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**Clothing Children in English Canada,
1870 to 1930**

**By
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**Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Post Doctoral Studies in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Ph. D. Degree in History**

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Abstract

This thesis examines the changing representations of children and clothing by drawing upon textual, visual and material sources. Clothing is an important part of our identities and it may be argued that clothing helps to define who we are. Clothing is our second skin. On a social, economic and material level, it shields us from the natural environment. On a cultural level, it mediates relationships between the individual and the larger society by delving into constructions of gender, ritual and dress. This study explores the ways in which clothing illustrates social change in late nineteenth-and early twentieth-century Canada.

This thesis provides an opportunity to examine changing representations of children and clothing by drawing upon a wide variety of sources and building upon previous studies. In examining constructions of gender and childhood, it focuses on the emergence of the 'new boy', using clothing as a point of entry into the history of masculinity and femininity. What also emerges is the importance of the mother/son relationship, as portrayed by the process of dressing children. Overtime, rituals associated with clothing children altered. This daily process required more clothing that clearly differentiated between boys' and girls' garments.

An adapted material history study of clothing allows the unique opportunity to peel back the layers of meanings of clothing, photographs, images and representations, advertisements, advice columns, and mail-order catalogue descriptions. This research strategy also permits a re-appraisal of nineteenth and early twentieth-century images that have dominated our perception of children and gender. This study, exploring a diversity

of textual and pictorial sources, such as newspapers and advertisements, trade literature, and department store catalogues, informed by material history questions and viewed from a Canadian perspective, helps to unravel the mysterious connections between 'new women' and 'new boys'.

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Clothing Children in English Canada, 1870 to 1930: Introduction

I wish my clothes was pasted on my back, jes' like a dog's,
Or like th' bark that's fastened on a pile of hemlock logs;
Then every time I trimmed my kite, or jiggged my little boat,
An' started out, I wouldn't hear: "Oh, Johnny, where's your coat?"

About th' time I'm ready fer to drill a little well
Down by th' old green waterin' -trough, then ma or sister Nell
Comes out upon th' porch an calls: "Ho, Johnny, where's your hat?
You'll get a sunstroke runnin' roun' bareheaded, boy, like that."

Th' fellers of my gang come up an' holler at our gate;
"Come on, we're goin' fishin', Jack!" But, gee! I got t' wait,
Till ma as sewed a button on an' stitched a rippin' hem,
'Fore I kin get my fishin'-pole, an foller after 'em.

One day when me and Nell was huntin berries down th' lane
Th' hired man rattled by – he had waggon – load of grain;
An he'd a' taken me along, if Nell jes' hadn't said:
"He can't go into town without a hat upon his head."

In winter, when th' sleddin' an' the skatin's comin in,
I never leave th' house but what I'm ordered back ag'in
T' bundle up "in somthin' warm" -an' so I've got t' tote
A pair of skates an' rubber shoes an' gloves an' overcoat!

An' after supper, when th' spooks of night begin t' creep,
I get t' lookin' in the fire, an' sudden fall asleep;
Then pa, he has to lift me up, an' while I nod an' doze,
Ma turns th' covers on my bed an' he slips off my clothes

An' in th' mornin', when th' birds is singin' in th' trees,
I'm later gittin' out than all the chipmunks an' th' bees,
Jes' cause I have t' sit aroun' a pullin' at a shoe
That won't go on fer knotted strings, or cause it's wet with dew.

That's why I wish my coat was pasted on, like a dog's,
Or like th' bark that's fastened on a pile of hemlock logs;
Then every time I wished t' have a swim or take a doze
I wouldn't have t' wait till I had shed my Sunday Clothes.¹

¹ Aloysius Coll, "The Wish of a Small Boy," *The Last West*, November 1906, 52. Readers of the *Farmer's Advocate* were directed to read this publication in the "Life, Literature and Education" section of the *Home Journal*. The Manager of the Last West

Entitled "The Wish of a Small Boy," this poem emphasizes a conviction that underpins an expanding field of socio-cultural research: clothing is our second skin. Johnny relished roaming the fields, climbing the trees, picking berries, and skating on the pond in the winter. However, each time he was about to venture outdoors, he met with gentle yet persistent admonishments from his mother and elder sister, who fussed over his coat, hat, buttons, shoes and Sunday clothes. Exasperated, Johnny exclaimed that he wished his coat was pasted on his back. A dog's fur, he reasoned, which allowed for both fun and physical activity, was preferable to the bothersome Sunday clothes. This 'small boy' did not appreciate being constrained by the clothing forced upon him by female family members.

On a material level, clothing shields us from the natural environment. On a cultural level, it reflects the social, economic and cultural relationships between an individual and the larger society. Clothing expresses identity both in terms of the ways individuals see themselves and how they are seen by others. "Clothes make the man." "All dressed up and no place to go." "Tied to mother's apron strings." "Who wears the pants?" "You are getting to big for your britches!" Such expressions point to the link between clothing and identity, and they suggest how clothing often reflects relationships between perceived masculine and feminine characteristics and between adults and children. A boy characterized as a 'sissy' or 'mamma's boy' is depicted as being tied to mother's apron strings. Power relationships within families are called into

Publishing Company, Walter E. Gunn, had a long career in publishing and reporting. He had worked as a Parliamentary reporter for the *Toronto News*, advertising writer for the T. Eaton co., and advertising manager for the *Farmer's Advocate* in London, and manager of the *Farmer's Advocate* in Winnipeg.

question when we ask: “Who wears the pants?” The opposition to women wearing trousers before the 1960s vividly attests to the fears invoked by a reversal of gender roles. Similarly, the idea of being too big for one’s ‘britches’ allows a glimpse of the ritual of growing-up, with a boy shedding his ‘britches’ for grown-up trousers.

From the perspective of clothing as a “second skin,” this thesis builds upon previous socio-cultural research on children and childhood by studying material culture, images, periodical literature, trade journals and mail-order catalogues in Canada from the 1870s to the early 1930s. The following chapters will present this evidence in order to explore the changing ways in which the clothing of children reflected Canada’s “great transformation” from a predominantly rural agricultural country to an urban, industrialized society. The importance of situating the process of growing-up within this transformation has been emphasized by the scholarly debate that was sparked by Philippe Ariès’ seminal study entitled *Centuries of Childhood*. This study pointed to the ‘discovery’ of childhood during the development of modernity.² In the case of clothing, Iris Brooke has found that the earliest record of garments specifically for children dates from the 1770s.³ Prior to these years, children were dressed in the same style of clothing as adults. Although various researchers have subsequently revised or qualified the unique association of childhood with modernity, scholars continue to emphasize the tremendous changes in growing-up that have occurred in the recent centuries.

² Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962). Translated from French by Robert Baldick. Ariès provides a brief discussion of children’s clothing in Part I: The Idea of Childhood, Section III: Children’s Dress.

The history of childhood has been a particularly active field in the case of Canada, especially following Neil Sutherland's ground-breaking work on the changing official attitude toward children in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁴ Other scholars have attempted to reconstruct the lives of "juvenile delinquents," the impact of mass-schooling, the living conditions and labour of working-class children, the history of child immigrants, and the establishment of children's aid societies.⁵ Pioneering research has also been conducted on the participation of boys and girls in youth organizations such as the boy scouts and the YM/YWCA.⁶ These scholars are united in their belief that the history of childhood is neither 'intrinsically private' nor 'trivial'.

³ Iris Brooke, *English Children's Costume Since 1775* (A. & C. Black Lt. 1958), 111. Introduced by James Laver.

⁴ Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976); and his more recent work, *Growing-up: Childhood in English Canada from the Great War to the Age of Television* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1997). For a recent review of the history of childhood in Canada, see Robert McIntosh, "Constructing the Child: New Approaches to the History of Childhood in Canada." *Acadiensis*, 28, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 126-140.

⁵ Russell Smandych, Gordon Dodds and Alvin Esau, eds., *Dimensions of Childhood: Essays on the History of Children and Youth in Canada* (Legal Research Institute of the University of Manitoba, 1991); John Bullen, "Orphans, Idiots, Lunatics and Historians: Recent Approaches to the History of Child Welfare in Canada," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 18 (1985); Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880 – 1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Joy Parr, *Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994); Andrew Jones and Leonard Rutman, *In the Children's Aid: J.J. Kelso and Child Welfare in Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981); Patricia T. Rooke and R.L. Schnell. *Discarding the Asylum: From Child Rescue to the Welfare State in English Canada, 1800-1950* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983).

⁶ Ross Bragg, "The Boy Scout Movement in Canada: Defining Constructs of Masculinity for the 20th Century," *M.A. Thesis*, (Dalhousie University, 1996). Robert H. MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and Boy Scout Movement, 1890 – 1918* (Toronto, 1993); David I. Macleod, "A Live Vaccine: The YMCA and Male Adolescence in the United States and Canada, 1870-1920," *Papers of the Canadian Historical Association* (June 2, 1977); David I. Macleod, *Building character in the American boy: the Boy*

Instead, they note that “actions within the limits of private life seem bound up with the most basic human instincts and needs. Understanding how these basic elements are satisfied promises insights into the sources of the nature of our most deeply held social values.”⁷

Today, rather than speaking of the ‘history’ of childhood, scholars speak of ‘histories’ in recognition of what Harvey J. Graff calls the “conflicting paths” of growing-up. No longer do historians maintain that the wealthy male children whom Ariès studied represent the manifold experiences of both boys and girls of different classes, times, and places. In his recent monograph, *Conflicting Paths*, Harvey Graff uses the phrase ‘growing-up’ to integrate the concepts of childhood, adolescence, and youth. Graff cautions against simplifying the experience of growing up and encourages his readers to explore the complexities and diversities of childhood. His central analytical concept is that of conflict, which he derived from his readings of first person accounts from across the United States, paying particular attention to questions of gender, race and social class, ethnicity, place of residence and age.⁸

Among this constellation of ‘conflicts,’ the research project undertaken for this thesis focussed on the question of gender. To what extent was clothing used to specify

Scouts, YMCA, and their forerunners, 1870 – 1920 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983).

⁷ Patricia T. Rooke and R.L. Schnell, ed., *Studies in Childhood History: A Canadian Perspective* (Detselig Enterprises Limited 1982), 204. Also see Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon, “From Children’s Point of View: Childhood in Nineteenth-century Iceland,” *Journal of Social History*, (Winter 1995): 317, he notes that there have been many calls for attention to the children’s point of view. Indeed in this work, he focuses on the history of childhood in a rural society from children’s point of view, using 240 autobiographical accounts.

⁸ Graff, Harvey J., *Conflicting Paths: Growing Up in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), xii.

gender identity from the 1870s to the 1930s in Canada? This question arises from certain studies on children's clothing in other societies which have concluded that the dominant attitudes supported the idea of an age of "innocence" for both boys and girls during which children were considered "sexless" beings.⁹ Specifically, Paoletti and Kreglough have argued that "parents today perceive-and dress- infants as sexual beings, while a century ago babies were asexual cherubs."¹⁰ In contrast, other researchers have emphasized the consistent ambition of adults to use clothing to specify gender identity especially through the use of colour. Studies in other countries have shown that the colour-coding of children has been practised with varying degrees of consistency for more than a century. However, the present-day associations of pink for girls and blue for boys were not necessarily followed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In fact, in the United States, boys often wore pink while girls wore blue:

But pink and blue color coding was a novelty at the turn of the century and only became widely practiced at the end of World War II. For most of our history, there has been little differentiation between the clothing of male and female children under the age of five. A hundred years ago, both boys and girls wore dresses until about this age, yet there is no evidence that these conventions had any effect on the gender identities these children assumed in adulthood.¹¹

An American source indicated that while there were varying opinions, a general rule was: "pink for the boys and blue for the girls. The reason is that pink being a more decided and stronger colour is more suitable for the boy; while blue, which is more delicate and

⁹ Karin Calvert, *Children in the House: The Material Culture of Early Childhood, 1600-1900* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992) 97-98, 103, 109.

¹⁰ Jo B. Paoletti and Carol Kreglough, "The Children's Department," in Claudia Brush Kidwell and Valerie Steele (editors), *Men and Women: Dressing the Part* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 24.

¹¹ Paoletti and Kreglough, "The Children's Department." in Brush Kidwell and Steele (editors), *Men and Women: Dressing the Part*, 22.

dainty, is prettier for the girl.”¹² By contrast, a British source suggested that blue was for boys as it was associated with the sky; as the favoured children, boys were in particular need of protection from evil spirits from the skies. In some European countries, boys were also associated with blue as boys were found under the bluish cabbage leaf whereas girls were born inside a pink rose.¹³ There are other colour traditions in Western nations. In contemporary Belgium, pink continues to be used for boys while blue is for infant girls. The dominance of this tradition is difficult to trace, but today in Belgium, baby boys wear pink while baby girls wear blue.

In Britain, two well-known images of children at a later age are the ‘Little Boy Blue’ by Reynolds and ‘Pinkie’ by Gainsborough.¹⁴ An 1867 painting by Claude Monet, ‘The Cradle-Camille’ with the artist’s son Jean, has a baby in white, with a blue ribbon on the hat.¹⁵ It has been suggested that Catholic families were more likely to dress their infant girls in blue as it was the colour associated with the Virgin Mary. Another explanation was provided in Iris Brooke’s work, *English Children’s Costume Since 1775*:

The choice of blue is believed to be associated with the old belief that evil spirits hovered over infants. Such spirits were thought to be allergic to certain colors, chief of them blue, because its association with the heavenly sky made evil spirits powerless before it. The wearing of blue by a young child was therefore a protection. As boys were much more important than girls, they needed special guarding, so blue was reserved for them. No such protection was thought necessary for girls, but later generations, unaware of the reason for ‘blue for a boy’ but conscious of the omission of girls from any such distinction, thought up the idea of pink. Another European legendary tradition is quite different. It is that

¹² Quoted in Paoletti and Kreglogh, “The Children’s Department.” in Brush Kidwell and Steele (editors), *Men and Women: Dressing the Part*, from the Infant’s Department, June 1918.

¹³ Elizabeth Ewing, *History of Children’s Costume* (New York: Scribner, 1977), 111.

¹⁴ Images of Little Boy Blue appeared several times in *The Farmer’s Advocate*.

¹⁵ ----- *Flowers of Youth: Images of Children from the National Gallery of Art* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1996).

baby boys were found under cabbages, whose colour in Europe was mostly blue. Girls were born inside a pink rose.¹⁶

The question of colour points to the larger issue of how clothing related to the gender identity of children in Canada during the decades of rapid change, beginning in the late nineteenth century. In turn, this question focuses our attention on adult decision making. Since children were dependent upon adults to produce or purchase materials and garments, their clothing was closely associated with adult expectations in the context of social, economic and cultural imperatives and limitations. In this context, the evidence to be discussed in the following chapters reveals how important clothing were to perceptions of the changing relationships between mothers and sons, or, in the language of the day, between ‘new women’ and the ‘the new boy.’ In the case of women’s history, this thesis builds on the significant studies on the ‘new woman’ leaving the farm, working in factories, attending educational institutions, joining women’s organizations and playing many other new roles outside the home. Historians have also pointed to the changing productive roles of women within families including responsibility for clothing their children. As previous research on children’s clothing in nineteenth-century Ontario reveals, there were mounting pressures on women to dress their children both functionally and fashionably: “But while middle class mothers were counseled in proper dress for the child, they were also lured by the fashion fads and advertising which

¹⁶ Iris Brooke, *English Children’s Costume Since 1775* (A. & C. Black Lt. 1958), 111. Introduced by James Laver.

presented a romantic image of children decked out in fussy, impractical and showy costumes – little showpieces for the family. Which way was mother to turn?”¹⁷

In addition to enriching our understanding of the ways in which being a mother was changing during the period of ‘new women,’ this thesis emphasizes the importance of introducing the concept of the ‘new boy’ into analyses of children’s clothing during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For this reason, and in keeping with the research strategy of Philippe Ariès, Chapter one first examines the clothing in familiar visual images of boys beginning with a discussion of a family heirloom, a photograph of great-grand-dad clothed in what appears to be a dress. Such images resemble the popular fictional character from the 1880s and 1890s, Little Lord Fauntleroy, with his long curls, velvet suit and close relationship to his mother. In order to pursue the questions that arise in the discussion of these images, Chapter one then reports on the results of a material history analysis of children’s clothing as preserved in the major Canadian museum collections. Through material evidence, we can examine sewing techniques and the texture and quality of the cloth as well as the location and usefulness of buttons and other closures. Such analysis, as will be shown, is especially important in the case of children’s clothing; for example, it is in this way that we can tell whether or not a child needed help to get dressed.

In order to situate the visual images and actual clothes that remain from the period, Chapter two examines the changing ways in which children’s clothing was discussed in a major newspaper of the day, the *Farmer’s Advocate*. This newspaper was selected for systematic study since it offers a window on the perspectives available to the

¹⁷ Christina Bates. “Beauty Unadorned: Dressing Children in Late Nineteenth-Century

Canadian population that was predominantly rural until after World War I. Of special interest are two columns from the family section of the newspaper. These columns were aimed at women and children, and they offered drawings, photographs, musings and advice. From the outset, children were considered by the owners and editors to be important readers since they represented future farmers and family members. As will be discussed, the *Farmer's Advocate* provides extensive evidence concerning the images, representations and ideas about childhood, clothing and parents, especially the changing role of mothers in clothing 'new boys'.

Chapter three uses the general discussion of children's clothing in the *Farmer's Advocate* as a background to focus on the industry itself as portrayed in the major trade journal of the period, the *Dry Goods Review*. Founded in 1891, the *Dry Goods Review* was widely read by wholesalers and retailers, including travelling salesmen. Between the 1890s and 1930s, this journal featured advertising from manufacturers of ready-made clothing and textiles as well as news related to dress goods. Articles and columns discussed tips for running successful dry goods businesses and clothing departments. Prior to focusing on the ready-made clothing market for girls and infants, boys' ready-made garments were considered to be a key component of success for retailers and dry goods merchants. Advice on how to capture this burgeoning trade often dominated discussions throughout the *Review*. In the monthly and eventually bi-monthly issues of the *Dry Goods Review*, prescriptive articles advised readers about current fashions and offered views on how to sell in stores across the country.¹⁸

Ontario" (Ottawa: Microfiche Report, 1983) 18.

¹⁸ Michael Bliss, *Northern Enterprise: Five Centuries of Canadian Business* (McClelland and Stewart, 1987) and V. Strong-Boag, *The Girl of the New Day Recalled, 1919-1939*

As a complement to the study of the changing industry perspectives provided to those who sold children's clothing in Canada, Chapter four examines the ways in which consumers were directly addressed by the new mail-order catalogues that appeared in the late nineteenth century. Historians are familiar with the catalogues of the T. Eaton Company but, two other Canadian retailers also produced mail-order catalogues during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: the Hudson's Bay Company and the Robert Simpson Company. Chapter four provides a description of the mail-order catalogues including a content analysis of children's clothing as well as of the comments used to attract shoppers – mothers and children.

Taken together, the images, material artifacts, newspaper coverage, trade journal descriptions, and department store catalogues examined in this thesis offer new evidence on the changing ways in which children's clothing was represented, made, and marketed during the turn of the century. The sources used in this study reflect different aspects of the history of childhood but, as will be discussed, they all suggest the key importance of gender in the changing relationships of mothers and sons during the emergence of the 'new boy' of modern Canada.

(Toronto: Copp Clark Pitmann, 1988). This study of the *Dry Goods Review* builds on previous research that has focused on children's clothing based on analyses of pattern books and magazines that were directed at women. See for example, Christina Bates, "How to Dress the Children? A Comparison of Prescription and Practice in Late-Nineteenth-Century North America," *Dress* 24 (1997): 43-54; Jo B. Paoletti, "Clothing and Gender in America: Children's Fashions, 1890-1910." *Signs* 13 no. 1 (Autumn 1987); Katharine B. Brett, "Little Women, Little Men: 19th Century Children's Clothing in Canada" *Rotunda* 3 no. 1 (Winter 1970): 7-15; JoAnne Olian, ed., *Children's Fashions, 1860 to 1912: 1, 065 Costume Designs from 'La Mode Illustrée'* (New York: Dover Publications, 1994).

**Chapter 1:
The Images and Material History of Children's Clothing**

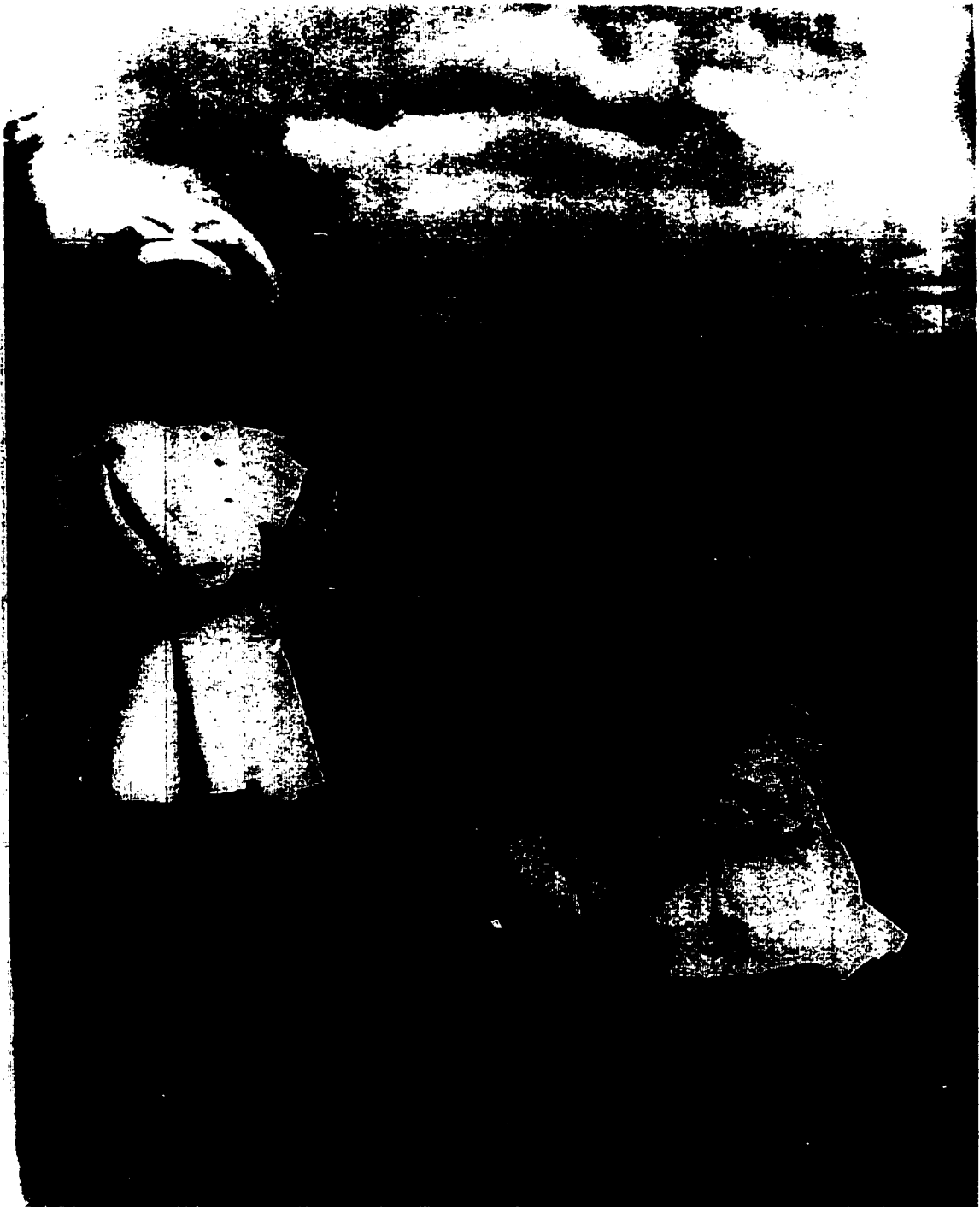


Figure 1.1: Master Jean and Brother Archambault, 1898, McCord Museum of Canadian History Notman, Collection 6375, 125, 122-BII

What is often striking about family photographs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, like the one in Figure 1.1, is how different boys appear from those pictured a century later. Without the caption attached to Figure 1.1, 'Master Jean and Brother Archambault,' these two boys might be confused for two girls. What did these 'feminized' images of boys reflect? Is there a conflict between the 'dress' of these boys and the fact that one is holding a sailboat and the other clasping a hammer? How do we reconcile dress and the construction of boyhood at the turn of the twentieth century? The prospect of analyzing material artifacts offered an exciting opportunity to unravel the increasingly complex process of clothing children.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section considers how photographs and other visual representations from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can be examined with regard to gender and appearance in order to tease out the complexities of everyday children's clothing. The second section discusses how material history methods allow us to learn from actual clothing what cannot be learned from textual sources. The third section applies this material history method to museum collections of children's clothing in Canada.

Formal images are often designed to preserve a particular memory and ideal. For example, Mrs. Taylor's Boys, Figure 2.2, raises a number of questions about gender, mother-child relationships and appearance. Mrs. Taylor's boys displayed 'Scottish' culture with their full kilt regalia.

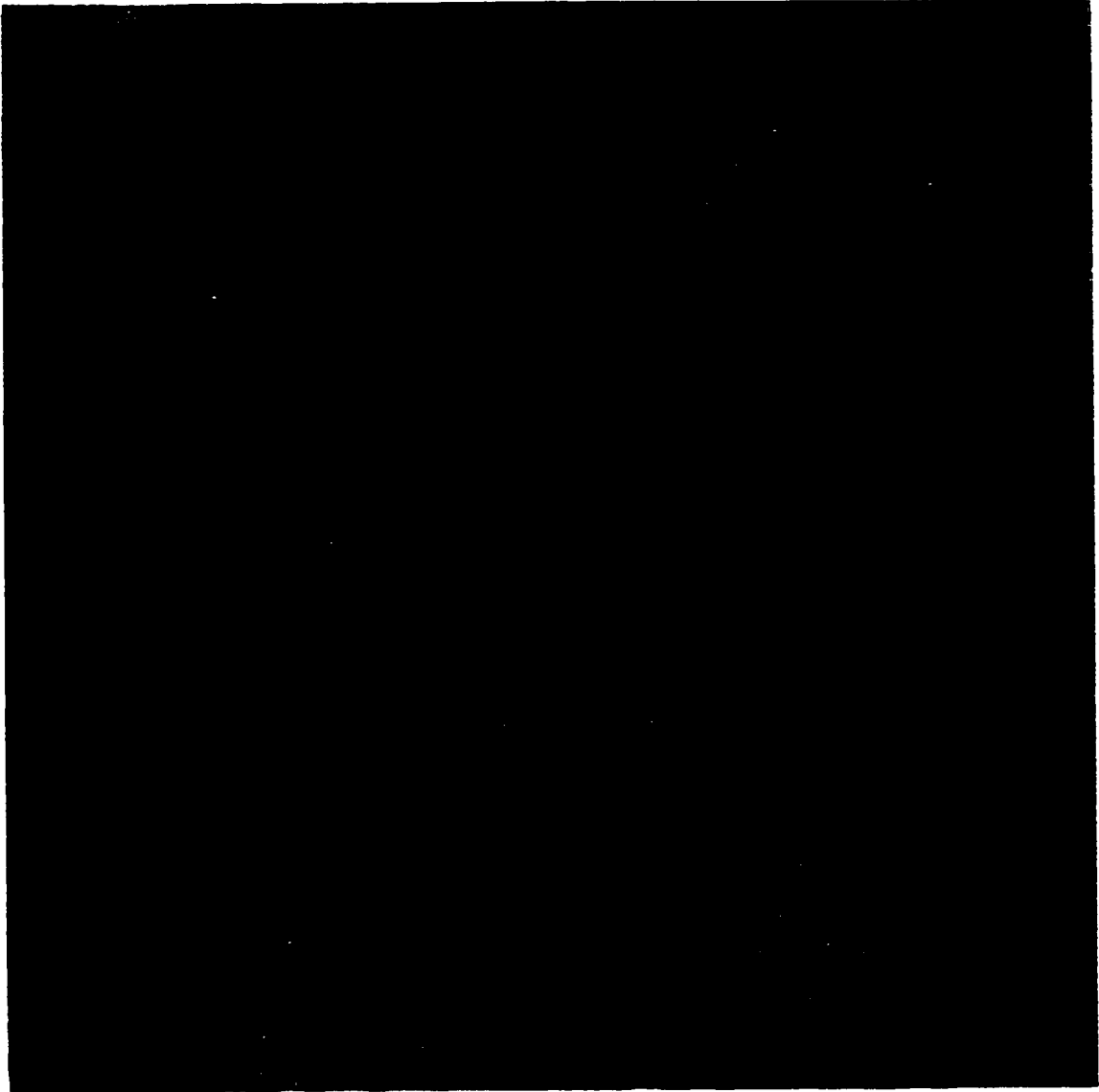


Figure 1.2: Mrs. Taylor's Boys' McCord Museum of Canadian History, Notman Collection, 1890.¹

This outfit was not intended to be worn for play and fun, but to preserve a moment in their childhood. The suits were popular styles for boys in the late nineteenth century.

¹ See for example, H9-7-587 (A-F) a complete kilt outfit at the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, Winnipeg. The first child to wear this garment was born in 1900 in Falkirk, Stirling, Scotland. The kilt suit was brought to Canada in 1905 and later used by the original owner's four children for a costume.

Their hair is very striking, clearly taking time to wash and curl. The ornamentation of these outfits, represented in the buttons, further demonstrates their formal function. These boys were 'dressed up' for this photograph.

In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, portraits were significant events for many families and individuals 'dressed for the photographer' to preserve a specific memory of family, time and place.² It was necessary to sit still for an extended period of time and it was difficult to avoid the appearance of stiffness or an 'awkward look'. One commentary lamented the rigid posing and discomfort that appeared in many images: "How come it that [sic] a photograph, which ought to present the sitter in a thoroughly easy and natural pose, often exhibits him in a constrained and awkward attitude?"³ Many photographs captured idealistic family portraits. Figure 1.3 depicts clean and tidy boys, calm and serene in appearance. In this image, there are several clues that identify gender and how 'maleness' was constructed. All three boys are wearing a style of trousers, either short or long depending on their ages. Their hair is short and they are in a setting that would be considered 'male' with a boat and dock-like background. The two hats and long trousers suggest that the boys were identified with the fashions of their elders.

² An excellent study of everyday clothing and photographs by Joan Sevrera, *Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion, 1840 – 1900* (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1995), provides outstanding analysis of clothing using photographs and advice literature from women's magazines. All family members appear, though there are not many images of children. Like many studies, this one also stops at the twentieth-century.

³ "Sitting for your Portrait," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 December 1878, 292. This article provided advice to families having their picture taken. Families were counselled on how to look more natural and also hints for having children's portraits taken were given.

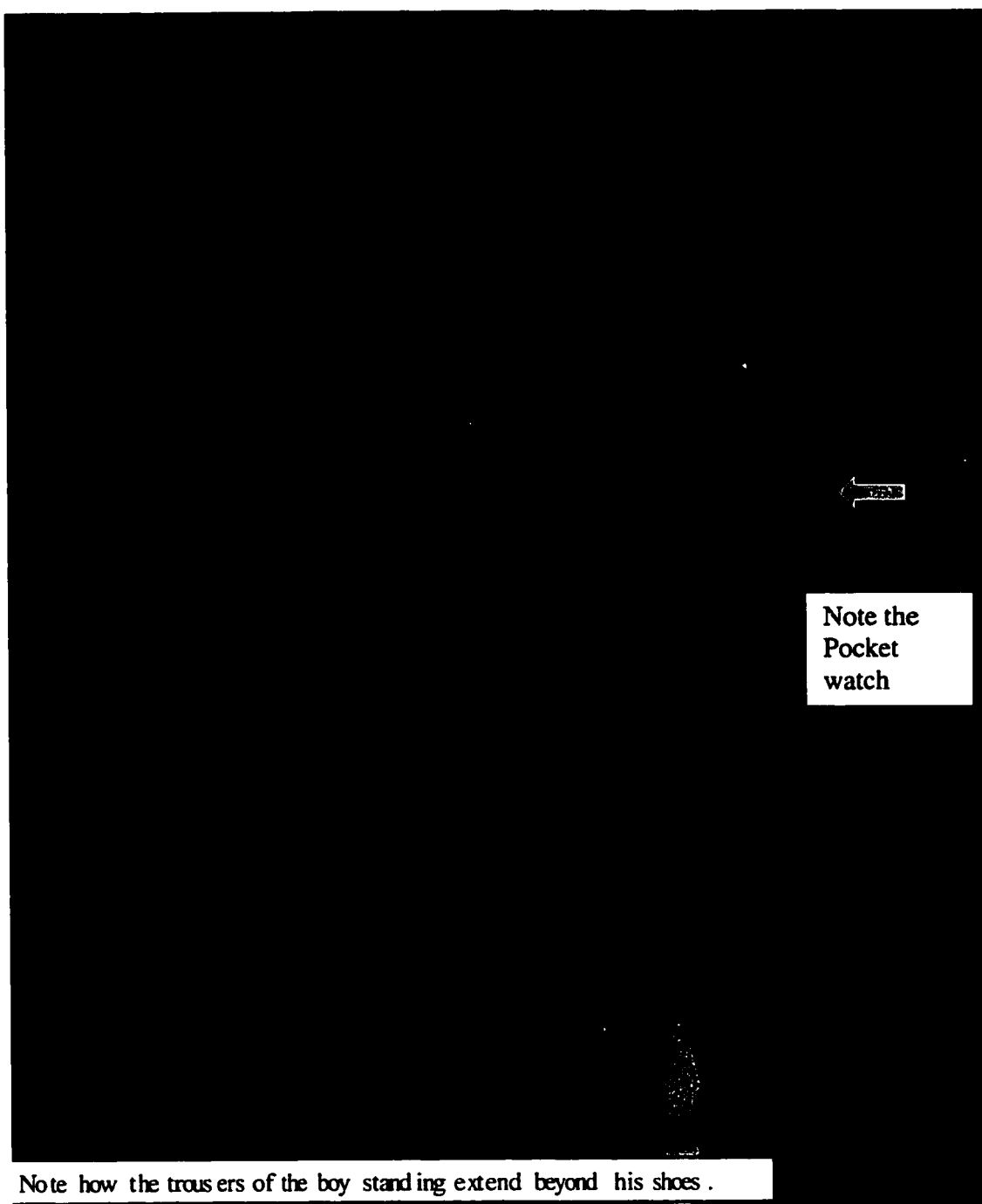


Figure 1.3: Mrs. Geddes' three children, McCord Museum of Canadian History, Notman Collection, 6315, 49, 938, BII, 1878.

The pocket watch, hanging from the vest of the oldest boy, also suggests maturity and the importance of time for this boy.

In the late nineteenth century, images and representations were often reprinted from fashion plates, newspapers, catalogues and family photographs and limited to a few original sources. Newspapers in the 1870s and 1880s contained few images and no photographs. Most periodicals depended on expensive engraving and artistic images to provide their readers with some images from outside their small community. A rare drawing appeared in Uncle Tom's Column, in the *Farmer's Advocate*, Figure 1.4. An image of a boy from the Notman collection, Figure 1.5, taken eleven years earlier depicts a young boy wearing an almost identical ensemble as depicted in the drawing from Uncle Tom's Column. Master St. Lawrence Hopkins, the boy in the Notman photograph, is holding a ball even though his clothing was not appropriate for play and certainly would not afford comfort.



Figure 1.4: “Uncle Tom’s Department,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 1 May 1874.

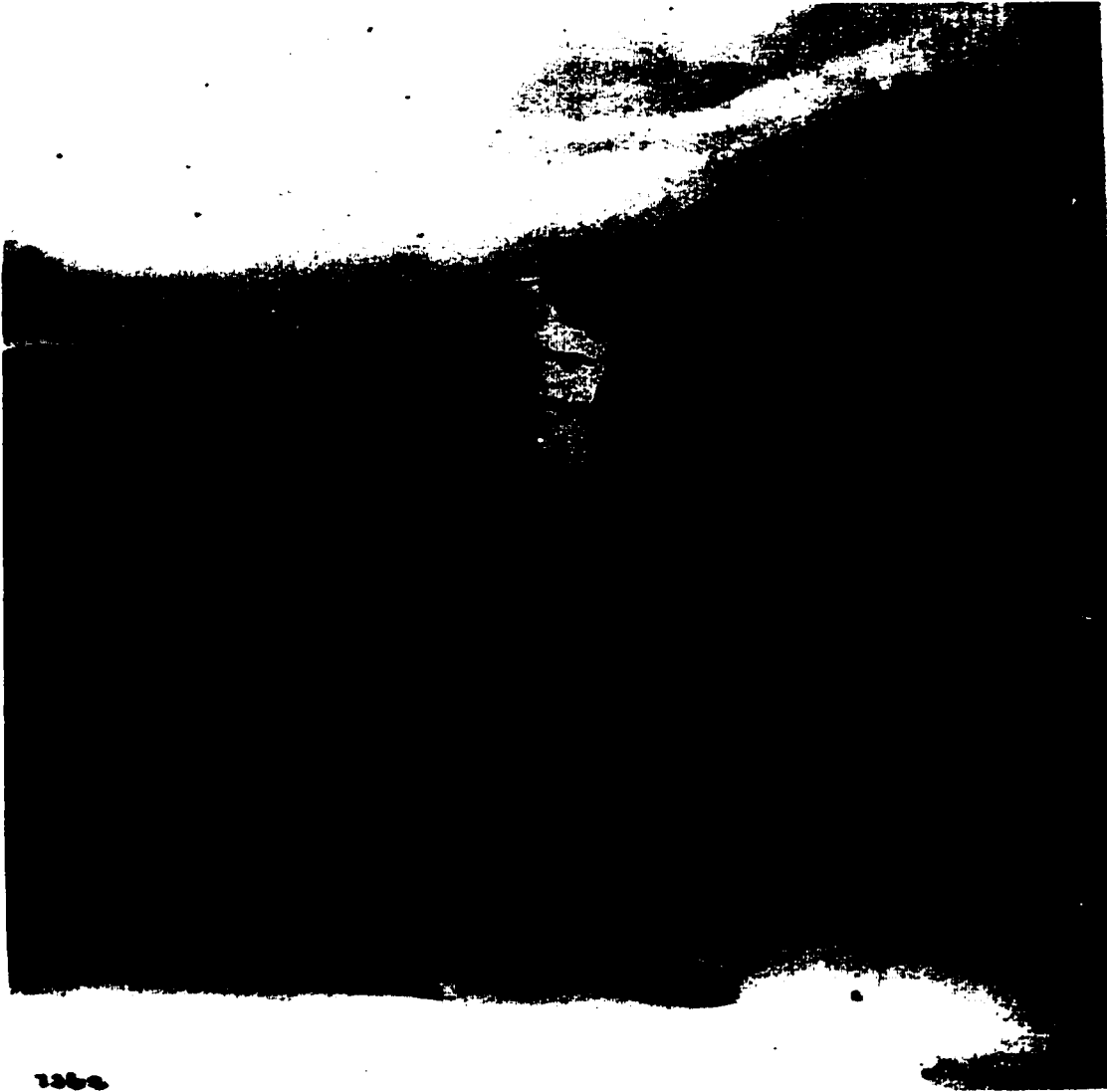


Figure 1.5: St. Lawrence Hopkins, McCord Museum of Canadian History, Notman Collection, 6262, 7362, I, 1863.

In Figure 1.5, the 'feminine' nature of the boy's lace-edged blouse and curls is countered by the use of the ball as a prop. Props used for boys were in contrast with props used in formal photographs of girls, many of which depict them holding baskets, flowers, dolls or skipping ropes.⁴ The similarity between the drawing from Uncle Tom's Column and

⁴ Louise Gagnon, *L'Apparition des Modes Infantines au Quebec* (Quebec: Institut quebécois de recherche sur la culture, 1992), 106-107. Several images of girls holding flowers appear in the Notman collection at the McCord Museum of Canadian History.

Master St. Lawrence Hopkins also demonstrates how limited the range of images were during the nineteenth century and that often photographs mirrored images that appeared in periodicals and vice versa.⁵ In this particular case, one image had appeared in a rural Canadian newspaper while the other image was a portrait from one of the best-known family photographers in Canada.⁶

An important construction of 'ideal' boys in the nineteenth century was based on the fictional character, Little Lord Fauntleroy. The drawing below, Figure 1.6, appeared in the nineteenth-century edition of the book. Written by American writer, Frances Hodgson Burnett, *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, was published in 1886. This novel was serialized in newspapers throughout the United States and Canada. Suits were fashioned in his name and his character became synonymous with an 'ideal' son.⁷ In the story, the sweet, innocent image of the boy is described in great detail and his relationship with his mother triumphs because of the strength of his character and the purity of his love for her.

⁵ JoAnne Olian, ed., *Children's Fashions, 1860-1912: 1, 065 Costume Designs from "La Mode Illustrée"* (New York: Dover Publications, 1994).

⁶ For more information about William Notman, see Roger Hall, W.D. Dodds and S. Triggs, *The World of William Notman* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1993).

⁷ A reference to the 'Fauntleroy Craze' appeared in the Canadian periodical, the *Dry Goods Review* in the 1890s. See "Boys' Clothing," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 August 1891, and "Boys' Clothes," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 September 1892, 14. In Canada, velvet Little Lord Fauntleroy suits were sold at department stores. For example see the Robert Simpson Company, *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1899, 97 and the T. Eaton Company, *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1898-1899, 111.



Figure 1.6: "I was thinking how beautiful you are," said Lord Fauntleroy. Frances Hodgson Burnett. *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, Illustrated by Reginald B. Birch (London Frederick Warne and Co. 1892) 199.

The following three images of boys, Figures 1.7, 1.8 and 1.9, were taken by William Notman in Montreal. In each of these images, their clothing and their long hair demonstrates the relationship between formal photographs and its relationship between fiction and fantasy.

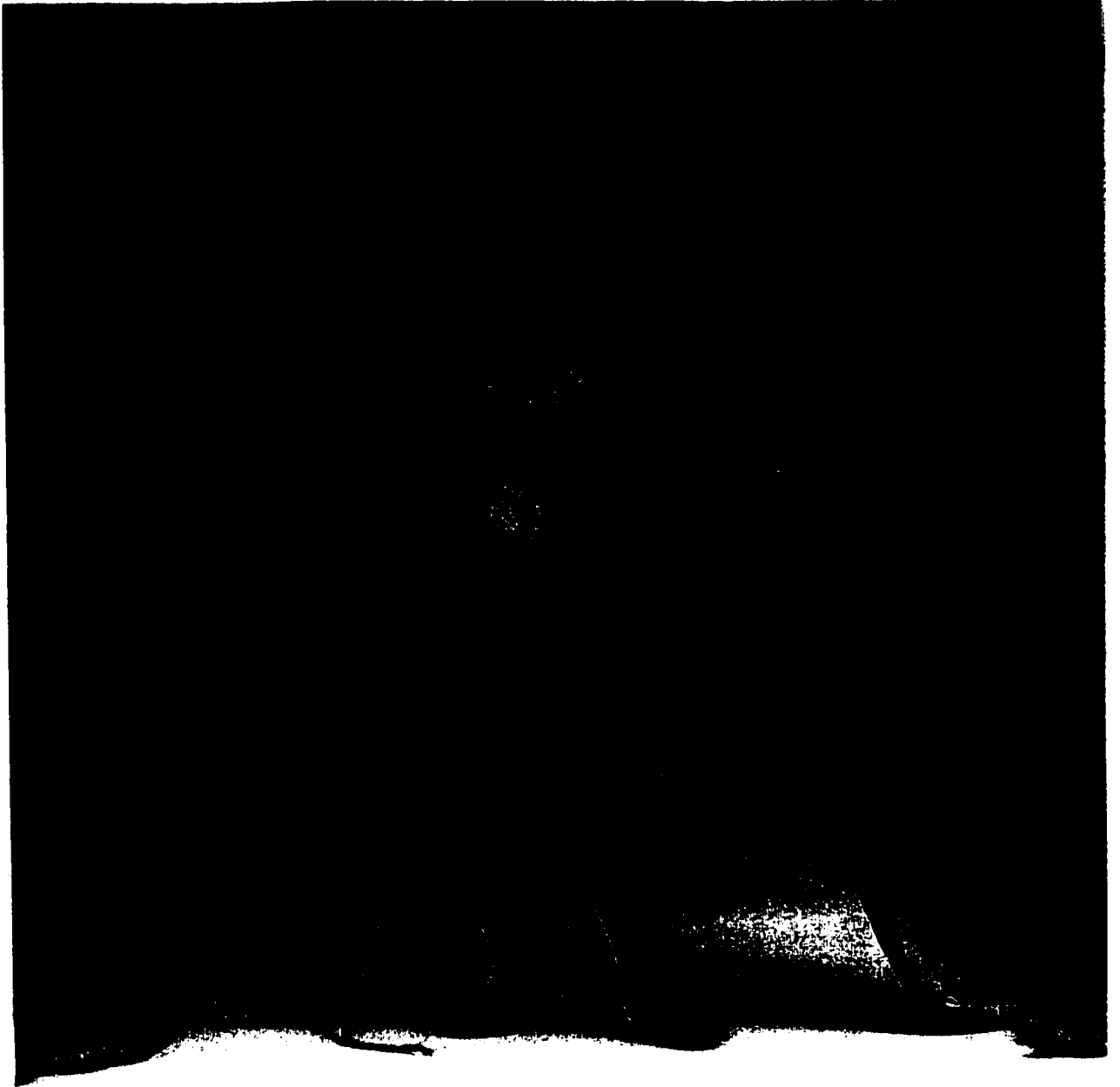


Figure 1.7: Master Sydney Lyman, McCord Museum of Canadian History, Notman Collection, 6356, 95, 624 BII, 1891.



Figure 1.8: Master Kirkpatrick, 1891 Notman Collection, McCord Museum of Canadian History, Portraits – Children, 6354, 95, 504-BII.

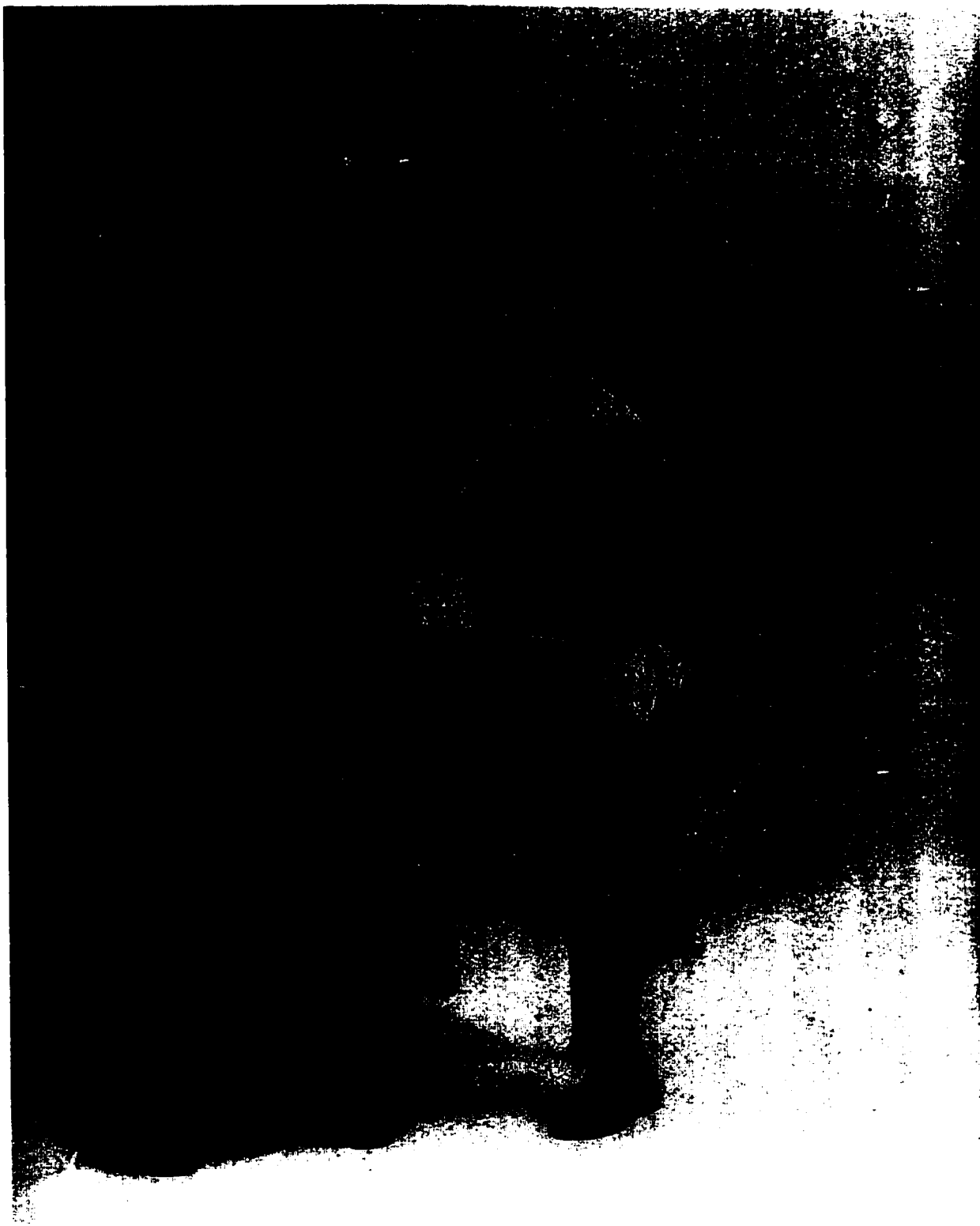


Figure 1.9: Master Sclater, McCord Museum of Canadian History, Notman Collection, 6352, 95, 281-BII, 1891.

The most striking example of a representation that reflects the character of Little Lord Fauntleroy (Figure 1.6) is depicted in Figure 1.7, Master Sydney Lyman. The image of Master Kirkpatrick, Figure 1.8, who appears to be about ten years of age, represents an idealised boy, as depicted by Little Lord Fauntleroy's character, but it also provides information about his masculinity and about family relationships. Bed bugs, lice and other 'creatures' that could inhabit beds and homes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century made it impossible for some families to care for any child's long hair. Indeed, having long hair added to a child's dependence, especially in the case of boys, as children with long hair definitely required more care. Infestations could be brought home from school or from playing with other children and required thorough cleaning of linen, bedding and clothing. Long hair required more of mother's time. Girls could be taught to take care of their own hair and could help with this task, however, it does not appear that boys learned to curl their own hair or were expected to get themselves ready for these formal images.

These three boys all posed holding whips, another masculine symbol. Boys frequently appeared in Notman photographs holding props like toys, tools or whips, associated with masculine characteristics.⁸ No girls appeared in Notman's images holding whips. Thus, while many of the boys depicted in formal studio portraits have what might be described as 'feminine' features and characteristics, clear messages regarding their masculine identity and differences from girls were indicated through props and clothing.

⁸ For example, the image of Ronald Redpath taken in 1890, depicts him holding a whip. He is not much older than one year of age. McCord Museum of Canadian History, Portraits, children, 6344; 92, 511-BII.

Cameras were not available to take informal photographs until the end of the nineteenth century.⁹ An example of an informal image of children, rare because of when it was taken and also because of its date and subject, is Figure 1.10, entitled ‘Canadian Children’:



Figure 1.10: “Canadian Children” c. 1860, McCord Museum of Canadian History, Notman Collection. People, view series, 3463, 7149 view.

⁹ Cameras could be purchased from the T. Eaton Company from the 1890s onward and by the 1920s, Kodak frequently advertised their cameras. “Keep a Kodak Story of the Children” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 4 August 1921, 1230. “When the Children out-grow Childhood,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 3 February 1921, 182. While the changes in photography are beyond the scope of this research, these two advertisements demonstrate the change from formal to informal. “After all home pictures mean the most. Pictures of travel, of the week-end motor trip and of our sports – all these add to the fascination of the picture album. But the home pictures – for the most part pictures of the children, just every day pictures – these are the ones that never lose their appeal, that grow more and more in value as the children out-grow childhood.”

Figure 1.10 depicts two boys and a girl outside and is an unambiguous representation of 'boys' and 'girls'. Both boys are wearing long trousers, made from a coarsely woven material, and braces or suspenders made from the same material. One boy's trousers are torn and patched. The girl is identified by her hat and simple dress. This photograph differs significantly from the formal studio photographs of the time. It would seem that these children were dressed according to practical needs and gender.

While photographs and other visual representations provide information about styles of clothing worn for formal photographs, they require complementary evidence that helps provide information about what children's garments were actually made and worn every day in Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1986, *Material History* published a useful material research method that considered what materials were used to make the artifact, how it was put together, what its purpose was, where the materials or finished product came from, and what value, monetary or otherwise, it held.¹⁰ These categories appear in Table 1.1, along with the five research components that formed the foundation of this research: material, construction, function, provenance, and value. As this research progressed, the fifth component was altered

¹⁰ Stuart Smith *et al.*, "Towards a Material History Methodology," *Material History Bulletin* 22 (Fall 1985). This article was co-written by the participants in a graduate seminar as directed by Professor Smith. Other studies influenced Smith's analysis and informed this research method. See Jules David Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," *Winterthur Portfolio: A Journal of American Material Culture*, 17 no. 1 (Spring 1982) and E. McClung Fleming, "Artifact Study: A Proposed Model," *Winterthur Portfolio*, 9 no. 1 (Spring 1974); Melinda Young Frye, "Costume as History," *Museum News*, 56 no. 2 (1977); Joan Severa and Merrill Horswill, "Costume as Material Culture," *Dress*, 15 (1989). Roland Barthes, "Histoire et sociologie du vêtement: quelques observations méthodologiques," *Annales, E.S.C.* 3 (1957) is one of the earliest articles regarding a clothing research methodology.

slightly to include meaning in conjunction with value because value seemed restrictive, most often being related to monetary assessments.

Clothing provides multiple non-verbal cues about gender and age, among other things, and in this way is rich in meaning. The basis for this method begins with the garments in question. According to this methodology, the first step is to analyze 'observable data.' The second level of analysis is a comparative analysis of artifacts, examining garments from different periods, genders, and places of origin. The benefit of this component is that it challenges us to continually question differences and similarities and change over time. Finally, this method was to be supplemented with other sources that could originate in the museum or from other historical sources.

Table 1.1: Smith, *et al.*, Material History Research Method.

Data	Material	Construction	Function	Provenance	Value
Step 1 Observable Examination of the single artifact-sensory engagement					
Step 2 Comparative Similar artifacts, different time period					
Step 3 Supplementary other sources of information introduced					
Step 4 Conclusions					

Once the methodology was identified, two questions followed: how have researchers studied clothing, and what have they revealed about children's clothing?

Costume history is often associated with antiquarians.¹¹ These researchers, categorized as 'connoisseurs,' study clothing for its own sake, and their research interests include costume as art and the designers behind fashions, for example.¹² Antiquarians, interested in clothing for its own sake, have provided descriptions and classifications of costume, and examined them in social contexts, commenting on what was worn by specific groups, such as royalty. A number of journals in Great Britain, the United States and Canada have contributed to an increasingly diverse body of research.¹³ Researchers have focused on past fashions and costume in order to recreate what people actually wore. In the past twenty years, a study of clothing has provided researchers with a point of departure for studies of gender, ritual, and childhood.¹⁴ Certainly among the most important question regarding this research strategy is the gender breakdown of children's garments that have been preserved.

Costume collections in Canada are both rich and diverse. One Canadian museum is solely dedicated to the preservation and study of costume, the Canadian Museum of Costume, formerly known as the Dugald Costume Museum, located twenty-five minutes

¹¹ For example, many questions regarding costume history are beyond the scope of this research. See, Nancy Rexford and Patricia Cunningham, "Beyond Artifacts and Object Chronology," *Dress* 14 (1988): 78

¹² Jacqueline Beaudoin-Ross, "Costume in Canada: An Annotated Bibliography." *Material History Review*, 34 (Fall 1991) and Jacqueline Beaudoin-Ross and Pamela Blackstock, "Costume in Canada: An Annotated Bibliography." *Material History Review*, 19 (Spring 1984).

¹³ Two important journals are *Costume: The Journal of the Costume Society* (Britain) and *Dress*, journal of the American Costume society.

¹⁴ Claudia Brush Kidwell and Valerie Steel, eds., *Men and Women: Dressing the Part* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989). Karin Calvert, *Children in the House: The Material Culture of Childhood, 1600–1900* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992). Christina Bates, "'Beauty Unadorned': Dressing Children in Late-Nineteenth-century Ontario." *Material History Review* 34 (Fall 1991); Christina

east of Winnipeg. This private museum has over twenty thousand artifacts in its collections. Many other museums in Canada also boast rich collections of children's clothing. For this research, garments at the Canadian Museum of Costume, the University of Manitoba Clothing and Textiles Museum, the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the McCord Museum of Canadian history were consulted. A database was constructed and adapted to provide a framework for a systematic analysis of artifacts examined at Canadian museums.

A series of questions for each component of the analysis guided me through museum collections and card catalogues. The analysis of children's clothing evolved into three phases. The first phase was to become familiar with costume collections by examining the garments, photographs and card catalogues. The second phase was to study garments using five research components. Finally, a database was created to capture the material history methodology and translate findings from the clothing into information about clothing children and the construction of gender.¹⁵ Appendix I outlines the database created to collect data adapted from Smith's material history method and questions outlined by Severa and Horswill related specifically to costume history.¹⁶ This method also incorporates specific questions related to gender, childhood and the study of clothing in Canada. Over seven hundred girls' dresses and garments are catalogued at the Canadian Museum of Costume alone, and approximately one hundred and sixty are catalogued as 'boys' wear.' This one collection, along with the other

Bates, "How to Dress the Children? A Comparison of Prescription and Practice in Late Nineteenth-Century North America." *Dress*, 24 (1997).

¹⁵ See Stuart Smith *et al.*, "Towards a Material History Methodology." *Material History Review* 22 (Fall 1985) 36-37 for an outline of the questions related to this methodology.

¹⁶ Joan Severa and Merrill Horswill, "Costume as Material Culture," *Dress*, 15 (1989).

museum collections, provided over one thousand artifacts for analysis. In the end, the adoption of this analytical framework as a tool both critically informed the reading of the selected material evidence as well as of the other textual sources.¹⁷ In this way, an adapted material history methodology provided an opportunity to tease out the conflicting evidence from all primary sources, regarding dress, gender and difference in twentieth-century Canada.

What, however, is the *value added* of material history or studying clothing *qua* clothing? How did artifacts at museums relate to nineteenth-century photographs? As photographs and images of 'feminine' boys were the point of departure for this project, a few examples of garments, viewed from the perspective of material history methodology, will be discussed and compared with other nineteenth-century images in order to illustrate what can be learned from picking up the garments, turning up their hems, lifting up the collars and 'sizing them up'.

The first component to consider was material. What materials were used to produce the artifact? Most images of children from the nineteenth century are black and white, and, often, museums photograph material artifacts in black and white.¹⁸ Examining garments first- hand provides an opportunity to examine colour, patterns, and

¹⁷ This methodology provides an excellent opportunity to study garments in a controlled setting. In this way, a very small number of artifacts could be identified and analysed within a short span of time.

¹⁸ An exception to this practice is the Canadian Museum of Costume. Since its establishment in 1982, volunteers catalogue garments by providing a textual description, sketch the garment, as depicted by mannequins, and then complete the 'intake' process with a water colour representation. The Canadian Museum of Civilization has digitized some of their collection, and these appear in colour. These photographs are also difficult to analyse because, in some instances, the garments are pinned to boards or laid over boxes. It is thus difficult to determine the shape of the garment or how it would appear on

textures of the materials used. Were garments for boys and girls ever made of the same material – never, sometimes or always? Photographs also hide information about closures, especially if they were on the back of the garment. Were there two buttons that could easily be fastened by the wearer or twenty-five tiny buttons that required help? These two questions influenced the way I thought about childhood. Were some materials appropriate for young children only? Did garments without buttons mean more freedom and independence for children and mothers? What kind of care would the material require? Some materials could not be washed while others could be washed relatively frequently. How did material influence the process of clothing children?¹⁹

Analyzing photographs can sometimes yield information about how garments were made; however, looking at the stitching and lines of garments can provide further insight. By looking at the stitching, we can determine the quality of the sewing. Both crooked lines and neat stitches tell us about skill level. Pleating was a common construction in garments in the nineteenth century. There are many different pleating styles: such as the box pleat and knife-pleating. The latter requires more time and knowledge about sewing and also required more fabric. Studying construction also makes us think about pockets, ways to close garments and materials used to decorate children's clothing. Pockets, for example, could be simple patches added to the outside of a shirt, or they could be complicated insertions that were lined and hidden from view. Girls'

a person. It is unclear why most museums photographed its collections using black and white film.

¹⁹ Christina Walkley and Vanda Foster, *Crinoline and Crimping Irons Victorian Clothes: How they were cleaned and cared for* (Peter Owen, 1981).

dresses of the nineteenth century did not have visible pockets.²⁰ Why not? Was it impractical to sew into dresses? Did handbags suffice?

What was the function of the garment? Was it specifically for a boy, a girl or a child? Did the material aid or impede comfort? If it was a garment worn in summer, was it made of material that would be cool? What details about the function inform us about children or adults? For example, was the garment for play, school or a formal occasion? Are similar garments, with similar functions, worn today? Do children still wear shirts that are buttoned to their trousers? Would the function of the garment vary based on a consideration of age? Where did the garment come from, or what was its provenance? Can we learn anything about its origin by simply looking at it? For some garments, a positive strategy for analysis is to begin with known elements rather than considering the provenance of the finished product. For example, silk was not indigenous to Canada in the nineteenth century and had to be imported. Many other materials, like cashmere and Irish lace, were also imported. What about evidence about children's ready-made clothing in the nineteenth century? How common were ready-made garments in this period and how common are they in Canadian museum collections? While children's ready-made clothing was available in the late nineteenth century, Canadian museums consulted do not contain any examples of ready-made children's garments. There are numerous examples of garments made by dressmakers, especially from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

²⁰ See girl's dress at the Canadian Costume Museum, DAC-72, circa 1870. A deep pocket was sewn into the right seam of this silk taffeta dress, likely to hold a handkerchief, but never as a place for one's hand.

Finally, what can we learn about a garment's value and meaning? In a limited analysis, this might involve only the amount it cost to make. Providing this information has many challenges, as it is almost impossible to assign a cost to making home-made garments in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²¹ It might be possible to determine how much a specific length of material would cost in a specific time and place; however, this information might not add to our understanding of gender and childhood. Meaning might better inform our quest to understand these constructions. In this way, value and meaning, in terms of 'cultural' references, enriches the final component of the material history methodology by adding to the definition of 'value.'

The most commonly preserved garment for 'children', the infant Christening or Baptismal gown, was always white and most often made by mothers, inevitably displaying their sewing skills.²² These garments became heirlooms because they were hand-sewn and, sometimes, because they were made from mother's wedding dress. However, a study of this garment does not inform us about every-day attitudes about the process of dress and difference because these gowns are examples of ritualized clothing and not examples of everyday wear. Mothers wanted to create souvenirs and heirlooms for future generations. Consequently, there is an element of sameness instead of difference regarding these garments. Careful stitching and an abundance of delicate material dominated the construction of these garments.

²¹ Assigning a value to work in the home is a contemporary debate. The idea of waged labour in the home is only possible to capture when we look at the cost of having a dress made by a seamstress or dressmaker.

²² In each Museum surveyed and studied, Baptism gowns dominate many collection, just as wedding dresses for women's clothing dominate.

What about other rites of passage associated with children's clothing? Did rites of passage change over time? Can this question provide insight into boys' dresses in the nineteenth-century, or the appearance of the 'feminine' boy? Interestingly, the garment that most often represented a boy's rite of passage was his first pair of trousers. There is no evidence of this 'rite of passage' in the museum collections. Did families choose to save these garments? Did curators reject them? Did the ritual disappear, or did other symbolic garments replace it? Even though there are representations of a boys' first pair of trousers in newspapers and periodicals, there are neither references nor artifacts located in any museum collections consulted for this study. In museums, there are more examples of garments worn by women and girls than by men and boys. Over seventy percent of children's garments catalogued are girls' garments.

In most instances, it has not been the mandate of museums to collect worn, tattered or everyday clothing. The following poem illustrates the challenges of preserving clothing that was worn daily:

My mamma took a piece of cloth-
 A lot of yards, I guess-
 She cut it and she sewed it
 And she made herself a dress

She wore that dress a year or two,
 Perhaps she wore it three,
 Then turned it on the other side
 And made it up for me.

A long, long time it served for me,
 Till it got old and raggy;
 Then mamma washed it clean and made
 A coat for baby Maggie.

And, when the baby'd grow too big
 To wear that any more,

We cut it into carpet rags
And wove it for the floor.

So, in our new rag carpet, here,
That purple strip you see
Is made out of the Sunday clothes
Of mamma, Mag and me.²³

Another poetic representation from the *Farmer's Advocate* provides corroboration of the practices of using old clothing to make clothing for other family members, and sometimes for children's dolls, but more commonly as rags for carpets:

My mother's careful of our clothes, and
never lets things waste,
She rips and turns and makes them up
the latest style and taste.
And when they are too old for that,-
Why what do you suppose?
She cuts some up for carpet-rag, and
some for dolly's clothes!²⁴

Thus, many collections consist of unique and beautiful clothing, often heirlooms from families.

Differences between boys and girls were noted as important from birth. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, articles and advice about infants frequently appeared in newspapers and women's periodicals. Everyday clothing for infants were dresses made at home from homemade or local flannel, or remade from other dresses.²⁵ Variations of white were the most common colours for an infant because materials like cotton or wool did not require dyeing and therefore required less maintenance. Cotton garments could be boiled and sun bleached on the clothes-line. Wool fabrics varied

²³ "Going Through the Family" *Dry Goods Review*, 1 January 1902, 74.

²⁴ "Children's Corner: Nature's Patchwork Quilt," *Farmer's Advocate*, 16 October 1907, 1564.

²⁵ Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull. Flannel infant dress.

greatly according weave, weight and coarseness in this period, and they faded, shrank rapidly, or deteriorated if washed the same way that cotton was washed. Silk fabrics were delicate, weak and expensive and could not be woven at home. Neither woollen garments nor silk ones were washed very often, and silk was often only washed with alcohol-based chemicals to take out stains. Women were counseled on how to restore colours through dyeing, brushing, and taking garments apart and cleaning pieces separately.²⁶ Thus, children's garments needed to be easy to care for, or families would need help with keeping garments tidy, fresh and, increasingly, 'healthy.'

In mid-nineteenth-century Ontario women were counseled to dress slightly older children in dark colours, but by 1878, it was noted that other colours were available to mothers and children: "For several years, black and the most sombre shades have been worn exclusively. Old and young, mother and child, have all worn the darkest shades. This season the greatest change has taken place in colours. All the dead tints of past seasons have entirely vanished."²⁷ Even though these changes occurred, a very young child would not have worn a brightly coloured outfit. Dyeing technology was not sophisticated enough; many families relied upon homemade dye recipes.²⁸ Printed cottons, calicos, and dyed fibres for weaving patterns were available, but required special

²⁶ "Minnie May's Department" *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 June 1875, 117.

²⁷ "Minnie May's Department" *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 November 1878, 266. Did this reliance on dark colour relate to mourning rituals and the likelihood of a family being in mourning? Were infants afforded these rituals, and, if there was a death in the family, did they also wear dark colours?

²⁸ "Colours and Dyes," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 August 1871, 121. This article was reprinted again. See "Minnie May's Department," *Farmer's Advocat*, 1 October 1871, 148. "Minnie May's Department: Minnie May's Scrap Bag," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 April 1874, 61, a recipe for black dye.

care to retain their colour.²⁹ Caring for dyed material also required special knowledge of washing techniques and stain removal. By the turn-of-the-twentieth century, white cotton was one of the most popular materials for girls' dresses and children's summer garments, as well as for infant dresses.

The majority of clothing held by museum collections are hand-made, likely by mothers, sisters or other female family members or a seamstress. Consequently, sewing techniques for all clothing were based on those used to make dresses for girls and women. While the knowledge of sewing was passed from one generation to the next, during the nineteenth century, patterns became available and were advertised in ladies' magazines and newspapers.³⁰ These patterns add another layer of information for our analysis of the period as they provide contemporary information about materials and the construction of the clothing. Unfortunately, it is difficult to make connections between these patterns and actual garments held in Canadian museums because boys' suits from the nineteenth century are rarely part of museum collections. We know, however, that women were provided advice on 'tailoring' garments for their sons:

In the case of small boys, there are many women who have good machines and who are very quick with their needle and handy in cutting suits from many patterns which are to be had so cheap, and who take real pleasure in planning and making pretty suits for their much loved little boys, and in such cases it is well for them to make them, even if it were no saving; but if a woman uses good judgement in the purchase of her material, it is, no doubt, much more economical under these circumstances to make the garments at home. In many families, there are cast-off men's suits of good material, not much worn, and of a color and texture quite suitable for boys' clothing, and out of these, with a little trouble,

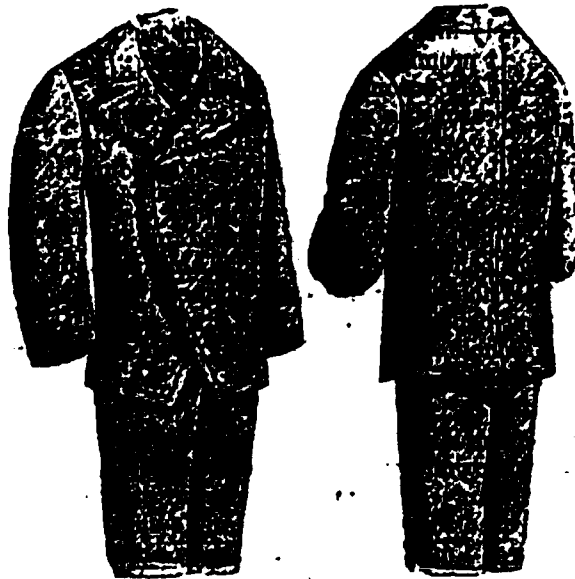
²⁹ "Facts about Colours," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 July 1868, 106. "Minnie May's Department: Minnie May's Scrap Bag," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 April 1874, 61, how to clean black cloth.

³⁰ Margaret Walsh, "The Democratization of Fashion: The Emergence of the Woman's Dress Pattern Industry." *The Journal of American History*, 66(September 1979); Joy Spanabel Emery, "Development of the American Commercial Pattern Industry: The First Generation, 1850 – 1880." *Costume*, 31 (1997).

really serviceable and handsome suits for small boys can be made, which often wear much better than new material of poorer quality.³¹

Figure 1.11 provides an image of the finished product, based on a paper pattern sold in the *Farmer's Advocate* in 1881. The pattern for the Lionel Suit suggested neither material nor colour and so as Jane Hewitt, in her prize-winning essay suggested, choosing quality material required care and attention. While the variety of patterns were limited to only a few styles, the descriptions of these outfits let us know that while girls were dressed like their mothers, boys had clothing that was significantly different from those of their elders based upon their age:

Pattern for: No. 3259 Lionel Suit [front and back drawing]
 A stylish suit, arranged with a double breasted, short, sacque coat, a single breasted vest, and knee-pants cut plain at the top. The size for eight years requires three yards and a half of good twenty-seven inches wide. Patterns in sizes for 8 and 10 years of age. Price 30 cents each.



No. 3225-LIONEL SUIT.

Figure 1.11 "Lionel Suit" *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 December 1881, 310.

³¹ Jane Hewitt, "Home Tailoring," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 November 1891, 455. The author of this first prize essay was from Birtle, Manitoba.

In the same column, a very different pattern was described for girls:

Pattern for: No. 25 Albertine Costume

A hi-fitting cuirass basque, to the bottom of which is added a deep box-plaiting, forming the skirt, is the foundation upon which handkerchief draperies are disposed in this stylish design. A small capuchin hood and a turn down collar complete this dress. The size for ten years requires seven yards and three-quarters of good twenty-four inches wide. Half a yard of silk will line the hood. Patterns in sizes from 8 to 12 years. Price, 25 cents each.³²

When compared with the material requirements for the Lionel Suit, the Albertine costume is first and foremost heavy. Almost eight yards of material is enough to make at least four simple dresses for an adult woman by today's standards. An experienced seamstress was required to sew this costume, as it included box plaiting as well as a lined hood.

It is possible to determine more details about what girls wore than what boys wore in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many Canadian museums house impressive collections that provide material evidence about girls' dresses. Often, these dresses are exquisite examples of well-made garments for special occasions, or demonstrate embroidery, hemstitching and other 'domestic' skills. One collection in the Costume Museum of Canada is an exception to this practice. The 'Mitchell' collection provides an impressive number of garments that are examples of everyday clothing worn by two sisters from Rivers, Manitoba. This collection is also notable because the garments provide evidence of mending, altering and daily 'wear' and 'tear' on children's garments, all sewn by their mother.³³

³² "Minnie May's Department: Fashion Notes," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 December 1881, 310.

³³ Jane Marie Fuller, "A Methodology for the Analysis and Interpretation of the Mitchell Costume Collection" *Ph.D. Thesis*, (University of Minnesota, 1992).

The analysis of children's clothing raises many questions regarding the construction of gender and differences in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Based on what we have learned from studying clothing, what can the images and representations of children, such as Figure 1.12, a photograph printed in the *Farmer's Advocate*, tell us of constructions about gender and childhood? If we look at this image, published in a rural newspaper, a number of similarities and differences can be detected. The boy and girl are the same age and are both wearing 'dresses,' both of which could have been made at home according to dressmaking techniques, as opposed to tailoring methods. Yet these dresses are also different. The girl's dress is very full and light, while the boy's outfit appears to be made from a different fabric. The sleeves are different, as the girl's are gathered and pulled in at the wrist, and the boy's are straight and cuffed. The boy's dress is also belted while the girl's is loose and perhaps layered with a pinafore. Further differences can be detected from their hair styles, as the boy's hair is short and the girl's long, with a ribbon or bow.



Figure 1.12: "A Pair of Two-Year-Olds," *Farmer's Advocate*, 6 November 1907, 1646.

This type of boy's outfit, represented in Figure 1.12, is actually an example of a military style, or Russian Suit, exemplified in Figure 1.13. The outfit in Figure 1.13 was made of striped cotton, and was unadorned. If we compare the outfit worn by the two-year old boy in Figure 1.12, with the material evidence provided from an analysis of Figure 1.13, gender differences are clearly evident. A common difference between boys' and girls' 'dresses' or outfits was use of front buttons and belts on boys' garments:

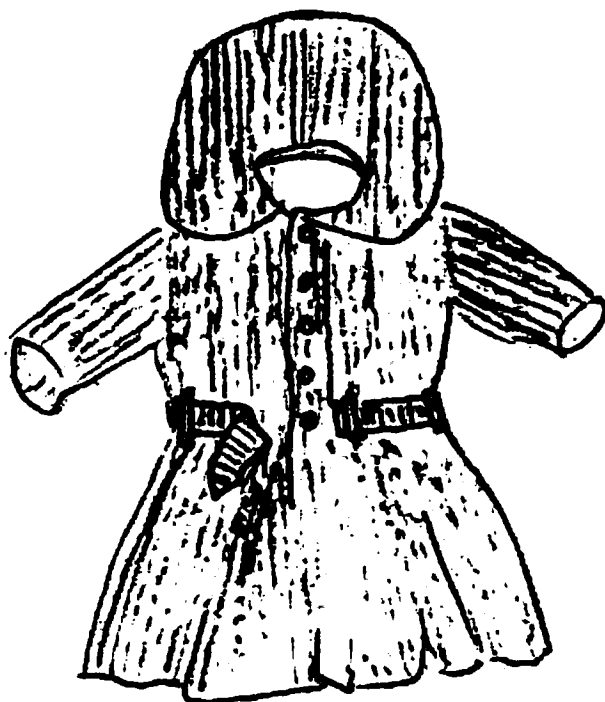


Figure 1.13: Water colour of Boys' Wear, Canadian Museum of Costume (Dugald Costume Museum) 1898.

If we consider the image of the two two-year-olds, Figure 1.12, along with the material evidence, Figure 1.13, we can detect a number of gender differences. As discussed, the boy has short hair while the girl's hair is long. According to such photographs as those from the Notman collection, when boys did have long hair of the kind that imitated Little Lord Fauntleroy's, other cues were provided to determine their

gender. We know, for example, that the three images, Figures 1.7, 1.8, and 1.9, represent boys because they were all wearing knee-trousers, a distinctively male garment in the nineteenth century. Indeed, women who wore bloomers were challenging sartorial codes, and in the twentieth century, up until the 1960s, many dress codes still prohibited women from wearing trousers. Short hair, along with sailor suits, masculine props and the clothing itself distinguished boys from girls.

Sailor suits from the nineteenth century are located in a number of Canadian museums. The sailor suits depicted in Figure 1.13, 1.14, and 1.15 are from the nineteenth century, the 1920s and the 1930s respectively, and are very different from one another. Figure 1.14, from the 1920s, with its accompanying whistle and hat, shaped cuffs and knee trousers is an example of a 'tailored' ready-made sailor suit:



Figure 1.14: BW, DO 332 Dark Navy Blue, heavy wool, serge sailor suit; Costume Museum of Canada, circa 1920.

The cuffs, silk tie and wide legged trousers were fashioned after 'Jack Tar' or 'Man-o-War' suits available in specialty clothing stores and at Department stores.

From these examples of boys' sailor suits, we can evaluate the transformation in material, construction, function, provenance and meaning and value. The third sailor suit, Figure 1.15, was a practical summer garment that was also 'dressy' for young boys. The suit in Figure 1.13, was sewn at home, using dressmaking techniques while that from the 1930s was ready-made and fashioned after boy's short trousers. There is also a difference in the complexity of the ready-made versus the home-sewn garment. Figure 1.14 depicts a garment sewn along simple lines and followed a pattern that required few individual pieces. Figure 1.15 provides an example of a more complex garment because of the piping along the sleeves and collar. The front decorative buttons as well as the shirt buttoning to the shorts also provide evidence that this garment was ready-made.



Figure 1.15: BW 47, DO 772 Medium blue two piece boy's summer suit, Costume Museum of Canada, 1932-1933.

A study of a number of sailor blouses and suits housed at several museums revealed that there were significant differences between those made at home and those that were 'ready-made'. Many errors in the home-made suits were covered by the sailor's collar. Many of these garments had simple pockets and could be slipped over a child's head.³⁴ A suit produced by F.J. Jackman, Boys' Clothing specialists, was clearly different from any other sailor suits studied.³⁵ For example, the material was thicker and much stronger than that found in other sailor suits from the same period. The pockets were lined and a placket of material hid the buttons, whereas home-made suits usually had patch pockets or no pockets at all and few buttons if any. The sewing also appeared flawless by comparison. This evolution of the sailor suit is representative of the changes in boys' clothing throughout this period, and will be further explored in the following chapters.

Children's garments were made using styles and techniques associated with dressmaking as opposed to tailoring methods. There were variations between styles, and many mothers used trim, material, or colour to distinguish between boys' and girls' garments. Evidence from museums and photographs reveals examples of children's dresses' worn by boys. The following 'boy's wear', Figure 1.16, a cream -coloured garment, is located at the Canadian Museum of Costume and represents a style similar to

³⁴ D-10 322, T.B. 01-20 when the sailor collar was lifted up, it was possible to examine crooked stitching and see where material over-lapped; similar garments were D-10 324, D-10 321, T.B. 01-21, Canadian Museum of Civilization.

³⁵ D-10321, Canadian Museum of Civilization. A detailed article appeared in the *Dry Goods Review* and outlined the history of this company as well the philosophy and marketing strategy for the company's line of boys' clothing. See "Specializing in Boys' Clothing," *Dry Goods Review*, 17 February 1915, 46.

that worn by Master Ogilvy, shown in Figure 1.17. A very small boy would have worn this dress:



Figure 1.16: BW 134, Costume Museum of Canada, 1880-1890.

Master Ogilvy, Figure 1.17, appeared in a garment that was more like a suit. There was a vest with a jacket worn over it. The 'skirt,' decorated with pockets and piping, had box plaiting and required considerable skill to make, considering the number of buttons and the piping on the cuffs and collars.



Figure 1.17: Master Ogilvy, McCord Museum of Canadian History, 6292, 77582 BII, 1885.

A description of an almost identical garment appeared in the September 1888 edition of the *Farmer's Advocate*. This column discussed recent 'fashions' for women and provided advice on making garments at home. Accordingly, it was noted: "The boys' costume is for a child up to six years old, and requires about two yards material, forty-

two inches wide for a medium size.”³⁶ This was specifically a ‘boys’ costume’ and would not have been appropriate for young girls during this period as girls did not wear suits. Their garments were fashioned on the styles of adult women and were commonly dresses.³⁷

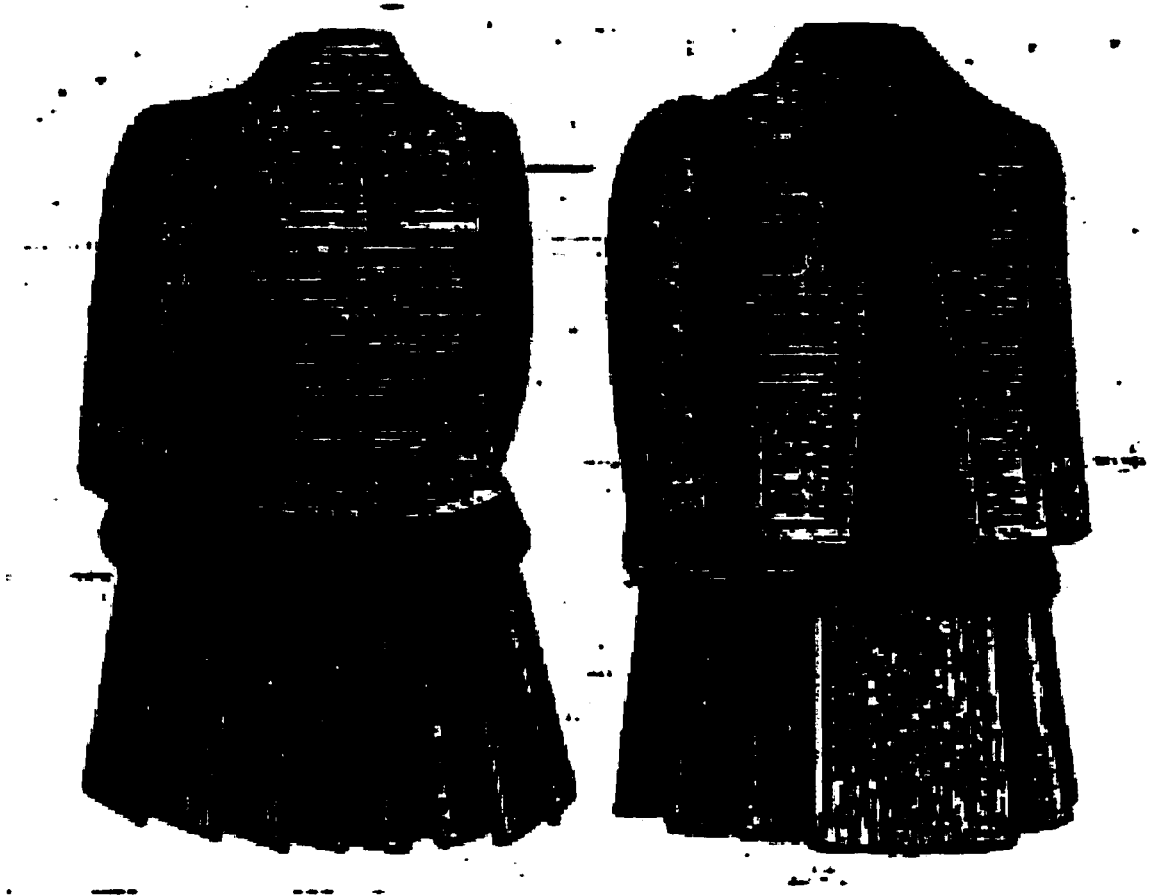


Figure 1.18: “Minnie May’s Department,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 1 September 1888, 278.

³⁶ “Minnie May’s Department,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 1 September 1888, 278.

³⁷ “Minnie May’s Department: Fashion Notes,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 1 December 1881, 310.

In Figure 1.19 and Figure 1.20, Herbert Roper, between the ages of one and two, had long hair and is attired in a 'dress'. The hair and 'dress' might be mistaken for 'feminine' characteristics. However, if we look more closely, we see that he is holding a cigar, and that the caption is 'The Gentleman.'

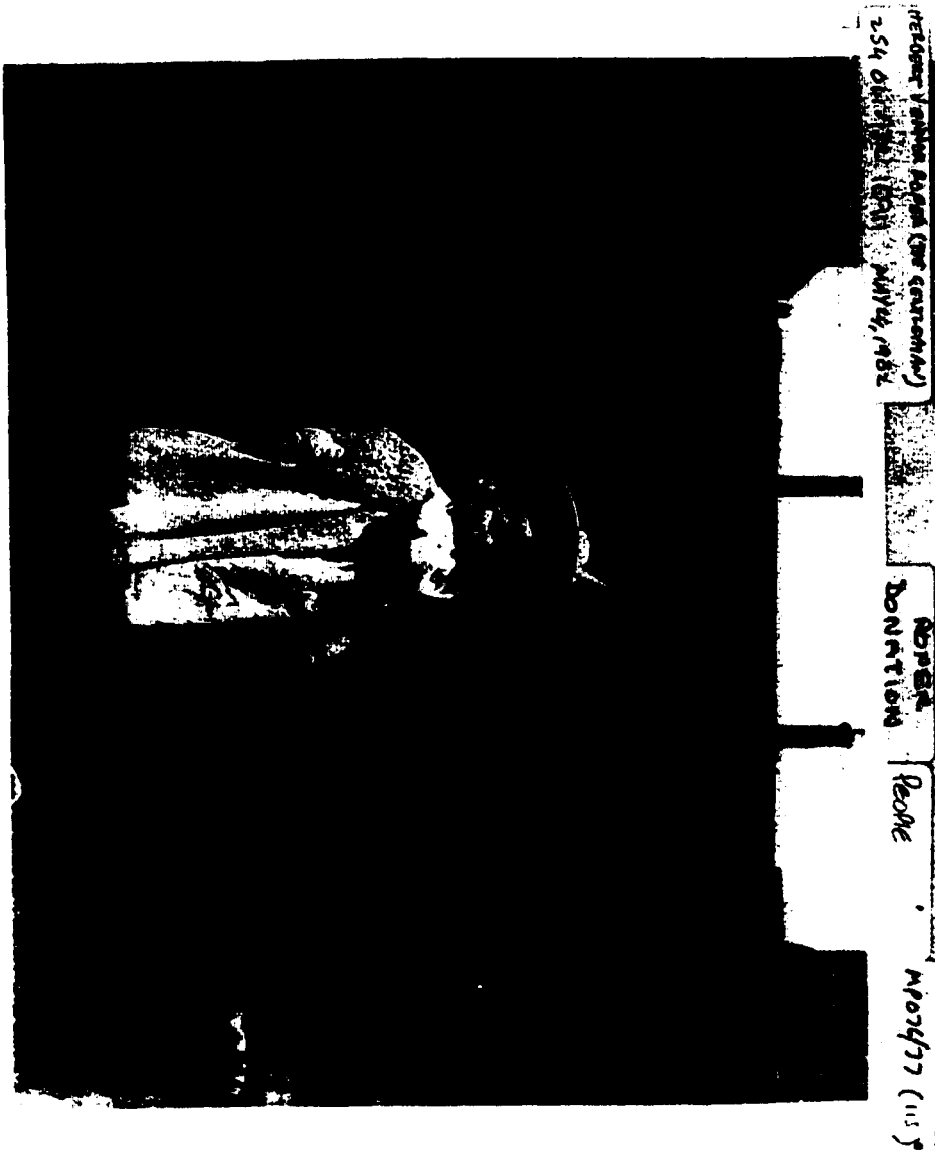


Figure 1.19: Herbert Vernon Roper, McCord Museum of Canadian History, Roper Donation: "The Gentleman" May 24, 1902.

On the same day, another image of Herbert was taken, this time in a sailor hat and different style of 'dress.'

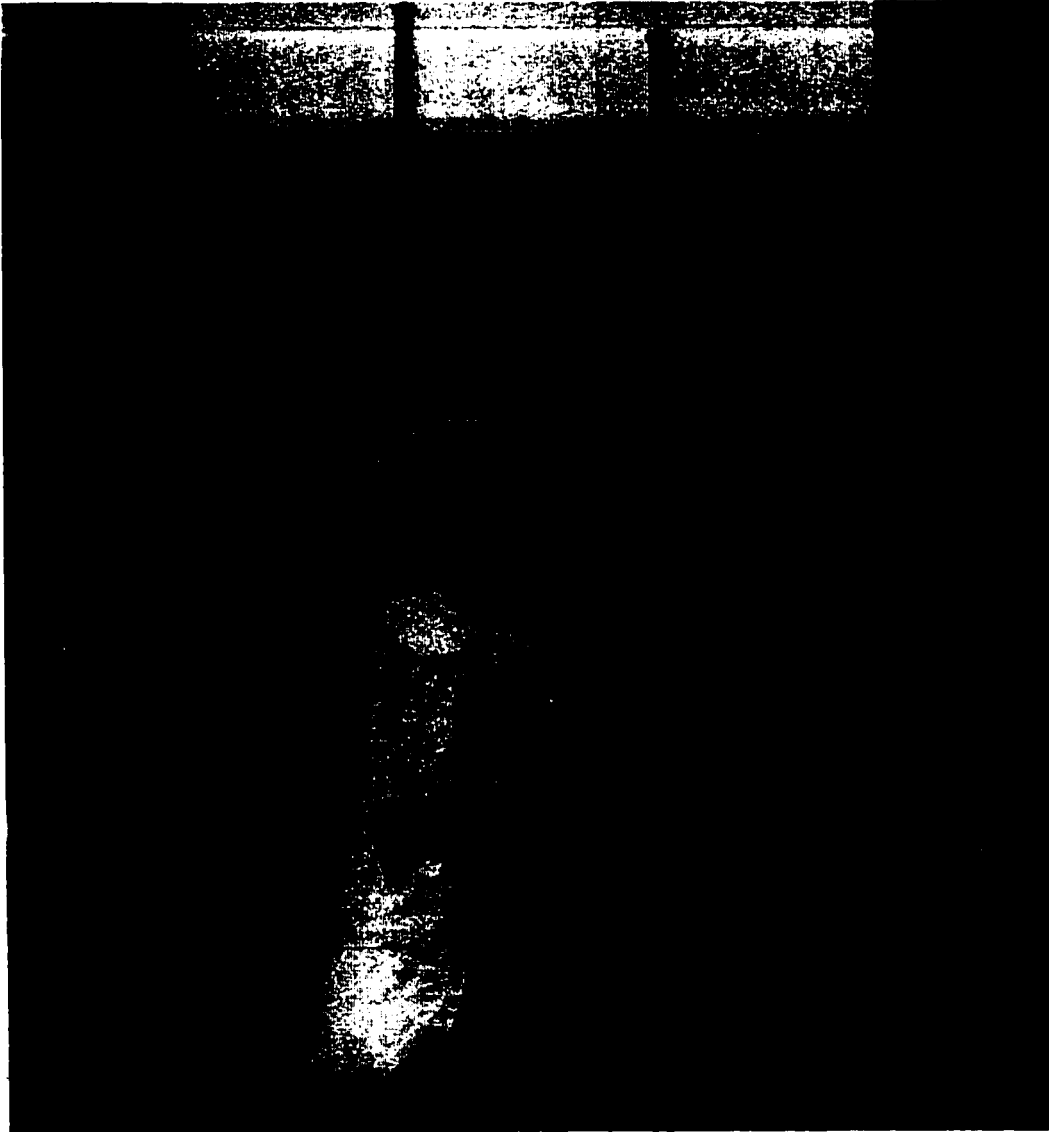


Figure 1.20: Herbert Vernon Roper, McCord Museum of Canadian History, Roper Donation, "The Tough," 24 May 1902.

A photograph from the Public Archives of Ontario, Figure 1.21, provides an opportunity to re-examine our views about 'feminine' boys and their 'dress'. As in the images of 'The Gentleman' and 'The Tough,' 'masculinity' and 'maleness' appear to be celebrated in Figure 1.21 and Figure 1.22, not, however, by clenching fists or by holding a cigar. Instead, 'the pants are the thing' for 'a coming man'.



Figure 1.21: Harold Hammond, "The Pants are the Thing," PAO Acc. 6355 S.9454, c. 1904.

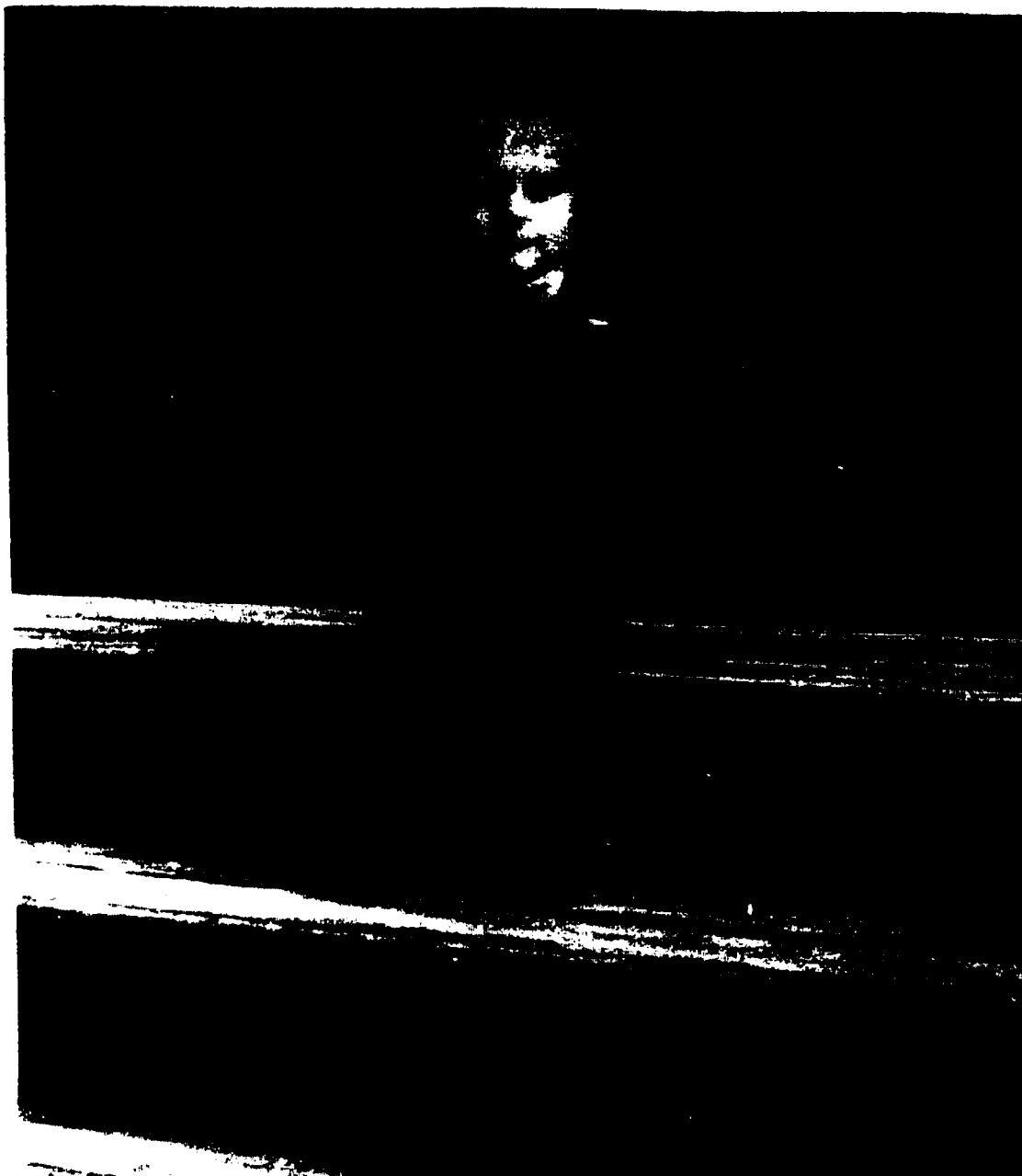


Figure 1.22: Harold Hammond, "A Coming Man," PAO Acc. 6355, S.9454, c. 1904.

Using a material history methodology to inform the reading of textual sources, the following three chapters present findings regarding how children's gender identities were constructed and contested in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Were 'pants' the thing for 'new boys'? Was it also the 'wish of the small boy' to be out of his 'dress' as soon as possible, to participate fully in the male world of work and play, thereby leaving the world of home and hearth? Informed by the material history research, Chapter two explores representations and rituals associated with clothing and children by studying prescriptive literature and representations printed in the *Farmer's Advocate*.

Chapter 2:

'New Boys,' Families and Fashions:

Representations in the *Farmer's Advocate*

"The New Boy."

For a long time we heard a great deal about the "new woman." She must be dead and gone now, for no one ever speaks about her. But who has heard about "the new boy"? He has surely come to stay, and may his tribe increase very rapidly. In the first place, the "new boy" is one that can look after himself a little. He can put his own clothes away in their proper place, and knows where to find them when he needs them. He can keep his room almost as tidy as his mother or sister could. If it is necessary, he can make his own bed, sew on buttons, cook his breakfast, and even wash the dishes. And he doesn't feel ashamed of himself for doing it, either. He is polite to his sister, even if she is younger than he is; above all

else, he is kind and thoughtful about his mother. When his father is away he helps to keep things straight, just as if he were "the man of the house." He doesn't think much about his clothes, of course, but yet he keeps himself clean and tidy. He even plays with the girls sometimes, and he has all the more fun in his game of ball or "shinny" because he isn't rough or rude like a heathen.

Figure 2.1: "The Children's Corner: 'The New Boy'" *Farmer's Advocate*, 20 December 1905, 1902.

In 1905, “The Children’s Corner” of the *Farmer’s Advocate* offered this description of the ‘new boy’ for its readers.¹ The article situated the ‘new boy’ in a discrete discursive space. The ‘new boy’ could look after himself only a ‘little’ and could keep his room ‘almost’ as tidy as could his mother or sister. He could ‘even’ wash dishes and care for himself in certain other ways, but only ‘if necessary,’ a condition which implies that his competence did not undermine the established associations of domestic chores with women. Politeness to his sister was important, but his most important consideration was his mother. Only when his father was away did he help keep things ‘straight’ as if he were the ‘man of the house.’ The article insisted that the ‘new boy’ was masculine despite his competence in domestic activities and attitude toward other family members. He ‘even’ played ‘sometimes’ with girls but his character as a civilized boy separated him from the ‘old’ heathen boy. Just in case readers were getting worried about the masculinity of this ‘new boy’, the *Farmer’s Advocate* emphasized that he did not think much about his clothes but ‘of course’ kept them ‘clean and tidy’.

This discussion of the ‘new boy’ was published about a decade after representations of the ‘new woman’ first appeared in public discussions, most notably in the United States. For its part, the *Farmer’s Advocate* had not focussed on the ‘new woman’ during the preceding years. Surprisingly, the newspaper downplayed the connection between these two turn-of-the-century characterizations; indeed, the *Farmer’s Advocate* perceived a declining interest in the ‘new woman’. However, the complex connection between the ‘new woman’ and the ‘new boy’ was articulated through new demands on mothers during the social and cultural transformations of the late nineteenth

¹ “The Children’s Corner: ‘The New Boy,’” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 20 December 1905,

and early twentieth centuries. As we will see, the making of 'new boys' was dependent upon family attitudes and decisions of 'new women' as mothers. This discussion complements the substantial research on womanhood and the emergence of the public 'new woman.'² The focus here is on the domestic 'new woman', especially her key role as mother of 'new boys'. Characteristics of the 'new boy' were carefully couched in a language suggesting that his gendered role remained intact as it was tied to his place in the family. How did this boy differ from nineteenth-century representations of boys? What exactly was different about him?

Clothing offers a promising way to address such questions in that it represents a powerful form of communication of one's place in society and in family. The representation of the 'new boy' in the *Farmer's Advocate* provides a useful point of departure for this chapter, which examines children's clothing and the complexity of family roles from the 1870s through to the 1930s as described in the *Farmer's Advocate's* family section. Specifically, the following discussion focuses on the representations and images found in the articles for women and children in the *Farmer's Advocate*. How were women portrayed, and how were changes in women's roles connected to images of boys and clothing? A key focus of this chapter, one not originally foreseen in this research, is the relationships between mothers and sons, and the 'mother's special term of power.' This idea, that mothers held a special term of power, appeared in a musing that

1902.

² Mary P. Ryan, *Women in Public Between Banners and Ballots, 1825 - 1880* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); Nancy Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: 'Woman's Sphere' in New England, 1780 - 1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977) and Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Anchor Press, 1988).

was printed appeared in the *Farmer's Advocate* in 1871.³ This chapter will look at the dynamics of dress, gender and difference in the home, and examine links between women and boys, sons and daughters, and parents and children.

An examination of the *Farmer's Advocate* provides a valuable opportunity to explore the ideas and images of rural children over a period of sixty-five years.⁴ From the outset, a significant component of this rural newspaper was dedicated to the home and the family. By December 1866, William Weld had become an advocate for agricultural education for the rural class. Weld wanted to establish an information sheet about the state of agriculture, and to provide a forum for discussions on scientific agriculture. He firmly believed that his paper would be useful to farmers: "'Utility and to the point', is our motto-every one should take this little paper that wishes for the prosperity of the country, especially the farmers."⁵ The paper's emblem reflected the origins of the colony, the Lion, the Eagle and the Beaver. Weld gleaned ideas about family, fashions and fun from sources across the British Empire and the United States.⁶

³ This idea will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. The term has been drawn from a poem that appeared in the *Farmer's Advocate* and described the phases of a man's life from childhood through to the 70s. "Man's Life," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 January 1871.

⁴ In September 1931, John Weld died. Editor, "The Passing of John Weld. Veteran Printer and 'Farmer's Advocate' Publisher Dies in his 78th Year," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 October 1931, front and 996. His father managed and edited the paper until his untimely death in 1891, when his son John Weld took over as Managing editor. Editor, "'The Farmer's Advocate' Manager Since 1891," *Farmer's Advocate* 30 June 1927, 990. There is a consistency with this source throughout the period.

⁵ William Weld, "To the Public," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 January 1867, 3. William Weld, "To the President or Secretary of Each Agricultural Society in Canada," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 January 1867, 1. The paper was part of his Agricultural Emporium, a Co-operative for farmers, first started in the London area.

⁶ William Weld, "Our Emblem and Motto," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 January 1867, 2. The editors and columnists at the journal quoted, selected, excerpted, and altered information to suit the views of the editors and perceived needs of the readers. "In our emblem at the

The Weld family lived on a farm in Delaware, Ontario, later known as Weldwood. By means of the *Farmer's Advocate*, Weld promoted the values of a progressive, co-operative and productive family. William Weld and his wife Agnes (née Johnston) had nine sons and two daughters.⁷ Several members of the Weld family worked on the family farm and for the *Farmer's Advocate*.⁸ From the earliest editions of the paper, the section for families was an integral component. The Home Magazine, a distinct and important section, appeared in various forms over the years and was often filled with moral tales, poetry, and engraved images.⁹

head of the paper will be seen Canada represented in the form of a Beaver, industriously working away at the foot of a tree; on the right hand is England in the form of a Lion coolly and calmly watching with interest and admiration. America is represented on the left under the form of an Eagle, in considerable of a flutter, eyeing [sic] with envy and jealousy the prosperity with which we are advancing..." Weld finished this comment by relating his views about reciprocity between Canada and the United States and remarking that "-despite her self-injuring policy of non-Reciprocity." As the paper expanded, so did, influences, and as England industrialized, more agricultural information came from Scotland.

⁷ Editor, "The Death of Mr. William Weld," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 February 1891, 38. "What George Brown was to Reform, Weld was to farmers." He was born in 1824, in Berwick-St. John, England. Weld was well educated; his father was a minister. He emigrated to Canada West from England in 1843 and in 1845 he married Agnes Johnston. He had worked twenty years as a farmer before embarking on the project of promoting scientific agriculture. For more biographical information, see Ian Stewart, "William Weld," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Volume 10, 1891-1900): 1093-1094 and A.G. Bogue, "The Fighting Farmer, William Weld," *Western Ontario Historical Notes*, 3 (1945): 75-78.

⁸ "In Memoriam," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 October 1898, 469. Perhaps the relationships in the Weld family were models for the family publication. William Weld died in 1891 and his wife, Agnes, died in 1898. Family and friends mourned her loss: "A devoted wife, ever at her husband's side to cheer and aid him on his life's journey the *Farmer's Advocate* owes much to Mrs. Weld's able assistance in her husband's work in former years; she was, in fact, a true helpmeet." [sic]

⁹ William Weld, "A Word to Our Readers," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 January 1875, front page. What started as a four-page, monthly publication in 1866 expanded steadily throughout the period. In 1875, when the paper's circulation was 11,000, the paper enlarged from 16 to 20 pages, having already expanded from its first four-page format.



Figure 2.2: William Weld, owner and editor of the *Farmer's Advocate* .

In 1889, Mr. Weld eyed the expanding agricultural community in the West, and, in 1890, he opened the Winnipeg office of the *Farmer's Advocate*. Until 1896, the publication appeared monthly, and between 1897 and 1903 the two eastern and western editions were published bi-monthly. Initially, the family sections in each edition, the 'Home Magazine' and the 'Home Journal' respectively, often contained identical columns or features. Over time, local

writers and businesses increasingly contributed local views and information; in the western edition this content accounted for more pages than did content originating from Ontario. In 1904, the paper appeared weekly and, increasingly, the editorial offices sought to meet regional needs in their editions.¹⁰ The decision to return to a bi-weekly format was made in 1932, after the death of John Weld.¹¹

Throughout the period, the *Farmer's Advocate's* magazine section developed special features within the magazine section. From the beginning, the *Farmer's Advocate*

¹⁰ The Western edition reflected different agricultural commodities and regional market conditions as well as diverse farming conditions. A comparative analysis of these two editions is a study unto itself. Throughout the 1890s and early 1900s, many articles and columns were identical, but as the staff at each office grew and letters and columns were written in Winnipeg and London, the content of the pages began to differ. In many editions images, engravings and selected musings from other sources were the same. However, the 'Children's page' was edited by two different people. The *Journal* had the 'Western Wigwam,' introduced in the October 21, 1908 edition while the *Magazine* had the 'Beaver's Circle' which started in January 1911. The column for women underwent similar changes in the early twentieth century. The columnist for the *Magazine* moved to Winnipeg and took her pen name with her, Dame Durden (Miss. L.), making a change in the Eastern edition necessary. Miss L. quit the Winnipeg office as well, but sometimes used her old pen name. The new editor, Miss C., used the penname Dame Dibbins for the *Winnipeg Journal*. Consequently, in 1912, Junia appeared. See "The Ingle Nook," *Farmer's Advocate* 21 March 1912, 540. Miss L., according to the Winnipeg edition, was Miss Florence Lediard. A photograph of her appeared in the 26 August 1908 edition on page 11. According to the advocate, "Miss Lediard's best work has been done in connection with the *Farmer's Advocate*, first in London, Ontario, and since the beginning of the year in Winnipeg. The work with which she is particularly in touch concerns the condition of women in farming communities, and Miss Lediard's interest is personal as well as journalistic" 26 August 1908, 14. In the 1920s, the women's editor of the *Farmer's Advocate* was Mae Clendenan, who was also president of the Canadian Women's Press Club. Kay Rex, *No Daughter of Mine: The Women and History of the Canadian Women's Press Club, 1904-1971* (Toronto: Cedar Cave Books, 1995) 108-109.

¹¹ Editorial, "1889 and 1890," *Farmer's Advocate* 1 December 1889, front page. Thomas Weld, "To the Farmers of the West," *Farmer's Advocate* 1 January 1890, front page. "Editorial," *Farmer's Advocate* 1 January 1893, front page. Three years later, the *Farmer's Advocate* again increased its size by publishing bi-monthly in both London and Winnipeg. Starting in January 1932, the paper reverted to its bi-monthly format after almost thirty years as a weekly publication. Editor, "Every other Thursday," *Farmer's*

reflected a strong family image and an interest in the 'young folks.'¹² Columns, musings, letters, serials, games, puzzles, stories and advice for boys, girls, young wives and mothers appeared in diverse forms and were always a prominent feature. According to an early edition of the *Farmer's Advocate*, children and youth were important since the Welds had eleven children and wished to provide other families with useful evening entertainment and readings. One also gets a sense that children were viewed as so important in the future of agriculture that their loyalty was to be captured at a young age:

We have no hesitation in saying that children who are supplied regularly with the *Farmer's Advocate*, will become the most influential farmers in this Dominion. Do not neglect the young. Give their young minds proper food, and something that will amuse, please, draw their attention. We have numerous correspondents who are under 14 years of age, and we predict that before long some of them will be writing useful articles for this paper.¹³

A section and series of columns, targeted to boys and girls, remained an important feature of the paper from the 1870s through to the 1930s.

The first 'family member' to join the *Farmer's Advocate* was the columnist known as 'Uncle Tom', beginning in 1872, a column directed at the 'young folks', his 'dear nieces and nephews.'¹⁴ "Clear the track youngsters! The *Farmers Advocate* says I

Advocate, 15 October 1931, 1008. Additional research into the period following the 1930s could explore any possible changes that may have occurred.

¹² "Questions for the Young Folks to Answer," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 January 1867, 3.

¹³ "Engraving," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 March 1868, 40. As it turned out, several readers returned to the *Advocate* later in life. For example, Ada Armand, a frequent game winner appeared later as a columnist in the *Farmer's Advocate*. Ada Armand wrote a letter asking girls to submit more answers to puzzles in July 1889, "Uncle Tom's Department," 1 July 1889, 226. She was also the author of a first prize Story entitled "A Tale of Twenty-five years Ago," *Farmer's Advocate* 1 November 1891, 492-493. In the 1890s and later, in the Children's Corner, letters from children commonly appeared noting that their father had 'taken the *Advocate*' for five or ten years, or even longer.

¹⁴ "Uncle Tom's Department," *Farmer's Advocate* 1 April 1872, 57. Ada Armand also appeared sometimes as a columnist in the late 1890s, replacing Uncle Tom periodically.

am to take charge of this corner of the paper, so I want all our smart boys and girls to lend a hand...And now, boys and girls, if you will only help your old Uncle, we'll have *such* a jolly good time in this corner of the *Advocate* – such jokes, such games, such puzzles, and such lots of them!"¹⁵ Less than a year later, another enduring feature of the 'Home Journal' section made its debut. Minnie May began her column, explaining that Uncle Tom and Mr. Weld had decided that it would benefit "mothers and sisters who belong to the *Farmer's Advocate* family" to have advice and "talks" related to "household troubles." She promised to do her best: "John thinks all my knowledge comes to me by instinct. That's all a mistake. When I see anything new and particularly good I just ask for information and take a note of it. That's how I get along."¹⁶

Uncle Tom often provided family advice to his readers. He frequently used stories, humor, and outright statement of fact, providing his perspective on roles of family members as, he did for example, in the following comment on brothers and sisters: "My dear nieces and nephews, What are the duties of brothers and sisters? It is the duty of brothers and sisters to promote the improvement of each other."¹⁷ Again, the idea of sharing information and improving the lot of the farm home was central to the success of the column and paper. The metaphorical family was a significant component of the journal in the nineteenth century. It appears that with the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Weld, in 1891 and 1898, respectively, the connection with readers, as family members, generally waned.

In 1900, Uncle Tom retired. Ada Armand, "Our Boys and Girls Department," *Farmer's Advocate* 1 October 1900, 580.

¹⁵ "Youth's Department: Uncle Tom's Corner" *Farmer's Advocate* 1 April 1872, 57.

¹⁶ "Minnie May's Department" *Farmer's Advocate* 1 March 1873, 41.

¹⁷ "Uncle Tom's Department" *Farmer's Advocate* 1 March 1879, 68.

In December 1900, a 'Hostess' replaced Minnie May. While 'Ingle Nook Chats' still provided a feeling of fireside warmth, the family component was less pronounced. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, families struggled to first keep boys and then girls on the farm. Advice about domestic chores, child-rearing and household economy appeared in books and at universities, and had a professional and formal outlook. There was a change in the form and content of advice in the twentieth century as the familiar home of family conversations transformed into a friendly yet professional advice section. Represented alternately as gatherings in front of a fireplace and 'cosy chats' the 'nook' invited readers to send letters to the 'nook' to share opinions or good wishes with other readers, under the editorial supervision of the 'hostess.'¹⁸ The imagery evoked memories of the nineteenth century. The hostess was bid farewell in 1903 and replaced by Dame Durden.¹⁹ The family atmosphere began to re-emerge as new columnists joined to write columns, advice or features, often taking family titles like Aunt Grace, Cousin Dorothy, Cousin Clara, Cousin Beth; the readers in turn were again extended the familiar courtesy of being referred to as nieces or nephews.²⁰

The *Farmer's Advocate* provides a valuable glimpse into the textual and visual message being sent to farm families regarding themselves, their roles and their

¹⁸ Readers were informed, "A *nom de plume* may be used if desired, but each writer should also sign his real name and address, which will not appear except by owner's permission."

¹⁹ Editor, "Inglenook Chats" *Farmer's Advocate* 5 June 1903, 555. A reference to this editor appeared revealing that she was 'Miss L.,' now living Winnipeg: "The many readers of our Ingle Nook Chats will, we are sure, be sorry to hear that our gracious Hostess, who for many years has welcomed guests, both old and young, to her hospitable Ingle, has decided to say farewell to us all, having made plans which necessitate her removal to a far-away city, though she still remains in Canada. Our loving wishes follow her in her new sphere of useful work, and we wish her every success and happiness."

relationships. Its images, advice, poems, articles, advertisements and drawings inform us about changing attitudes and values toward dress, gender and difference in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Canada. Representations and prescriptions about clothing in the *Farmer's Advocate* afford an opportunity to gain insight into the changing character of identity construction, especially with respect to gender. The questions, advice and images of children and clothing provide a testament to the profound changes taking place in this period and the tensions and contradictions about fashions and practical living in rural Canada. In 1880, an image of two children appeared in which a boy and girl were each dressed only in maple leaves while the parents and an older boy were looking on – shocked at what they saw!

²⁰ Cousin Dorothy, "The Children's Corner," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 February 1895, 56. Cousin Beth, "For the Young Folks," *Farmer's Advocate*, 6 October 1927, 1435.



"Adam and Eve."

Figure 2.3: "Adam and Eve," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 July 1880, 164.

The text that accompanies this drawing reads as follows:

Thinking their primitive costume preferable to their own common place garments, they have taken upon themselves to make a valuable addition to our already crowded fashion plates. Accordingly they have donned the verdant foliage of our cherished maple, and seem quite jubilant over the metamorphosis. But, lo how their countenances change when they accidentally fall beneath the parental eye. The face of the mother sufficiently indicates her astonishment, whilst the features of the irate father bear strong marks of his indignation. The gardening implement he is grasping is not, however, suited to the occasion; a rake, we think, would be more appropriate. Were *mode de la mode* less exacting, we poor victims of her tyranny might now be enjoying the comforts afforded by light clothing. When will that much needed individual appear who, regardless of "what the world will say," and laying aside all human respect, will emancipate herself from Fashion's bondage and adopt a more natural and economical costume.²¹

²¹ "Trust the Children," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 July 1880, 164.

The message could not have been more straightforward: parents were encouraged to provide suitable, light clothing for children and avoid the tyranny of fashion.

Mothers were counseled on providing warm, comfortable and healthy clothing for children. This clothing did not follow the fashion plates of New York or Paris. Instead, these were simplified fashions, meant to meet the health needs of children and perhaps to remind women that bondage could be found in many places, notably in the dictates of fashion. Following fashions for herself or her children was presented as hazardous. The family appears shocked by the innocence of the children named Adam and Eve who might have reminded women readers of their past 'follies'. Adherence to high fashion also meant that sewing was laborious and meant extra work. Again, readers were counseled against the trappings of this extra work for fashion. An example of this advice appeared in one such article, "Never become a Household Drudge" which warned readers to avoid the unnecessary sewing that patterns based upon fashion plates demanded.

If she is obliged to do her own family sewing, every tuck and ruffle that she puts on her children's clothes is a crime. The hour or hours spent making an elaborate dress that baby will look "lovely" in is a waste of energy that a mother who does her own work cannot afford. Baby will look quite as lovely in her eyes in a plain slip, and he has only elaborate dress to recommend him to the eyes of others, he might rather pass unnoticed.²²

Even years later, advice about plain clothing appeared in the advice section. "Don't have too many frills and tuckings. Make clothes as plainly as possible; they are so much more easily ironed."

A striking theme in the *Farmer's Advocate* is the representation of motherhood throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century. There was a reverent ideal of

mothers' role in developing the character of her boys before they entered the 'male' sphere. Contributors to advice columns and prescriptive literature often included images relating to the relationship between mothers and sons. In contrast, representations of and advice concerning girls suggested greater continuity. Daughters helped their mother. Sisters, often described as being older, helped care for their brothers.²³ Girls were expected to nurture their siblings, and, much like mother, were often portrayed as significant factors in a young child's development:

Mothers and sisters, for heaven's sake, make your home attractive for your boys. Don't find fault with them every time they stir, because boys are by nature a noisy set. Who would have them otherwise? Treat your boys well and give them good advice – in small pieces; don't feed them too much at once, or it will act in the wrong direction. Give them kind words, and you will never pass any sleepless nights on their account. A boy who has the right kind of a home will *never turn out bad*.²⁴

²² "Never Become a Household Drudge," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 February 1888, 52.

²³ The sister as helper is depicted in the poem, "The Wish of a Small Boy," *The Last West* November 1906, 52, and in many other representations. Along with mother, she is responsible for helping keep the home happy for the boys and helping with domestic duties as well. See Minnie May, "Treat Your Boys Well," *Farmer's Advocate*, 6 June 1877, 140; Minnie May, "Keep the Children Happy," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 May 1879, 114. She counseled families to "Invent every possible amusement to keep your boys happy at home evenings. Never mind if they do scatter books and pictures, coats, hats and boots! Never mind if they do make a noise around you with their whistling hurraing... The influence of a loving mother or sister is incalculable." See also, "Boys will be Boys," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 October 1883, 317. In "Uncle Tom's Department," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 February 1891, 59, he suggested "Some of my nieces and nephews, too, who, once in awhile, think they know better than father or mother, or elder sister." In several images advertising clothing patterns, images of big sister and little brother were prevalent. "The Ingle Nook: For Big Sister and Small Brother," *Farmer's Advocate*, 23 July 1925, 1065.

²⁴ "Minnie May's Department: Treat your boys well" *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 June 1877, 140. Sisters helping brothers with the mending of their clothing as a theme, see "Minnie May's Department," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 February 1885, 54.

According to the *Farmer's Advocate*, girls were responsible for the care, well-being and 'goodness' of younger siblings, as well as ensuring a happy home environment.

According to many articles, daughters were considered to be miniatures of their mothers.

While this message of the girls' role is clearly made in the *Farmer's Advocate*, most representations of childhood focused on boys and boyhood. Relatively few commentators considered girlhood. The experience of growing up 'female' appeared less diverse than that of growing up 'male'. According to the pages of the *Farmer's Advocate*, mothers were responsible for teaching their daughters the necessary domestic skills. In 1887, the following response was provided to the question of which domestic lessons daughters should receive: "Teach her how to wear a calico dress and do it like a queen. Teach her to sew buttons, darn stockings and mend gloves. Teach her to dress for comfort and health as well as appearance."²⁵ For daughters and mothers, clothing mediated family relationships in terms of work and necessary domestic skills.

Practical advice for girls living on the farm was provided by Minnie May to her 'nieces'. Minnie May made suggestions to her readers on how to keep up with some fashion trends by remaking an old dress. Detailed instructions were provided so that girls who were knowledgeable about sewing and making dresses could follow her suggestions:

Dear Nieces, - Knowing of the busy life of farmers' wives and daughters, particularly in the spring and summer seasons, I think probably a few hints concerning the spring fashion may be of use and interest, as many of my nieces will be availing themselves of the opportunity of making their summer dresses before the approaching hurried season. The graceful Princess polonaise will be worn for house and street dress alike. This pattern is useful for making over old dresses... These pretty dresses hand all the

²⁵ "Minnie May's Department: What to Teach Your Daughter," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 August 1887, 248.

weight from the shoulders, are in one single piece, and are as suitable for the street as the house, all of which are desirable things in children's dress.²⁶

In this instance, Minnie May also outlined fashions that could be followed by even a young girl. Another column addressed young girls and prescribed appropriate clothing for simple living:

My Dear Nieces, It is surprising on how small a thing persons will sometimes pride themselves! I have known some girls to set themselves up as something superior to their neighbors' daughters because of the curiously-wrought needle-work on their garments. They quite despised their acquaintances who wore plain hems, whereas a person of fine taste would see at a glance that the neat hem was far more tasteful and elegant than their coarse embroidery or irregular braiding. Great skill is needed to make fancy work pay in beauty for the time and labor it costs. A dress over-loaded with trimming is always a mark of uncultivated taste. Very few young ladies can become proficient in fancy-work without woefully neglecting their minds, not to speak of every-day duties. You will usually find these skilful needle women are narrow in their views and exceedingly ignorant of the leading events of the day. Aim rather to cultivate your minds and hearts, dear nieces, by careful study and reading, and by self-sacrificing efforts for the good of others, and you will be far more attractive in the eyes of all whose good opinion is worth having than if you were adorned in the gayest robes of fashion.²⁷

Simplicity in fashion was advocated for girls' clothing, not because of material costs but because the common perception that girls who spent time trimming their dresses with 'fancy work' or other demonstrations of individuality and decoration were neglecting their intellectual cultivation and domestic responsibilities. In the 1880s, Minnie May suggested that girls should spend time learning about current events and helping around the house instead of working on adornments. While fashion information about the latest materials and trends were sometimes provided to readers, advice about the importance of dress, fashion and modes could be contradictory on the pages of the *Farmer's Advocate*.

²⁶ "Minnie May's Department," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 April 1877, 90.

²⁷ "Minnie May's Department," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 April 1880, 140.

Readers were reminded about the importance of a clean and tidy appearance, yet, at the same time, cautioned against judging by appearance or mistaking outward appearance for inner value. Still, the fact that people tended to form opinions based upon clothing was recognized. "Clothes and company do oftentimes tell tales, in a mute but significant language."²⁸ Evidently, consistency was a challenge to achieve; given that the editors of the journal scoured the agricultural newspapers of the United States and Great Britain for published materials, it was difficult to arrive at a consistent editorial line.

Advice regarding neatness and tidiness was directed at both boys and girls. The role of mother in these matters was considered central. A link between neatness and moral character and mothers' responsibilities was often made in the *Farmer's Advocate*. In April 1878, Uncle Tom offered the following musing on the habits of boys:

A few hints for Little Folk. - Did you ever stop to think to what extent grown-up people are influenced in their feelings towards you by the little habits you may consider of but slight importance...I read of one gentleman who attributed his great success in business to the fact that his mother taught him to be tidy, his first lesson being to fold up his nightdress neatly every morning; and when I see men who need someone always picking up after them, or women who are slatternly, and have a house forever out of sort; I think their mothers were mistaken in their ideas of true kindness.²⁹

Boys were also asked by Uncle Tom to take time to consider their appearance for the sake of their sisters: "It takes but a few minutes to wash your face, comb your hair, change your clothing, and put on your slippers...When you have occasion to take your sisters any place do try so to look and act that they may be proud of you. I have known brothers, and good brothers they were too, who were so very careless of their personal

²⁸ *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 March 1887, 88.

²⁹ "Uncle Tom's Column: A Few Hints for Little Folks" *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 April 1878, 91.

appearance that a sister could hardly be blamed if she felt a secret longing to get away from the farm.”³⁰ This quotation highlights the brother’s responsibility to his sister as well, revealing rural concerns about children leaving the farm.

Boys were also warned of the hazards of judging by appearances. While calls for clean and tidy appearance permeated the pages of the *Farmer’s Advocate* throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, commentators took care to emphasize that a ‘neat man’ was not a ‘dandy’:

A careless, slovenly, un-tasteful habit does not indicate superior intellectual powers in a man. Long straggling hair, untidy beard and dirty finger nails, with buttons gone or half unused, never make up for lack of brains. On the contrary, they show the owner needs thorough reconstruction. Neatness and tidiness do not show that a man is a “dandy,” as some people may think. I do think farmers are too careless and slovenly in regard to their attire.³¹

As Uncle Tom instructed his young readers, being tidy and being vain were two entirely different things. Not surprisingly then, the *Farmer’s Advocate* frowned upon the influence of high fashion on boys’ clothing, and condemned the pretentious behaviour of certain gentlemen who, apparently, had never been ‘real boys’ in their childhood. The following quotation has an early flavour of changing construction of boys, especially in its division between ‘out of date boys’ and the ‘new boy’:

We want a few private words with the boys. The truth is we have a great idea of boys. We used to think men were made of boys. We begin to think now that those were old-fashioned notions, that they are all out of date. We look around and see a great many persons grown up, with men’s clothes on, who are called men. But they act and behave so that we feel certain they were never made out of boys. If they had been they would know how to behave better. Where they came from we do not know. But what we wish to put into the ears of the boys is this, be gentlemen...Let no boy, therefore, think he is to be made a gentleman by the clothes he wears, the horse he rides, the stick he carries, the dog that trots after

³⁰ “Uncle Tom’s Department,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 1 November 1887, 344.

³¹ “Uncle Tom’s Column: Modes and Manners,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 1 May 1876, 101.

him, the house that he lives in, or the money he spends. Not one of all these things do it-and yet every boy may be a gentleman. He may wear an old cheap hat, cheap clothes, and have no horses, live in a poor house, and spend but little money and still be a gentleman.³²

Looking neat and tidy and caring for one's clothes was quite different from caring about one's clothes in a vain manner. If a boy was preoccupied with his appearance and clothing, his masculinity was called into question:

I know all about the ways of boys-flinging their coats on one chair, vest on another, tossing their boots in one corner, and their collars, neckties, suspenders, gloves, cuffs, etc., may lie around from one Sunday to another, unless some careful mother or sister puts them away. Joe Matthews, who lived in a farmhouse next to ours, used to keep a dress suit for two years, and it looked better at the end of that time than his brother Tom's did in six months' wearing. Their sister used to say, in commenting on the fact, that Joe always folded his coat, pants and vest, and laid them smoothly in a drawer, and that he had boxes for his neckties, and did not spend half so much as Tom did, and always looked better dressed. It is a bad custom to allow clothing to remain in a mud-bespattered state until the next time of wearing. It takes the newness off it more than wearing two or three times.³³

While commentators derided vanity that would undermine boys' 'natural' desire to romp and play, the *Farmer's Advocate* lauded neatness which they considered both responsible and economical.

As is evident in the preceding quotations, calls for neatness were balanced by cautionary tales not to judge a person's character solely by the quality of his dress. Uncle Tom, for one, reminded his 'nieces' that inner values were not always apparent at a first glance: "There is another thing that Uncle Tom has noticed sometimes, viz., a tendency on the part of his nieces to judge the fitness of their companions by the dresses they wear

³² "How to be a Gentleman," *Farmer's Advocate* 1 July 1877, 164.

³³ "Uncle Tom's Column: Modes and Manners," *Farmer's Advocate* 1 May 1876, 101.

and by their looks-just as if the outside made the heart within.”³⁴ Unlike boys who were in danger of being labeled a ‘dandy’ if they cared too overtly about their appearance, girls were expected to be neat and tidy at all times. Girls, after all, were expected to care about their appearances: “Neatness is one of the leading feminine virtues, and an untidy girl need never expect to be treated with as much consideration as is she who is always just right.”³⁵

Both boys and girls depended on their caregivers to dress them. Accordingly, the clothing they wore was seen to reflect their parents’ moral character in-as-much as ill dress or dirty clothing pointed to parental neglect or, even worse, filthy morals. Thus, the style and material of children’s clothing were regarded to be of secondary importance compared with the prominent role of neatness and tidiness:

Neatness in dress is the main characteristic of a well-attired girl. She gives attention to details of attire. She is aware that frayed facings, ripped skirt binding, spotted garments, loose or missing buttons, pins where hooks should be, unpolished shoes, soiled or worn-out gloves, untidy linen, rumpled ribbons and belts out of place co-operate in making a bad impression. Good clothes react on the mind of the wearer. The knowledge that one is in good form and correctly attired changes one’s whole bearing, and imparts a poise impossible to shabby or untidy persons.³⁶

Girls’ domestic contributions played a central role in the family economy, and commentators frowned upon sheltering girls from domestic demands: “To do a young girl’s sewing for her may be a far too frequent unkindness on the part of tender aunts and indulgent elder sisters, and it is as unwise as it is to bar her out of the kitchen.”³⁷

³⁴ “Uncle Tom’s Department,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 1 February 1890, 55.

³⁵ “Minnie May’s Department: Neatness in Dress,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 1 June 1890, 188.

³⁶ “Plain and Pretty Women,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 5 October 1903, 996.

³⁷ “Children: Trouble and Work,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 1 July 1879, 162.

According to the advice columns of the *Farmer's Advocate*, a good and helpful boy put his clothing away and tried, to the best of his abilities to keep clean. A girl's moral character, however, was questioned if she appeared untidy. Spending too much time on clothing deprived women of intellectual formation. At the other end of the spectrum, however, careless girls were warned that 'shabby' clothing affected their deportment.

In the 1890s, it was no longer considered to be mother's sole purpose to ensure the healthy and proper dress of their children; instead, they were also advised to take care of their own appearance. Commentators reminded their readers that rural people could often be identified by their clothes when they visited towns or cities, thus causing embarrassment for their children. The idea that children could be embarrassed by their mother's appearance was in itself a new concept. Mothers were warned to ensure their appearance was appropriate, "for children are very sensitive to appearances in those they love, and they present their friends to 'mother' with pride at her neat and handsome dress, and the family finances need not be seriously embarrassed either."³⁸ On the other hand, while mothers were advised to ensure their appearance was neat and tidy so as not to embarrass their children, they were not to instill vanity in their daughters. Moderation was supposed to be the guiding force: "The inordinate love of dress and display which young women cherish, and the time given to the ministering to their personal vanity, leads very many into a reckless and heartless state, and to an utter distaste for the things which would profit their spiritual, intellectual and social nature."³⁹ Vanity was almost

³⁸ "Minnie May's Department," *Farmer's Advocate*, 15 February 1893, 73.

³⁹ Jessie J. Lambert, "Dress," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 April 1893, 132.

regarded in terms of an illness, having one taken hold of a girl's character, would destroy her life.

From the outset of Minnie May's Column, and continuing into those of her successors, women were encouraged to ensure that clothing for their children was healthy, and to teach their children the value of being neat regardless of which garments they were able to afford. As well, women were encouraged to make purchases based upon quality. Excessive finery and excessive adornment were not valued in the advice literature. In fact, many columns outlined the importance of plain and simple clothing and linked its virtues to rural virtues. According to columnists, excessive ruffles, material, and fancy work not only indicated vanity but also prevented women from contributing to the family economy in more useful ways, or worse, led them to neglect their children's mental development: "I dare say some of the grown-up mothers would be rather thankful if their live dolls didn't wear out their gowns, or grow out of them, as fast as they do. But mothers shouldn't spend all their time dressing their children, and leave them to grow up dunces, should they?"⁴⁰ In the Ingle Nook, Dame Durden continued the plea for simplicity for clothing when she explained to women the significance of not having too many frills and time consuming decoration: "Don't have too many frills and tuckings. Make clothes as plainly as possible; they are so much more easily ironed. Hand out print wrappers and every-day shirts for the men without wringing, just dripping wet from the rinsing water. They will be quite smooth, and, for working wear, will not require

⁴⁰ Cousin Dorothy, "The Children's Corner," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 February 1902, 98.

ironing.”⁴¹ Extra frills, tucks, plaits, and material meant extra work for the family and, inevitably, extra cost.

Mothers were responsible for providing clothing for children, and, throughout the nineteenth century, the material they chose for dressing their very young children was considered more important than the style of the garments. During the period studied, the clothing needs of families changed dramatically. In the late nineteenth century, children’s clothing was based upon comparatively simple characteristics. Material and function of the clothing was paramount; only thereafter could women indulge in gender identification. Clothing for winter needed to be warm and was most often readily available in the form of flannel. Advice columns repeatedly reminded mothers of the importance of providing flannel material for the ‘helpless’ ones, as improper clothing could lead to colds, sore throats, croup and indeed death. “In this cold weather mothers should see to it that the flannel wardrobes for the younger members of the family are in order, ready to put on these sudden frost morning [sic], thus warding off many attack of croup or violent cold or sore throat. The younger the children the more imperative is the necessity for this care of them... a sudden frost bites them, as it does the flowers, and they fade from sight.”⁴²

The importance of providing healthy clothing for children was a view accepted by at least certain readers of the *Farmer’s Advocate*. In letters to the editor, readers wrote about proper dress and advocated dress reform. A prize essayist, for instance, asserted: “We all know that clothing should be suspended from the shoulders, and that tight-lacing is very injurious; and, as to children’s clothing, let mothers use their own judgement, and

⁴¹ Dame Durden, “Ingle Nook Chats,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 5 September 1903, 910.

not that of some fashion-maker, and they will not go far astray. What mother would willingly injure the health of her children? But this they often do by dressing them in some uncomfortable costume fashioned by somebody who was certainly not a mother.”⁴³

Representations and discussions about life on the farm changed in many ways and, in some instances, change was quick and dramatic in the period under investigation. Clothing a family became a more complex process, involving more family decisions. Women could travel to town to do their shopping, or they could respond to the advertisements in the *Farmer's Advocate* and send away for a catalogue or material samples. It was entirely possible that a peddler would bring material to them or that a trip to town would furnish the material that was required for winter or summer sewing. In the nineteenth century, mending and seasonal sewing meant that women were prepared to provide clothing for their family and for their children for the summer. Dresses for their children had to be lengthened and made over in many homes.⁴⁴ Sisters were set the task of mending while mothers and experienced seamstresses made new outfits and, often, the trousers or men's garments.⁴⁵

Discussions in the *Farmer's Advocate* consistently described clothing as an important part of individual identity. According to the *Farmer's Advocate*, “There is no surer expression of character than dress. It gives evidence which none can dispute, of wisdom or folly, of refinement or the want of it; and since it is an indication of what we are, its edicts have their place among the minor morals. Taste and elegance are not

⁴² “Fireside Selections: Flannels for Children,” *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 February 1875, 36.

⁴³ Grace Gladwell, “Prize Essay: How to Keep Home Healthy,” *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 June 1892, 235.

⁴⁴ “Minnie May's Department,” *Farmer's Advocate*, 15 May 1894, 208.

always signs of frivolity, or even of an absorbing interest in the fashions."⁴⁶ As always it was important to strike a balance in advice: farmers in particular needed to be aware of the importance of a neat and tidy appearance, but women and girls were advised not to be tempted and lured by the tyranny of fashion.

According to another musing that appeared in the *Farmer's Advocate*, mothers had a certain 'special' term of power with regard to the foundational years of her children. In particular, in the later nineteenth century, the advice literature and available images focused upon the raising of sons and the 'special' connection they had to their mothers. This early formation was also linked to the clothing boys wore or mothers were prescribed to make for them. The ideal mother promoted the character of her sons until their seventh year, when they were expected to leave the female world.⁴⁷ Putting a boy's life in phases of seven years was also common. Reprinted in the *Farmer's Advocate*, a 'modern philosopher' wrote the following, suggesting that his mother's guidance would lead him well in life and guide him throughout his life:

In this the young mother may see the destiny of her little son, that she thinks is to be the noblest man of the age. The foundation of his character is laid in the first seven years, remember, and these are the mother's special term of power. Be sure that your teachings will lead him in the right way;

⁴⁵ "'The Girls' Defender': A Champion for the Farmer's Daughters," *Farmer's Advocate*, 8 November 1905, 1631.

⁴⁶ "Taste in Dress," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 October 1885, 307.

⁴⁷ The age when boys were represented as leaving the influence of their mothers' sphere lowered throughout the nineteenth century. For example, is *Sharpe's Magazine* "My First Trouble," *The Globe* 6 February 1851, front, a boy left the female sphere at the age of ten. By the turn of the century, in some representations regarding clothing, this age appears to have dropped again to the age of five. Therefore, over a span of fifty years, the time boys were represented as being within their mothers' sphere lowered five years.

7 years in childhood's sport and play.....	7
7 years in school from day to day.....	14
7 years at trade or college life.....	21
7 years to find a place and a wife.....	28 ⁴⁸

The role of mothers in a boy's early childhood was considered key to his future development.⁴⁹ Boys were clothed, coddled and counseled by their mothers until they were ready to go, first to school, then work, and later to their own homes and families.

It should be noted that, to some extent, the images of families found in photographs and other sources are inconsistent with the messages about boyhood, play and gender expectations in the *Farmer's Advocate*. It seems impossible that boys were able to play in the clothing their mothers chose for them based upon many of the images, formal photographs and representations from the period as discussed in Chapter one.

Women increasingly shared the 'special term of power' with professionals like physicians and reformers.⁵⁰ Mothers were counseled on appropriate dress and warned

⁴⁸ "Man's Life" *Farmer's Advocate* 1 January 1871. The advice continued to the age of 70.

⁴⁹ A much less romantic depiction of the relationship between children and mothers had appeared:

The world is more indebted to mothers than to fathers for the characters of its leading men and women. A man or woman becomes good or bad as he or she is well or ill trained. How enormous is the responsibility of a parent, remembering what everlasting and wide spreading results for evil or for good may happen from the management of a child... If this is so, what serious mistakes are made by mothers who go about continually scolding and fault-finding and slapping and punishing their little ones at the least provocation, and without the formality of a thought as to the propriety of the hasty act... This is a subject which appeals very strongly to the most careful consideration of parents, but most especially to the mothers.

"Management of Children," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 February 1882, 59.

⁵⁰ An early article in *Farmer's Advocate* explored the relationship between clothing and mental health. "Dress: Its Influence Upon the Nervous System," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 December 1871, 182. Reprinted from *Good Health*.

against the 'evils' of improper dress for their children.⁵¹ For example, previous research has shown that in nineteenth-century Ontario there were increasing pressures on women regarding their children's dress. In a society with few images in print, those that were circulated and available in periodicals, catalogues and literature began to add to mothers' pressure. For its part, the *Farmer's Advocate* directed readers' attention to *The Delineator*, originally published in the United States and appearing in a Toronto edition in the 1890s. *The Delineator* offered its female readers advice on a number of topics including fashions, fancy work, crocheting, knitting, and lace making. The *Farmer's Advocate* characterized *The Delineator* as "a boon to wearied mothers, as it tells exactly how to dress their children."⁵² In other words, the newspaper suggested that as women's roles and responsibilities increased and changed their knowledge of, and, influence in clothing children declined.

A mother's 'special term of power' was seen to diminish as her role in boys' moral development was shared with others. For the 1870s and 1880s, scholars have described a transition from a society focused on the role of mothers in the first seven years of a child's life to one in which fathers played a greater role in their children's lives once children reached the age of three. Experts, physicians and reformers wrote an

⁵¹ "Fireside Selections: Flannels for Children," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 February 1875, 36. "Minnie May's Department," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 November 1877, 266. In this instance, mothers were told that proper winter clothing, although time-consuming to make and often requiring help, would ultimately save money. "Children's Dress," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 March 1881, 72. Reprinted from *Harper's Magazine*, this article discussed dress as it related to the health of the child. "Dress for Little Girls," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 October 1886, 311. It quotes Dr. J.H. Ripley author of *Babyland*. "Clothe the Children Well," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 December 1886, 376. In August 1887, a new column entitled "The Household by a Family Doctor," appeared.

⁵² "Minnie May's Department: Our Library Table," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 March 1892, 103.

increasing number of columns and articles on proper child-rearing. Over a period of fifteen years, the view of mother as the primary and sole caregiver of her children was challenged. Debates on the formative years in a child's life suggested that mother's 'special term of power' only covered the earliest year of her children's development, whereas toddlers and school children greatly benefited from the involvement of fathers and professionals:

If mothers could only realize what a critical period their children are passing through from the third to the sixth year, they would exercise more than ordinary care during that time. Not only physically, but mentally and morally, they are undergoing a change for better or worse, according to the care and attention they receive from their mothers and fathers. A father is no more exempt from certain duties toward his offspring than a mother. He should always bear in mind that his assistance in the control of his children is of more value to his tired wife than the presentation to her of a costly gift. It is at this time that the children begin to notice papa's and mamma's bearing toward another; let this always be one of perfect courtesy and respect. Nothing so quickly destroys respect for parents as constant bickering in the presence of their children. The first thing a child should be taught is respect for their parents and elders...⁵³

In the late nineteenth century, the view of a tender and loving mother-son relationship was gradually supplanted by more 'scientific' concepts. A call to end coddling was issued by representatives of health and reform movements that increasingly made their concerns known. As one reformer warned:

Be ever careful of the health of a child; and to be this you must yourself know something about the common laws of health, and the benefits to be derived from fresh air, exercise, sunshine, temperance in food, and listen, pray - temperance in dress, for over-clothing means over-coddling, and over-coddling kills. Coddling not only kills the individual, but it undermines the strength of nations; it is the axe that lies at the roots of its manhood. Remember that the Romans were the most

⁵³ "The Love and Respect of Children," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 June 1887, 186. Women readers also contributed to this dialogue about parental responsibility and the role of mothers and fathers. Miss Blanche Aylmer, "Prize Essays: The Duties of Parents to Children," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 October 1889, 323.

glorious people in the world until they took to effeminate habits and self-coddling. Then they went down-hill gradually but surely.⁵⁴

Coddling or otherwise over-protective behaviour in matters of dress and character was deemed to be detrimental to children's well-being. Not surprisingly, then, boys who continued to indulge in this type of relationship were increasingly labeled as: "Girl-boys! Tied to mother's apron strings!"⁵⁵ While behaving like a girl had been upheld as fine moral behaviour in an earlier period, as described in Figure 2.4, by the turn of the twentieth century, there was fear that such behaviour was deceitful. In early twentieth-century Canada, Little Lord Fauntleroy's sweet nature and loving loyalty toward his mother might have been viewed with deep suspicion by many commentators: "The boy who is most firmly tied to his mother's apron-strings is the one who can behave well only when her eyes are on him."⁵⁶ In other words, rather than having internalized moral values, 'girl-boys' constantly depended upon the supervision of their mothers, without whose guidance they would easily go astray. These boys were characterized as lacking independence and 'real' character. These boys relied upon their mother for direction at all times and without that direction, they were ill-behaved. Again, mothers were warned against this coddling relationship.

In this period, tension between appearance and character, reality and fantasy, appears in many representations and musings. Was it possible to be well-mannered and manly? Was it possible to have good character and simple clothing? What were boys

⁵⁴ 'A Family Doctor,' "How to Train a Child Mentally," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 September 1887, 273.

⁵⁵ Dame Durden, "Ingle Nook Chats: Housekeeping for Boys," *Farmer's Advocate*, 7 March 1906, 349.

⁵⁶ "Life, Literature and Education: Stray Thoughts," *Farmer's Advocate*, 19 September 1906, 1470.

taught about their roles? The following column from the *Farmer's Advocate* offered guidance for boys regarding their 'manly' behaviour, suggesting it was 'unmanly' to be discourteous:

Uncle Tom's Department.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES,—While being in company with a couple of boys I heard the elder one say to his young companion (who had been taught to treat every one with courtesy and respect) "What makes you always speak so affectedly and precisely? All the boys say you are just like some girl." We certainly would like to see more boys behave like girls, if good breeding and manners may be defined as that mode of behaviour. No, my dear nephews and nieces, politeness has no identity with foppery, pomp or affectation. These are its counterfeits. A well-bred person is always known by perfect ease in manner. It is incumbent ~~on every one to be courteous in his intercourse~~ with neighbors, or with the public generally. In good society the ladies are always treated with exceeding delicacy and deference; they are offered the best seat, or the only seat if there is no other; allowed to walk near the wall in the street, never jostled against in a crowded thoroughfare, and are always parted from with a respectful bow. In short, act a manly and inoffensive part in all the situations of life in which you may be placed; refined civility will spare both ourselves and others much unnecessary pain.

UNCLE TOM.

Figure 2.4: "Uncle Tom's Department," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 September 1877, 212.

In the early twentieth-century, representations of children's clothing increasingly centred upon work as the formative influence in children's lives, in addition to manners or character. In practical terms, girls were advised to look tidy and neat without spending too much time on fashionable dress. When it came to boys, commentators no longer praised Little Lord Fauntleroy as the perfect role model. Instead, they criticized his impractical garb as unmanly and reflective more of women's desires than of boys' needs. The meaning behind the image of Little Lord Fauntleroy, however, was not lost on the readers of the *Farmer's Advocate*. Instead of focusing on the clothing and appearance of this popular fictional character, articles now highlighted his manners and morals. Mothers were said to want their boys to embody the spirit of Fauntleroy. Using the imagery of Fauntleroy, mothers were provided with a list of things which boys should learn in order to mature into both men and gentlemen. The prelude to this extensive 'training program' suggested that this training needed to begin at an early age and was directed to mothers:

Have you ever heard it said that training in regard to good manners seems to 'show' more in men than in women? Possibly, this is true. A woman may be dainty, stately, irreproachable in all that pertains to the social code, yet she has few opportunities to exert evidence of her training than has the man. He must (needs) [sic] the cavalier, the one who is to bestow the little attentions that inevitably mark the man trained in manners; to the woman falls the part of receiving those attentions graciously and naturally. To be sure, then, that your son will act, when he grows up, as a gentleman must, begin the training of him while he is still but a boy, - yes, before he has discarded his Fauntleroy collars.- You remember, do you not, what a darling, what a most perfect little gentleman "Little Lord Fauntleroy" was? And now - just to refresh your memory - here is a list of the things that the boy must learn to do, that you must teach him to do, since upon you may rest, more than you may think, the responsibility of forming his manners.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ "How to Act - Department No. IV (What to teach the boys)," *Farmer's Advocate*, 20 June 1912, 1179.

Some writers for the *Farmer's Advocate* suggested that children copied what they saw and reminded mothers to extend their influence carefully. As the following quotation vividly illustrates, representations of nineteenth-century family life were distinctly gendered and mothers' role in raising good and honest men was depicted as the most noble task of motherhood:

It is hard for a young mother, who has not yet overcome the wayward tendencies of her youthful nature, to realize the influence she exerts over her little one. She is constantly surrounded by critical imitators who copy her morals and manners. As the mother is, so are her sons and daughters. If a family of children are blessed with an intelligent mother, who is dainty and refined in her manners, and does not consider it necessary to be one woman in the drawing-room and an entirely different person in her every-day life, but who is a true mother, and always a tender charming woman, you will invariably see her habits of speed and perfect manners repeated in her children. Great, rough men, and noisy, busy boys, will always tone down their voices and step quietly and try to be more manly when she stops to give them a kind word or a pleasant smile-for a true mother will never fail to say and do all the kind, pleasant things she can that will in any way help to lift up and cheer those whose lives are shaded with care and toil. The mother of to-day rules the world of to-morrow.⁵⁸

The idea that mothers needed to prepare their sons for their lives outside the home often appeared in the *Farmer's Advocate* alongside , 'words to live by': "A good mother, when her son was leaving the home of his childhood and going out into the great world, knowing that he was ambitious, gave him this parting injunction... 'My son, remember that though it is a good thing to be a great man, it is a great thing to be a good man.'"⁵⁹ Clothing cemented the special relationship between mothers and sons as a reprint from the *Syracuse Journal* reminded its readers in a sentimental fashion. In this story, a little

⁵⁸ "A Mother's Influence," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 December 1878, 295.

⁵⁹ "How Boys Succeed in Life," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 February 1879, 45.

boy, as a display of his affection for his deceased mother, kept a piece of material from the dress his mother wore sewn into his jacket pocket, often touching it for comfort.⁶⁰

The above story raises another key theme that emerged from the pages of the *Farmer's Advocate*: that of the idealized bond between mother and son. Not only were women told about the power they held in the formation of their sons; they were also provided with stories and images that celebrated the special bond between boys and their mothers. Indeed, it was implied that it was impossible to imagine sons being estranged from their mothers. This riddle for children illustrated this unthinkable view: "A lady met a gentleman in the street; the gentleman said, "I think I know you." The lady replied, "You ought to, for your mother, was my mother's only daughter." Children dwelling over this riddle might have been startled by the solution, which ran counter to common perceptions of family relationships: a son not recognizing his mother was unthinkable.⁶¹

The magazine section often depicted an idealized relationship between mothers and sons. One author, for instance described in glowing terms how a boy fell in love with his mother, a love that was the best possible preparation for his later role as a husband:

Of all the love affairs in the world, none can surpass the true love of the big boy for his mother. It is pure love and noble, honorable in the highest degree to both. I do not mean merely a dutiful affection. I mean a love which makes a boy gallant

⁶⁰ "My Mother's Dress," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 June 1882, 161:

A pretty and pathetic incident has been related to me of a little fellow from one of our charitable institutions who was being taken to a New Jersey farm by an agent, the owner of the farm having had the boy "bound" to him for a term of years. The agent noticed that the boy kept placing his right hand inside of his jacket on the left side, and occasionally would peep within with a tender look. At last he said: "What have you got in there my little friend?" "Oh, nothing, sir," he replied, "only a bit of my mother's dress, which I've sewn in my coat; it was the dress she had on when she died, and now it kind o'comforts me to touch it."

⁶¹ "Youth's Department," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 June 1871, 91.

and courteous to his mother, saying to everybody plainly that he is in love with her. Next to the love of a husband nothing so crowns a woman's life with honor as this second love, this devotion of a son to her. And I never yet knew a boy 'turn out' bad who began by falling in love with his mother. Any man may fall in love with a fresh-faced girl, and the man who is gallant with the girl may cruelly neglect the worn and weary wife. But the boy who is a lover of his mother in her middle age, is a true knight who will love his wife as much in the sere-leaved autumn as he did in the daisied spring-time.⁶²

Love between mother and son was viewed as a safeguard for family love and harmony in future relationships. The romantic nature of this relationship was described in detail for readers:

The curly-haired, dimpled three-year old, with baby features, lisps his thoughts with the innocence and perfect trust only children know. In playful mood his arms are about his mother's neck and he steals a kiss from his mother's cheek-to him the dearest, the sweetest in the wide world. And even in after years is not the remembrance of a mother's hand ever the softest, and a mother's love the most unselfish. Happy, happy mother and the little ones. Under your eye and care now, little ones to be molded for Him who said "Suffer the little children to come unto me." It is in these early days you do your most important work, which when done aright and carried through, leaves no room for asking, "Where is my wandering boy to-night?" in years to come.⁶³

The relationship between boys and mothers was seen to be central to boyhood rituals that marked a boy's entry into the 'masculine' public world. These rituals, related to appearance, almost exclusively focused upon boys and women. Three rites of passage commonly used as symbols of boyhood and masculinity involved hair, trousers and going to school. A boy's first haircut symbolized his entry into the masculine world.

⁶² "Uncle Tom's Department: Boys and their Mother," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 January 1878, 22. This story appeared again in the *Farmer's Advocate*, four years later in October 1882, pg. 274. For other expressions of the love between mothers and sons, see Eugene Field's poem, 'Child and Mother,' "There'll be no little tired-out boy to undress, No questions or cares to perplex you; There'll be no little bruises or bumps to caress, Nor patching of stockings to vex you."

⁶³ Kate Robertson, "A Summer Scene," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 July 1890, 221.

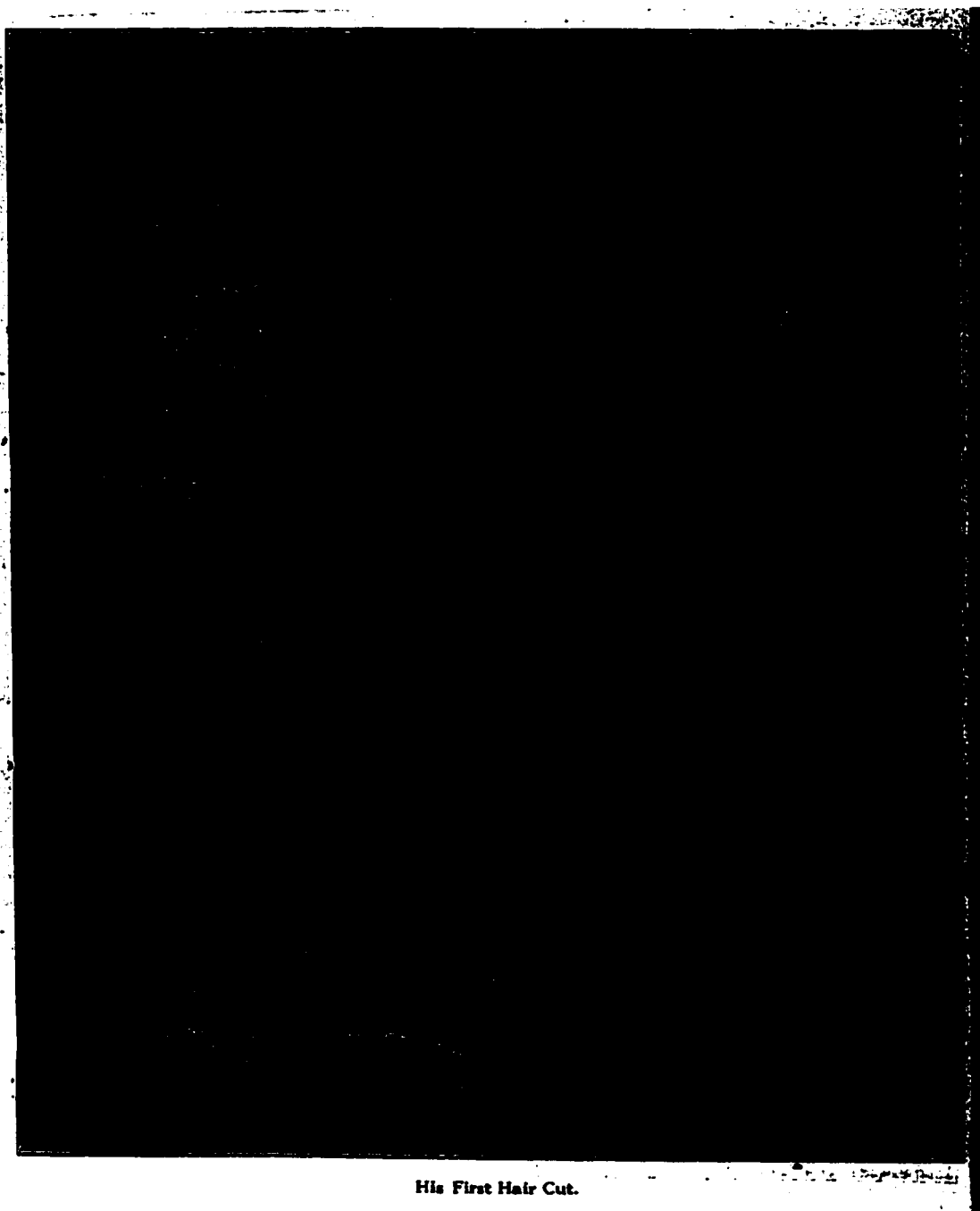


Figure 2.5: "His First Hair Cut," *Farmer's Advocate*, 8 December 1921, 1861.

Even though scholars have frequently noted the 'feminine' appearance of boys with long hair, long hair was not necessarily considered a feminine trait in the late nineteenth

century when boys, up to the age of ten, appeared in images with their hair long.⁶⁴ Rather, long and curly hair was interpreted as a sign of motherly love and devotion. In addition, there were important differences in the hairstyles of girls and boys. They did not appear to have the same hair styles. If a boy's hair was long then it was fashionable for girls' bangs to be cropped short. They had braids, bows, barrettes, combs or ribbons in their hair; boys never wore hair accessories.

A boy's first pair of trousers was considered to be a momentous occasion for many families and has been described in diaries, depicted in engravings and represented in musings found in the *Farmer's Advocate*. Many mothers were characterized as feeling that they had lost their little boy the day he was given trousers. An extract from the poet Elizabeth B. Browning's journal revealed feelings of loss when her son first wore trousers.⁶⁵ 'Breeching' boys, was a ritual that involved both mothers and sons. In nineteenth-century newspaper representations, a boy's first pair of knee-trousers was usually home-made by his mother and did not entail a trip to town for a suit or knickerbockers. Commonly, short trousers represented a boy's entrance into the male sphere of activity as he was dressed as a young man and no longer regarded to be in the sole care of his mother. In the nineteenth century, some boys wore frocks or petticoats up to the age of seven. At the turn of the century, however, more and more boys proudly wore knee-trousers as early as the age of three. By the 1920s, then, the ritual of

⁶⁴ Class would have been more of an issue as it would have been difficult to keep a boy's long hair clean, especially in urban Canada. Short hair was often a remedy to head lice for example. An interesting study on children's hair could include the prevalence of short hair for young girls among working mothers, the idea being that a working mother/parent does not have time to care for long hair – perhaps neither hers nor her child's.

'breeching' seemed to have lost its significance, except for the occasional reference to a time when boys wore skirts, lace collars and long curls.⁶⁶

Importantly, a boy's first pair of trousers did not mean he was leaving the 'feminine' world of mother's special term of power behind him; instead, he entered another stage of boyhood. A representation of a boy's first pair of trousers, Figure 2.6, appeared in 1887 in the family section of the *Farmer's Advocate* and was accompanied by the text that follows.

⁶⁵ Iris Brooke, *English Children's Costume Since 1775* (London: A. & C. Black, 1958); Anne Buck, *Clothes and the Child: A Handbook of Children's Dress in England 1500-1900*, (New York: Holmes & Meier, (1965) 1996).

⁶⁶ "For the Children: Once Upon a time," *Farmer's Advocate*, 30 June 1927, 1004. "Once upon a time, many years ago, when little girls wore long skirts and even bonnets, and little boys wore skirts and lace collars and curls till they were six, seven or even eight years old..."



THE FIRST PAIR OF TROUSERS

Figure 2.6: "The first pair of trousers," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 October 1887, 314.

Together, illustration and text offered a rich representation of the gendered world of childhood, with its strikingly different perceptions of ‘proper’ boyhood and girlhood and the rituals of clothing. The boy in this representation was described as being the ‘pet’ of the family, the most favoured child. Still, in the author’s opinion, Bertie’s first claims to manliness, symbolized in his first pair of trousers also marked a new set of obligations. Rather than spoiling little boys, mothers were expected to adopt the motto ‘girls first’, thus teaching the husbands of tomorrow to be ‘manly and selfless, kind and considerate’ toward others. While healthy and strong boys ‘naturally’ desired to romp and roam, they, too, had to learn to be ‘patient and good’:

We have made a man of our little pet. Mother has just finished and put on Bertie’s first pair of trousers. Look at grandmamma’s delight as the proud mother exhibits her boy. And now, with Bertie’s first claims to manliness, should also begin his lessons in politeness to his sisters. Most of mothers allow boys first place in everything. But one of the noblest men I ever knew was one whose mother’s motto was “Girls’ fist,” and all her sons were manly, selfless, kind and considerate for others. Man is naturally a selfish animal, and mothers foster their selfishness by every means in their power, forgetting how much or altogether a matter of education all these admirable qualities of heart and mind are, and the lessons cannot be begun too early in life. How many a young man has had the first rudiments of principle instilled into him at school by being soundly thrashed by a class mate for doing a mean thing, or what is more to a school-boy avoided by all his associates. Teach your boys, mothers, to think for others first. Your little girls are made to help from the time they can do anything, and are expected to be patient and good tempered as well. All that the little sisters can do, so can little brothers, mind baby, sweep the floor, feed the chickens, wash dishes, lay the table, and help themselves, instead of asking mother to find things they have carelessly mislaid. During vacations little girls are expected to help mamma, but little boys, though always the healthiest and strongest, are never expected to think for anyone but themselves, and amuse themselves with expeditions into the woods, cricket, base ball, or whatever they choose. This is how selfishness is taught; early lessons are always lasting, and mothers are to blame. Do not allow little boys to push or slap their sisters. Insist upon them giving them first place always and these early lessons, properly taught, will never be forgotten.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ “The First Pair of Trousers,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 1 October 1887, 314.

This 1887 description of Bertie and his new trousers appears to be in search of the ‘new boy’. Were ‘new boys’ of the early-twentieth century a product of this nineteenth-century representation? An article written in 1901 for the *Farmer’s Advocate* also questioned the future character of husbands and fathers who had the selfish side of their nature appealed to or who treated their sisters poorly.⁶⁸

What did it mean for boys to enter the ‘public’ masculine world? Musings represented being a boy as difficult. In some articles, boys overtly longed for the years when they wore petticoats and were enveloped in love and admiration:

Who wants a boy anywhere? Your sister don’t in the parlor. Your father don’t; he always asks if you are not wanted to do something somewhere. You make your mother’s head ache every time you come near her. Old ladies snap you up. Young ladies hate you. Young men tease you, and give it to you if you tease back. Other fellows, it’s because they’re aggravated so, I know, always want to fight if they don’t know you; and when you get a black eye, or a torn jacket, you hear of it at home... You look back and wonder if you ever were that pretty little fellow in petticoats that everybody stuffed with candy; and you wonder whether you’ll ever be a man, to be liked by the girls, and treated politely by other fellows, paid for your work, and allowed to do as you choose. And make up your mind every day not to be a boy any longer than you can help it; and when your grandfather or somebody complains that there are “no boys now,” you wonder if he remembers the life he led, that he don’t consider it as a subject of rejoicing... There is only one comfort in it all; boys will grow up, and when they do, they generally forget all they went through in their youth, and make the boys of their day suffer just as they did.⁶⁹

This musing, ‘Boys’ Rights: By a Boy,’ outlines the difficulties young boys, neither infants nor youths, experienced in the late nineteenth century. Indeed, it is a remarkable representation of the insecurities of boys caught between private feminine and public masculine spheres, little lost souls.

⁶⁸ H.A.B., “Boys and Girls in their Homes,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 15 April 1901, 274.

⁶⁹ “Boys Rights: By a Boy,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 1 December 1879, 298.

The *Farmer's Advocate* suggests that there existed a unique and 'special' relationship between mothers and their children, particularly their sons, during this period in Canadian history. The relationship was articulated in clothing. Many images appear in the early twentieth-century depicting boys wearing what appear to be dresses. Although they look like a type of dress, they were actually popular suits for young boys. Indeed, it was common for boys to wear suits, frocks and dresses which made them appear feminine in our modern eyes. These garments, however, did not mean that boys were not provided gendered messages about masculinity. But instead of assuming that boys were 'feminized' by this kind of clothing, we should explore the meanings of these outfits. The *Farmer's Advocate* did not feature any images of older boys – this is to say, seven year olds wearing 'dresses' in the early twentieth century. The only images of boys in frocks that could be found in the eastern and western edition of this period were of toddlers, usually under the age of two, still dependent on family members to help them dress.⁷⁰ More typical were practical garments or boys' fashions that borrowed heavily from military styles. While appearing 'feminine' in the eyes of twenty-first-century observers, Russian suits with their military influence were considered very masculine:

The tiny man's first step from dresses is the pretty Russian suit. The blouse is long and loose, and may be finished with sailor collar, or a straight band for the low linen collar. A pocket is inserted at the left side, and the blouse closes in front. A broad box-plait, formed at the top of the sleeve, and at the bottom is gathered into a little cuff. A belt is put around the waist loosely, held in place by keepers at the under-arm seams...Leg bands, or if preferred, elastics, may confine the fullness at the lower edge of the knickerbockers. This little suit, if trimmed

⁷⁰ Photograph, "A Young Farmer's Start – Begin Right and Then Go Ahead," *Farmer's Advocate*, 19 May 1904, 713. "Children's Corner: A Son of the West," *Farmer's Advocate*, 25 April 1906, 626.

with buttons, is very pretty⁷¹ for a boy from two to seven years of age. Courduroy, serge, linen or duck are used in making little suits of this description.⁷²

Figure 2.7 is an example of a Russian suit worn near the turn of the century in Canada.

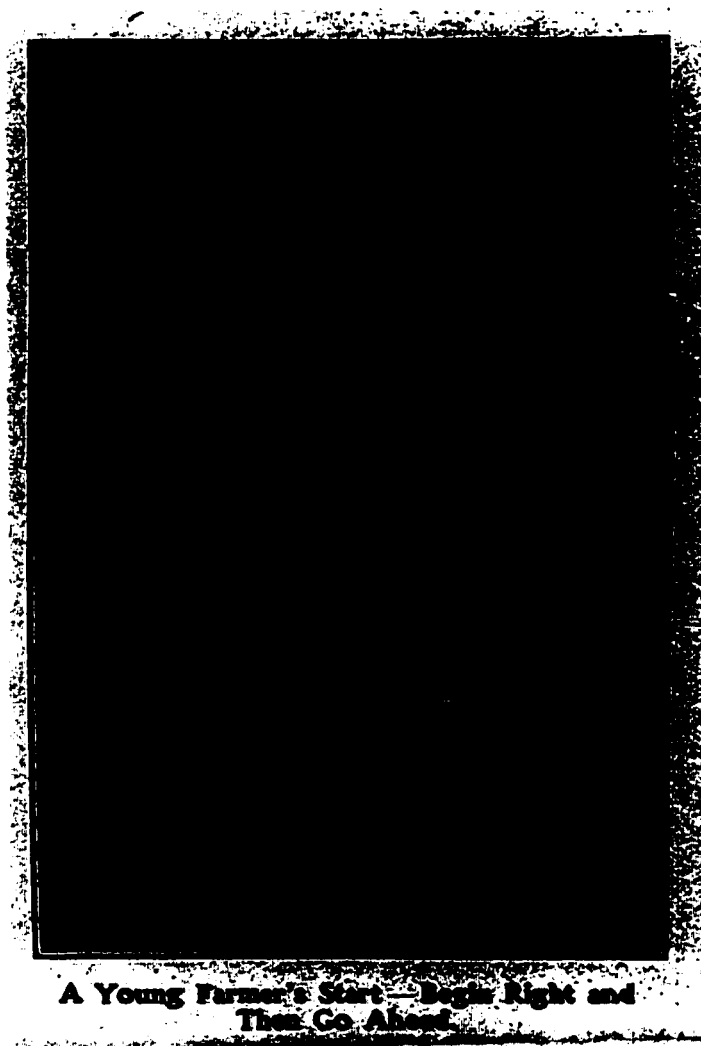


Figure 2.7: *Farmer's Advocate*, 19 May 1904, 713.

⁷¹ Pretty: of a person: excellent or admirable in appearance, manners, or other qualities; spec. of a soldier, brave, gallant and warlike. Russian suits, sailor suits were based upon Military styles. In the catalogues, these styles of garments were also noted as pretty. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2347.

⁷² Aunt Lin, "Fashion Notes," *Farmer's Advocate*, 10 March 1904, 353.

At the end of the nineteenth century, some commentators suggested that a boy could wear frocks or petticoats up to the age of five: “We next turned our attention to the needs of little Will, the dearest mite of a man in all the world. He has not yet attained to the dignity of knee-trousers, being but five years old.”⁷³ Importantly, though, dresses were represented as an acceptable garment primarily in those journals that offered women advice about home sewing. In other newspapers, images of boys caught between the worlds of petticoats and knickerbockers were often accompanied by humorous anecdotes:

Little Sydney had reached the mature age of three and was about to discard petticoats for the more manly raiment of knickerbockers. The mother had determined to make the occasion a memorable one. The breakfast-table was laden with good things when the newly breeched infant was led into the room. “Ah!” exclaimed the proud mother, “now you are a little man!” Sydney was in ecstasies. Displaying his garment to their full advantage, he edged close to his mother and whispered “Can I call pa Bill now?”⁷⁴

An amusing reference to a boy’s view of knee-trousers and the role of mothers in this rite of passage appeared in an 1898 issue of the *Farmer’s Advocate*. When a Bishop visited a family home the young boy of the house watched the honoured visitor attentively: “After dinner, the Bishop turned to the young lad and said: “Well, my young friend, you seem to be interested in me. Do you find that I am all right?” “Yes, sir,” replied the boy, with a

⁷³ “Fitting out the Family,” *Delineator* 1 April 1892, 402. This journal was sometimes mentioned in the *Farmer’s Advocate* and women were directed to read it for advice about sewing for their families. This particular article detailed sewing patterns for four children and also offered advice on behaviour and clothing. For example, mothers were encouraged to limit the amount of time children wore aprons and bibs. This protective clothing encouraged untidiness and fostered careless habits.

⁷⁴ Reprinted from *Philadelphia Public Ledger* in *Farmer’s Advocate*, 25 October 1917, 1667.

glance at the bishop's knee breeches. "You're all right; only," hesitatingly, "won't your mamma let you wear trousers yet?"⁷⁵

In the early 1900s, a move from frocks to overalls came to replace the ritual of 'breeching'. Boys just over the age of two increasingly appeared wearing overalls and were presented as examples of young Canada.



THE BEST PRODUCT RAISED ON THE PRAIRIE.

Figure 2.8: "The Best Product Raised on the Prairie," *Farmer's Advocate*, 26 December 1906, 2026.

⁷⁵ "The Bishop's Knee Breeches," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 September 1898, 412.

Short trousers, more common in Great Britain, continued to be worn throughout the period, but in rural Canada they were not practical for the needs of boys. Consequently, knee trousers were no longer the primary symbol of a young boy's rite of passage. While the fashions changed, the role of clothing as a symbol of impending manhood remained intact. Dressed in overalls, boys were ready to enter their father's worlds.⁷⁶

Helping Daddy.



Tim is helping "daddy,"
 Hard at work is he
 In his overalls so long,
 With his harrow, trim and strong,
 Happy as can be.

All the leaves and rubbish
 He'll gather in a heap
 With the barrow and the rake,—
 What a bonfire he will make
 'Ere he goes to sleep.

All the children love to rake
 And tidy up the land.
 Give them real work to do,
 Then they'll feel they're helping you.
 Let them lend a hand.

COUSIN DOROTHY.

Figure 2.9: "Helping Daddy," *Farmer's Advocate*, 15 November 1905, 1665.

⁷⁶ Cousin Dorothy, "The Children's Corner: Helping Daddy," *Farmer's Advocate*, 15 November 1905, 1665.

Images of the boys wearing overalls and pushing a wheel barrel increasingly appeared in the newspapers and in family photographs.

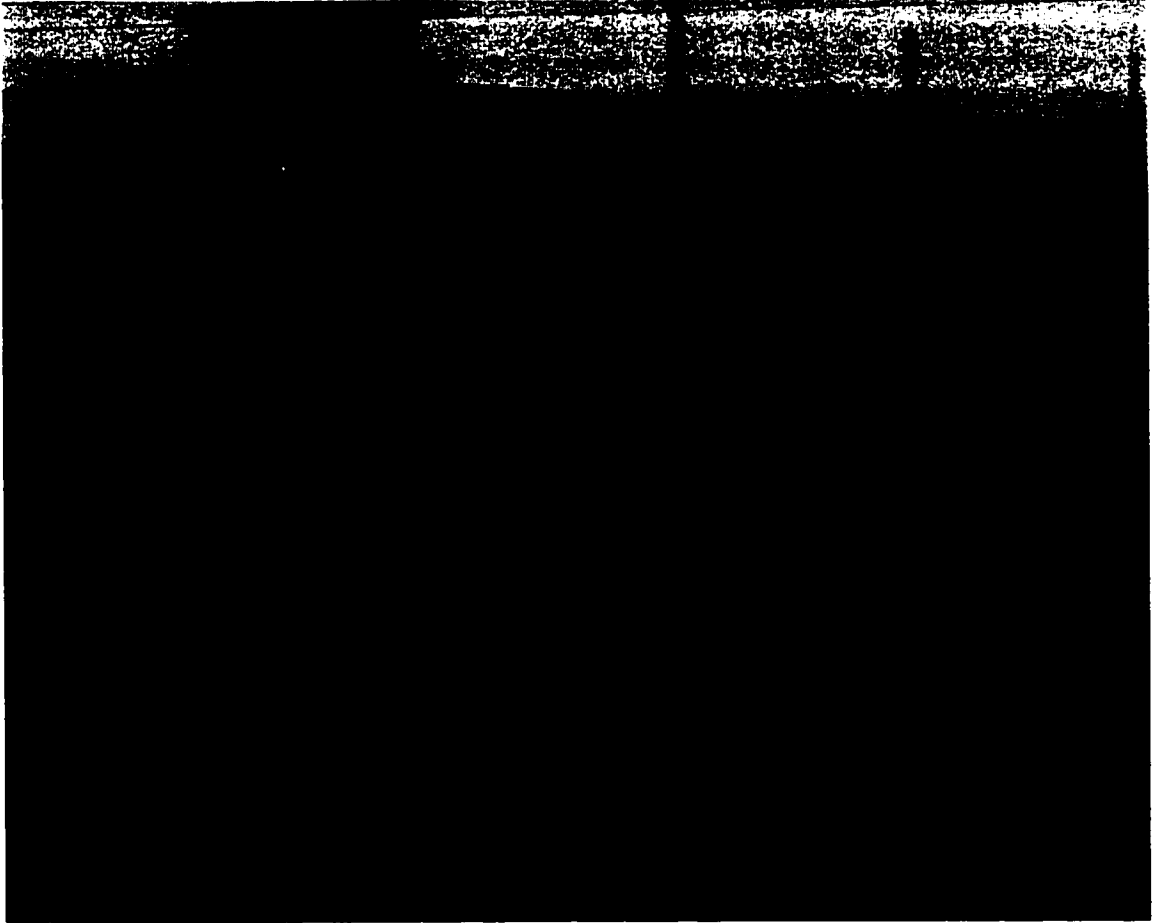


Figure 2.10: "Cleaning up Backyard," McCord Museum of Canadian History, Roper Donation, 254, Olivier, MP076/77 (127), October 1904.

The first image, Figure 2.9, 'Helping Daddy,' appeared in the *Farmer's Advocate*, while the second image was a family photograph, taken in Montreal in 1904.

Just as overalls marked the passage from the private world of the home to the outside world, so, too, did school introduce children to a sphere beyond 'mother's special' realm of influence. As school attendance increased, more and more mothers

came to share the bittersweet moment of seeing their boys leave for school for the very first time:

She lost her little boy to-day:
Her eyes were moist and sweet
And tender when he went away
To hurry down the street.
She stood there for the longest while
And watched and watched him; then
She said –and tried to force a smile–
“He’ll not come back again.”

This is the pain in mothers’ hearts
When school days have begun;
Each knows the little boy departs,
And baby days are done
Each mother fain would close her ears
And hush the calling bell
For, somehow, in its tone she hears
The sounding of a knell.⁷⁷

While hair length, clothing and schooling all presented rites of passage, there was an important difference. Mothers were central to the decision to cut their sons’ hair and in making the first ‘male’ garments for their little boys and thus exercised a moderate degree of control over the time when their sons left the world of petticoats and ringlets. By contrast, they had no control over the demands of mass schooling that enrolled increasing numbers of children in public schools:

Her boys at school must look like others,
She says, as she patches their frocks and hose;
For the world is quick to censure mothers
For the least neglect of children’s clothes.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ “His First Day at School,” reprinted from the *Chicago Tribune* in *Farmer’s Advocate*, 25 February 1904, 283.

⁷⁸ “Minnie May’s Department: The Farmer’s Wife” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 1 October 1877, 244. This is an excerpt from the poem. The issues of motherhood, truancy, cleanliness and children’s clothing is discussed in Christopher Clubine, “Motherhood

With the development of mass schooling, dressing children for the public world became a daily duty. No longer was children's appearance judged on Sundays alone when all family members wore their 'Sunday best.' Instead, children attending schools had to look neat and tidy at all times. Even this element of control was challenged when school attendance at an even younger age seemed to accelerate the point in time when boys no longer wore petticoats:

It's like the little dresses too, that once he used to wear,
The thought that something's past and gone, outgrown and put away-
That brings to Mother's ear and mine the bitter-sweet to-day;
It's just another forward step in Time's unchangin rule-
Our baby's left us now for good; our boy has gone to school.⁷⁹

Peer pressures, often unrelenting, also worked against a 'feminized' appearance of boys, thus further under-mining the sacred mother-son relationship. Boys who were over-dressed or over-protected were not necessarily seen as young men; they may have even been ridiculed as a cry-baby, sissy⁸⁰ or mamma's boy, or tied to their mother's apron string.

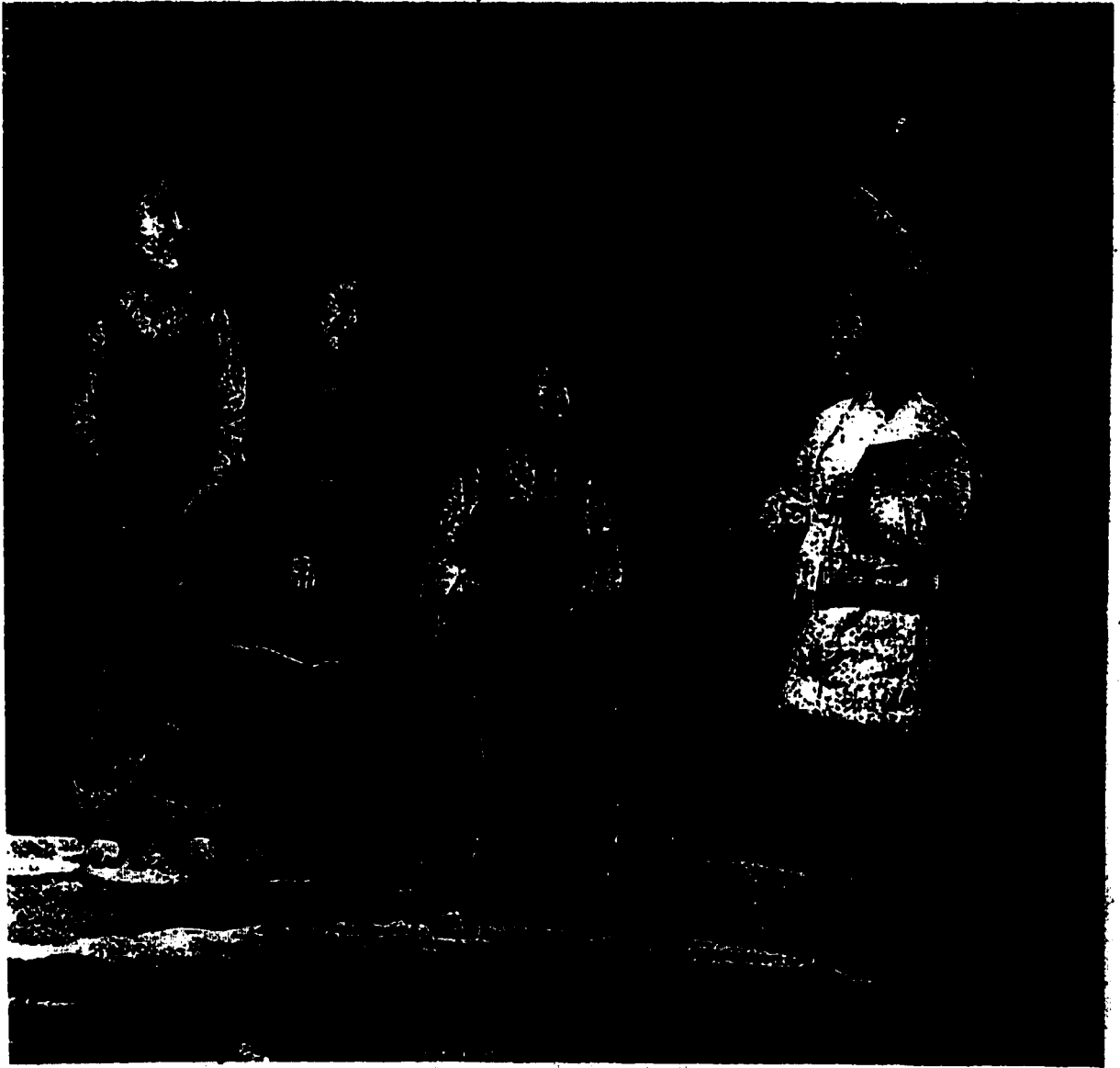
Representations of these views of boys and their mothers appeared more frequently in the early twentieth century. The image of the 'cry-baby', in particular, gained popularity in those years. As seen in the following representation, Figure 2.11, a well-attired boy is being teased by two boys with short hair in overalls, while a girl is standing nearby, appearing to sneer at the 'sissy'. Not even his sailor-suit prevents him

and Public Schooling in Victorian Toronto," *Ontario History* 88, 3 (September 1996): 179-180.

⁷⁹ Joseph C. Lincoln, "School Days," *Farmer's Advocate*, 16 October 1907, 1565.

⁸⁰ Sissy – from the word sister in the 19th century, also meaning effeminate or coward, *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2875.

from being ridiculed: his hair, his manners and his lollipop conspire to give away his 'cry-baby' character.



"THE CRY-BABY."

Figure 2.11: *Farmers Advocate*, 5 September 1903, 907.

In this representation, there also seems to be a class difference, clearly observed in the visual representation of the children in overalls and bare feet, and also with the accompanying text that describes the ‘cry-baby’ as a ‘young gentleman’ and also referred to him as his ‘Lordship.’ Figure 2.11, was accompanied by the following description:

Who has not seen just such a group of children? Notwithstanding the fact that the young gentleman shown in the right of the picture has been “dressed in his best,” to be taken out by his fond mamma, still he is far from happy. The jovial laddie with his hand in his pocket has evidently confiscated one of his lordship’s treasures, and his peevish whining demands for it seem to be a source of great amusement to the two mischievous children poking fun at him, while the elder boy does not conceal his scorn of the “tugged out cry-baby.”⁸¹

Another amazing image of sissies appeared in the *Winnipeg Free Press* and depicts mass-schooling, boy culture and representations of old boys and new boys. The ‘new fellow’ not to be confused with the ‘new boy’, brought to school with his long, curly hair, and seemingly fancy outfit, as well as his weight, equal to that of his mother, suggests that he is coddled and well fed. The ‘new fellow’ does not fit in with the other boys, who are all dressed alike. He also breaks the unwritten code of boys by telling the teacher that Johnny Bones struck him. He is abused and runs away all disheveled, leaving a curl behind in Johnny’s hands. In the depiction of the ‘Cry-baby’ boys who did not meet contemporary gender expectations were described as either sissies or cry-babies while mothers were being faulted for having spoiled their little lads. If we recall the image of the ‘Canadian’ children from the Notman collection, Figure 1.10 and the image of the young boys in sailor costumes, Figure 1.1, if we merge these two images into one image the result might be similar to that depicted by the ‘Cry Baby.’

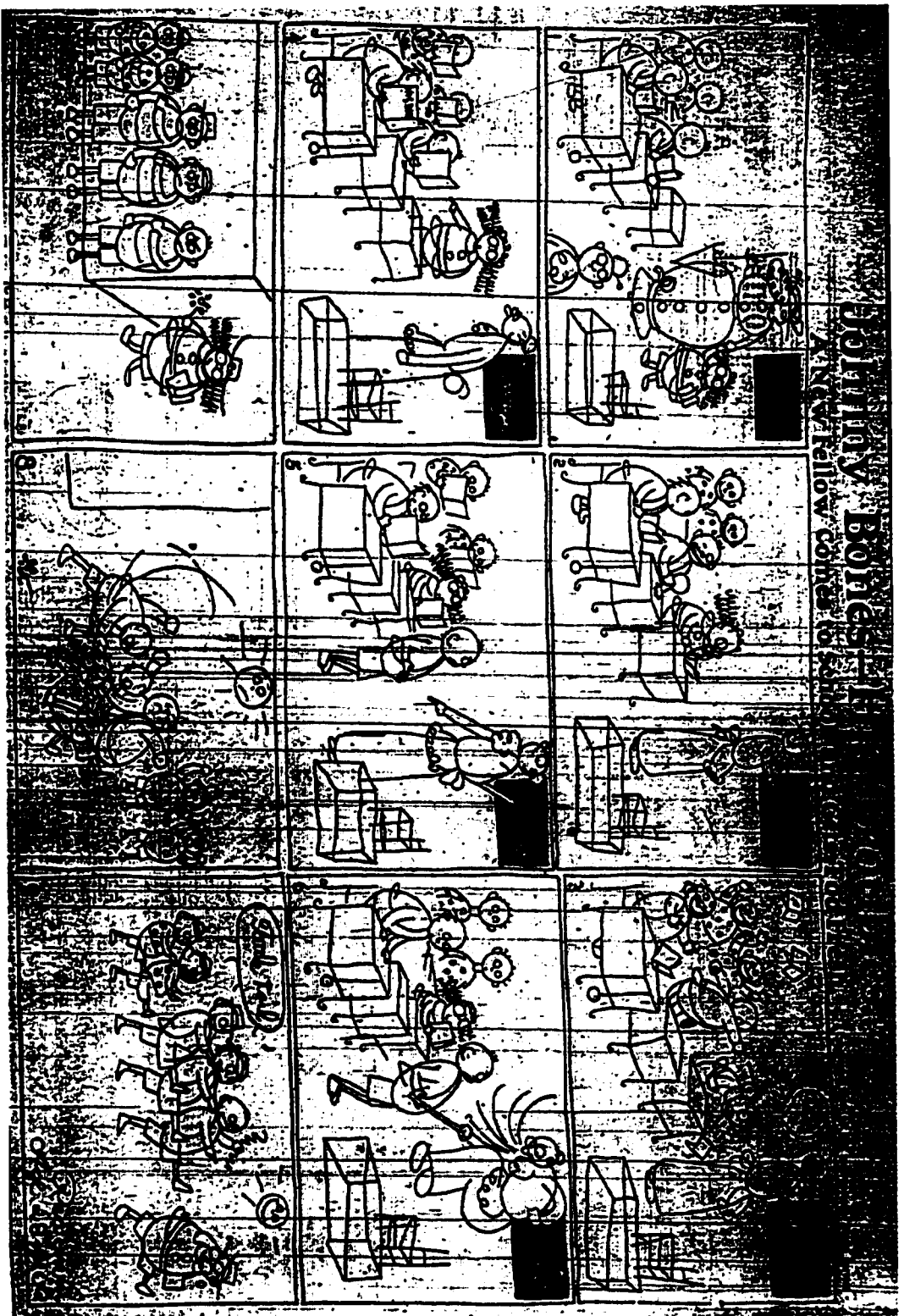


Figure 2.12: "Johnny Bones - His Troubles" *Winnipeg Free Press*, 1 April 1911, 2.

In the mid-1890s, tension regarding boys and their clothing appeared in magazines for women. The *Farmer's Advocate* directed readers to an article in the *Ladies Home Journal*, which was noted for its valuable and interesting information. This article, 'The Paradise Club,' was recommended as ridiculing the 'fad' of dressing, "hardy, romping lads" in clothing based upon fashion plates.⁸² It began the scene with a group of men discussing the life of boys – and dreaming about being boys once again. Four characters described as the married man, the irresponsible one, the cynic and the philosopher are debating the 'Domination of the Dud':

'The way boys and girls are fixed out with duds these days is beyond my comprehension. I suppose mothers know more about how children should be dressed than fathers do, but it seems to me that the time has come for fathers to organize and strike a blow for the emancipation of their children, their sons in particular, from the 'Domination of the Dud.' Look over there if you want a fine example of modern tendency,' he continued, waving his hand in the direction of the youngsters the Irresponsible one had been watching at play. 'Take that big lanky Lord Fauntleroy for a text. He's every bit of eight years old, and very tall for his years...To his mother he is undoubtedly the most perfect specimen of a noble-man extant. She sees in him all her own perfection plus the perfection she had expected to find in her husband - and didn't. So she puts velveteen trousers on; covers his calves with leather leggins, let his hair fall in curls over his shoulders, and tops him off with a Tam o'Shanter because that lovely little fellow Fauntleroy was dressed that way.'⁸³

In this instance, the boy and the mother's relationship, as it relates to his dress, is at the heart of their discussion. According to these men, the boy did not want to go to school dressed like that, and he really could not be faulted for getting into a fight and returning home with torn clothes. A more suitable material is suggested by the men "an outfit of strong corduroy," which seems to give him added prowess as he is late in returning

⁸² "Our Library Table," *Farmer's Advocate*, 15 August 1895, 324.

⁸³ John Kendrick Bangs, "The Paradise Club," *The Ladies Home Journal* June 1895, 6.

because he has inflicted harm on those who made fun of his clothing the previous day.⁸⁴

The discussion was a lengthy one, scorning little girls and venturing opinions about sailor suits as well. "I don't approve of any of 'em – Fauntleroy suits, sailor suits, or the penwiper costume. I'd sew 'em all up in a bag and send them to a warm climate until they'd grown up and knew less..." The cynic went on to argue that the two naturally dressed children were Cain and Abel, dressed without regard to style. The discussion continued with the married man agreeing:

'They did not suffer from the 'Domination of the Dud. I don't claim that clothes make the man, but I do say that clothes do interfere with the development of the boy. A boy knows whether he's a guy or not, or if he doesn't some other boy does, and he finds out pretty quickly. The poor little slave that he is, if his parents persist in making a guy of him he's lost. He is badgered or scorned; and the upshot of it all is he doesn't get his chance.'

'You're very wise, ' said the Cynic, 'But your talk is all theory. Granting that tall Fauntleroy over there is all that you say he is – no doubt his dress is absurd – but you've merely speculated on chance. He may be very different from what you say.'

Indeed, this boy was the romping lad they were discussing despite his clothing, for when asked if he was playing tag, he replied that he was hunting monkeys but that the four men were the only ones seen all day.⁸⁵

Increasingly, newspaper columns warned that mothers were coddling and over-dressing their boys. Sternly, commentators admonished mothers to consider their children's needs by allowing them clothing that encouraged and permitted play. The image of the cry-baby was also used by physicians who held that over-protection, coddling or smothering was dangerous to children's children:

⁸⁴ John Kendrick Bangs, "The Paradise Club," *The Ladies Home Journal* June 1895, 6. Girls' clothing was described as a pen wiper which was slang for 'handkerchief.' The exact meaning of this criticism is unclear.

Have you ever met “a smothering mother?” You can find a description of her in a recent number of the *British Medical Journal*. She has acquired her name because she smother her child with kisses and kindness, and, strange to say, they both enjoy it. The child is usually a boy. (Girls are seldom smothered, especially if they have red hair and freckles.) Smothering occurs most often in the one child family...The remedy is to have six children in your home, either your own or some that you have adopted. If such a plan is not feasible, then mothers, or better yet, young women, should be taught something about the raising of children.⁸⁶

Once again, this quotation points to a special relationship between mothers and sons, while the lack of affection lavished on girls is explained by the perceived displeasing appearance of red hair and freckles.

While girls who stepped beyond the bounds of ‘proper’ behaviour were described as ‘free-spirited’ or ‘tomboys’, there was no similar indulgence for ‘cry-babies’. The distrust for ‘the sissie’ only rivaled the dislike for the ‘new woman’ who, apparently, did not deserve respect. But, equally confusing in the eyes of small boys was the fact that ‘manly’ behaviour did not automatically earn them a grown-up’s privileges. As the rhyme in Figure 2.13 described, when it came to eating properly, ‘mother’s great big man’ was denied cheese and pickles and had to content himself with a diet for ‘little dears’: bread and milk.

⁸⁵ John Kendrick Bangs, “The Paradise Club,” *The Ladies Home Journal* June 1895, 6.

⁸⁶ The Family Doctor, “Your Health: When Mother Smothers,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 1 September 1931, 905.

Puzzled.



" I want to ask a question :
 Now, 'splain me this who can :
 How is it that when I get hurt,
 I'm 'mother's great big man,
 Too large, of course, and brave to cry' ;
 But when I ask for cheese,
 Or maybe pickles with my lunch,
 Why, then—now listen, please—
 Oh no, I am ' too little, dear,
 Must eat nice milk and bread.'
 I think and worry over this
 Until it hurts my head ;
 And I'd be very much obliged,
 If some one would tell me,
 Just 'zactly what's the proper size
 A fellow ought to be."

Figure 2.12: "Puzzled." *Farmer's Advocate*, 15 November 1902, 845.

Instead of depicting one world of childhood, the *Farmer's Advocate* established distinct 'male' and 'female' spheres in the family section. According to the editors, young boys were treated differently from girls from the moment of their birth. This was widely illustrated in the colours thought appropriate for male and female children. In the late nineteenth century, colour codes for children's clothing established white as a uniform 'baby' colour; one commentator noted pink and blue were used by mothers to denote gender. Importantly, contrary to our contemporary perceptions, in nineteenth-century Ontario, pink was for boys and blue for girls: "Young mothers usually have their fancies about colour, 'blue for a girl' and 'pink for a boy' and carry it into all the preparatory [sic] wardrobe. A basket lined with blue would have a small blue pin cushion, a blue and white powder box, though a white one is *babyish*."⁸⁷ Whatever tradition mothers followed, garments for young children, with or without some colour added, white most commonly appeared during the late nineteenth century, for obvious practical reasons. White cotton garments could be more easily cleaned and bleached simply by hanging garments to dry in the sun, while dark garments usually had to be frequently dyed, and some dyes were unreliable, leading to problems of colours running.⁸⁸

Despite limitations to what materials and styles could be used to differentiate male and female children, colours were used where possible. In the nineteenth century, mothers adorned and decorated clothing for young children with colours to publicly identify children's gender. Traditions have been traced to religious origins and

⁸⁷ M.S.H., "A Simple Baby-Basket," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 June 1877, 181.

⁸⁸ A report from France linked the dye used in red stockings worn by children with rashes on their legs and feet. A chemical analysis noted that children's perspiration permitted the chemicals to enter into pores and cautioned against wearing these dyed garments. "Red Stockings." *Dry Goods Review*, 1 May 1891.

superstition; sometimes these traditions varied between countries and cultures. Scholars have not heretofore examined evidence regarding 'Canadian' traditions in connection to infant clothing and colour coding. Therefore, the early reference found in the *Farmer's Advocate* describing what mothers were said to be practicing is worth emphasizing. Why was the tradition of dressing boys in pink and girls in blue questioned especially by a 'distracted father' as quoted in Figure 2.14?⁸⁹ Men rarely contributed letters, questions or responses to the advice columns in the *Farmer's Advocate*, let alone signed themselves as "distracted":

⁸⁹ "Ingle Nook: Pink or Blue?" *Farmer's Advocate*, 25 December 1919, 2350. There was no response in successive columns about this question. Traditions have noted that boys wore pink and girls wore blue as a strategy to confuse 'Harod,' as in the curse of Harod. The idea was that if you dressed boys as girls, they would survive the curse and perhaps that meant surviving childhood. I have never found any written documentation about this tradition.

Pink or Blue?

Dear "Junia":—~~Having read and heard of the sage advice given and the useful information dispensed in your column of the "Advocate", and judging from your answers to questions that you are an unusually astute individual and well acquainted with all the facts, fancies and foibles of men, and assuming also that you are fully aware of the factors operating not only in man's elevation to the various planes of consciousness but also in his initial appearance on this earth duly guided by unseen forces, may I please dear Junia, ask with all candor and reverence—is it pink or blue for boys, and who decided which is the right color and is it written down anywhere in the Bible?~~

Yours for Information.
Distracted Father.

It's *blue* for boys.—Now smile!—So much of the distraction gone. . . . But who decided?—And is it written down?—Now you have me in a box! But if the occult vouchsafes to reveal the mystery to me or any of my familiar spirits, I'll pass it on to you. Will that do?

Figure 2.14: "Pink or Blue?" *Farmer's Advocate*, 25 December 1919, 2350.

Junia neither provided readers with an explanation of why blue was a colour for boys, nor did she connect traditions to the Bible.

One reason why there were so many changes in public perceptions of children's clothing in the early twentieth century is that the quest of clothing for children was entering the public domain for younger and younger boys and girls. Mothers' role in the provision and care of their family's clothing continued to evolve with new technology,

new materials and new styles. Constructing, cleaning and caring for clothing was difficult work, and as materials and patterns changed and more clothing was required, the view of women at the spinning wheel or family weaving faded. In 1900, a call for more help for women's work appeared in the *Farmer's Advocate*. Women, the commentators posed, were overworked. Perhaps not even simplified patterns of clothing could ease the demands of clothing one's family. The hard life of farm women was outlined by one female reader who criticized fathers for their refusal to purchase labour saving devices. The lack of interest in improving the working conditions of rural women, the commentator implied, would eventually drive daughters from the farm just as the sons had been driven to work in factories decades earlier. According to the writer, women's chores lasted all day and into the night, including the cumbersome task of making up clothing for the children. In the following passage, then, written by a member of the National Council of Women, we encounter, not a 'new woman,' but a household drudge who did not have the good fortune of living with a 'new boy':

She has slaved morning, noon and night; made the children's clothes as best she could by lamplight, when our men folk were comfortably tuck up in their beds; cooked meals for the hired men (for *men* have to be hired and *paid*); got up early to churn the butter (no patent churn and separator for her); has risen before daylight to wash for a family of ten (no washing machine and wringer for her), neither father nor even the bigger boys realizing how heavily the burden was pressing upon her. It is for mother's sake we girls are stopping on the farm; it is for mother's sake we do not go, as we would dearly like to go, into the city and be able to earn a little money for ourselves. We know we should not have to work so hard there, and we know that we should have many opportunities for self culture which we could not possibly have in the country; but we do not go, though we are sorely tempted to do so, for mother's sake.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ H.A.B., "What Farmers' Daughters Have to Say about the Problems of Domestic Service," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 December 1900, 688.

As ready-made clothing became more available, boys were increasingly expected to dress themselves without mother's help. Instead of facing closures, button waists and other aspects of young children's clothing, boys could now easily slip into their overalls, and even the shirts they wore did not present too much of a challenge. Trying to save mother's precious time, commentators also provided detailed tips on how children could dress themselves: "Children who dress themselves, usually have difficulty in holding down the legs of their drawers while pulling on their stockings. A loop of tape tacked to the edge of the drawers' leg so that the foot may be slipped through it, will remove the difficulty."⁹¹ Independence for children meant that some mothers had more time to pursue other duties.

In the late nineteenth century, the ascent of mass-produced clothing exerted an ever-increasing influence within the discussion of children's fashions. The pages of the *Farmer's Advocate* mirrored this transition. Gradually, advice columns on home-sewing were supplanted by ubiquitous advertisements for ready-made clothing, available by ordering through the mail. Even though rural readers continued to be chided for the old-fashioned clothing they wore, they also earned praise for their preference of 'appropriate' and 'practical' clothing. Still, clothing one's children became a more complicated process once nurses, doctors, columnists, politicians and other 'professionals' began to liberally dispense advice on child-rearing practices, including 'proper' children's clothing. Increasingly, images of children were generated by etchings and paintings, and became known to readers of the *Farmer's Advocate*. These images were combined with photographs of local children and advertisements drawn in Toronto or Winnipeg. By the

⁹¹ Junia, "The Scrap Bag," *Farmer's Advocate*, 29 January 1914, 192.

1920s, advertising images and informal photographs of children provided Canadian representations of children and childhood as an alternative to the idyllic images of children painted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The newspaper columns of the *Farmer's Advocate* reflected changing attitudes at the turn of the twentieth century regarding family, childhood and children. For example, new columns for children appeared after Uncle Tom's retirement.⁹² The messages were still gendered, divided for boys and girls, and there was an increased emphasis on childhood and children. "Times may be changing, but one thing seems inalterable-the spirits of our Canadian children, and may it be ever so! While I admire a manly man, I also like to see a childish child."⁹³ The words used to address younger readers changed, as the catch-all category of 'children' became increasingly fragmented by age and region. By 1911, the London edition of the paper had two levels of readers, namely the senior and junior 'beavers'. In Winnipeg, the editors decided to rename the Children's Corner the 'Western Wigwam', thus emphasizing the regional identities of their young readers: "Dear Boys and Girls: - we've found a new name! Children's Corner didn't mean much, did it. No wonder you have asked for a new one. I hope you like this one: - The Western Wigwam."⁹⁴

As the prominent role of the children's pages illustrates, the editors of the *Farmer's Advocate* paid attention to the amusement, entertainment, and instruction of their young readers. From the first edition in 1868 to the children's corners of the 1920s,

⁹² Cousin Dorothy, "The Children's Department," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 February 1895, 56.

⁹³ "Uncle Tom's Department," *Farmer's Advocate*, 2 July 1894, 266.

the children's section was constantly refined and altered in order to suit the needs of children and reflect the changing conceptions of childhood. Play was an important component of childhood in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From the earliest editions to the 1920s, columns on play were directed to the family as a whole. Games and play were seen as enjoyable amusements for boys and girls, men and women: "We will give you plenty of games in this and future numbers, and we desire to make you all our friends. We love children and we love young people generally and specially, and we consider that when we help them to enjoy themselves, that we make ourselves happy by doing so."⁹⁵ Play, like clothing reinforced children's separate spheres. Advice about how children should play also further dispels the views that boys were 'feminine' in the nineteenth century.

According to the 1870s poem, 'A Man's Life', the first seven years of a boy's life were meant for play and learning manners, required in public life. In the early twentieth century, play, clothing and childhood were woven throughout the advice pages and children's column in the *Farmer's Advocate*. According to commentators, children, (read boys), up to the age of ten required a great deal of playtime in order thrive. Older boys, by contrast, were encouraged to devote themselves to their studies, while the age of fourteen marked the end of childhood. This end of childhood was often symbolized by the change from short trousers to long trousers. Boys would no longer need short trousers to play because they were past the age of putting holes at the knees or needing extra freedom.

⁹⁴ "The Western Wigwam," *Farmer's Advocate*, 21 October 1908, 389. It was further noted that about a dozen names were suggested and that, although it wasn't the most common, it seemed the best.

Not surprisingly, then, mothers were advised to let their boys have fun at play.

Maternal supervision, this commentator advised, should not hamper the 'natural' desire of boys to have a 'free and happy childhood':

"Oh, Johnny!" cried a nervous mother, "do have some pity on my poor head! Can't you play without shouting so?" Poor Johnny drew up the tape reins with which he was driving two chairs tandem, and called out in a loud, hoarse whisper: "Get up-whoa!" But at length, finding little pleasure in this suppressed amusement, he threw down his reins, and, laying his hands upon his breast, said, with a long breath, "O, mother, it's full of noise in here and it hurts me so to keep it in! Don't all little boys make a noise when they play?" "Yes, Johnny, I believe they all do," replied the lady. "O, then, mother dear," cried Johnny, in a winning tone, "please let me be a little boy." We will have to join poor Johnny in his petition. Please, mother, let your sons be little boys while they may. Let them have a free and happy childhood, that when your heads are low in the grave they may point back to those days and say, "We were happy children, for there was always sunshine where our mother was."⁹⁶

Boys were depicted as being frustrated by adults and mothers in particular, who did not understand their natural proclivity for noisy and unruly behaviour, and imposed far too many constraints.⁹⁷

The character 'Uncle Tom' provided children with a focus for their correspondence. His column and subsequent children's pages provided readers with observations about children's play, and also suggestions about childhood fun. Readers could also participate in dialogues about play and childhood. There was an emphasis on gender differences in his columns, from his greeting to his nieces and nephews to his explicit remarks to 'the boys'. For example, in the following reference to children, he specifically identified boys and girls on the farm: "Ho there, my farmers and 'farmeresses' in embryo, how many of you have your seeds started ready for

⁹⁵ T.W.D., "Youth's Department," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 January 1870, 26.

⁹⁶ 'St. Nicholas', "That Noisy Boy," *Farmer's Advocate* 1 September 1878, 209.

transplanting next month?”⁹⁸ In this context, Uncle Tom was advocating one of his pastimes from childhood, which was gardening.

Childhood was described as changing significantly during this period as well. The *Farmer's Advocate* was one of the first journals to have a section for children, a feature already offered in the early years of its publication.⁹⁹ Games, riddles and puzzles appeared frequently, as did advice directed at children. In December 1888, children were treated to a story about the Royal family and its toys and dolls. An accompanying drawing, Figure 2.15, depicted a boy and a girl tugging a donkey on wheels. Although in many artistic representations of children, gender is difficult to determine, in this early free-hand drawing of children, gender is easy to identify by their clothing, and so was the message. Fighting over toys was neither ‘good’ behaviour, nor smart, as the tugging toy was broken in the struggle: “Children, if you are careful of your toys you may perhaps become like your Queen, admired by all.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ “Children’s Corner: a Boy’s Lament,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 12 August 1908.

⁹⁸ “Uncle Tom’s Department,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 2 April 1900, 202. Again note the distinction being made between boys and girls on the farm!

⁹⁹ “Youth’s Department,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 1 January 1868. According to George Denison The Globe and Mail did not get a Children’s page until 1890s. See George Denison, “The Child in the Toronto Daily Press, 1919-1929” *Ph. D. Thesis*, (University of Toronto, 1988).

¹⁰⁰ “Uncle Tom’s Column,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 1 December 1888, 388.

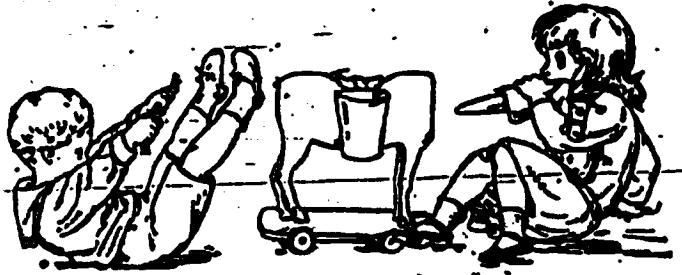


Figure 2.15: "Uncle Tom's Department," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 December 1888, 388.

Other messages about growing up were provided throughout these columns. Uncle Tom advised his young readers about the relationship between play and life-long learning:

So cultivate, in every way you can, your tastes. The little girl who can dress her dolly tastefully and neatly, is likely to be herself neat and tidy. And the boy who has a pet subject, in which he delights, will find, in being interested and succeeding in it, will be more interested in other things too. This calls to mind a little chap who thought shavings "bitty" (pretty) when he made them on the newly swept floor, who is now the successful carpenter; also of a boy's room, on whose wall were pinned butterflies, moths, insects, and in jars snakes of various kinds, who, from his observant qualities, has learnt much, and is not weary when left alone-because not alone, his thoughts are busy with interesting subjects. And so with another, who is himself his own taxidermist, and whose variety of birds, squirrels, etc., is interesting and instructive.¹⁰¹

Another revealing gendered perspective from Uncle Tom appear in one of his final columns in 1897:

¹⁰¹ "Uncle Tom's Department" *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 March 1890, 88.

I have heard that a sure sign of spring is to be able to get close enough to a frog to touch it with a stick, but we used no such warning of this advent of that welcome season, for an infallible indication (the ubiquitous small boy with his marbles) is everywhere in evidence, but especially on the street corners, where “Jack in the bush,” ‘ring taw,’ etc., are the games of the hour...It recalls the old childhood days when we children, tired of winter games, would diligently search our playground and the adjoining fields to find a spot of ground where part of old mother earth’s white robe had injudiciously melted away a little ahead of time, and how we did enjoy the first game of ball. Occasionally, lured by our glowing accounts of the delight of such pastime, the teacher (always a lady) would condescend to share our play; upon which red-letter occasion we mustered all our gallantry to do her honor, and were supremely happy. I presume our homely game would be scorned by any of the modern ----, but this I know, it was hearty and pleasant if not scientific. We did not sneeringly dub the girls “new women” when they shared our romps, for we were not a large crowd and “free for all” was our motto. Although those youthful joys have long since fled, I often mentally live them over again, and every barefooted, towheaded, freckle faced country boy with bright eyes peeping mischievously from beneath a half-rimless hat will find a warm corner in my hear for the sake of “said lang syne”¹⁰²

Did ‘new boys’ give girls permission to play and romp? These were clearly boys’ pastimes, but could apparently be enjoyed by girls as well.

Play was characterized as integral to the lives of both boys and girls; however, the gendered messages persisted, and reinforced male and female socialization. Play in general was important for boys and girls, however, boys and girls played differently:

Everybody needs play; “the boy without play is father to the man without a job.’ ...Play fosters a wholesome moral force among people. Many a boy or girl learns to control his or her temper, tongue, and hands in well-directed play. Where the moral standards of community there has been invariably lack of play and wholesome amusement. On the other hand, where there is a good interest in games and athletics, the moral standards are, as a rule, much higher. “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.” The boys and girls on the farm need recreation just as much as those in other walks of life.¹⁰³

¹⁰² “Uncle Tom’s Department,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 1 March 1897, 113.

¹⁰³ “Home Magazine: Play,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 12 June 1924, 899.

Of course, the outspoken interest in play also meant that appropriate clothing for children at play had to be considered. Throughout the early twentieth century, informal pictures depicting playing children stood in stark contrast to the more frequent formal representations of children. Clothing could hamper or enhance childhood experiences and these experiences could be different for boys and girls. Indeed, there appears to have been clothing that suited play for young children, but images of boys suggests their clothing was more diverse in terms of function. Did 'new boys' wear overalls, knee trousers, and knickers? What about 'tomboys'? Could girls wear overalls or knee-trousers without fear of being called 'new women'? Boys most often wore trousers, while few girls were ever shown wearing overalls.

After 1900, girls were increasingly explicitly included in references to play. Some commentators viewed play as a central foundation of childhood, and this view was rationalized by linking baby animals and their playful nature to the needs of children to play:

The baby girl is not happy unless someone will play "peep bo" with her, and she toddles off into an unsteady run, that she may be caught and lovingly brought back again. And so with the kitten which tangles up your ball of worsted, and big overgrown puppy which, apparently ownerless, haunts the lakeside or seashore, and give you no rest until you have thrown in the water the stick or stone he is so playfully eager to fetch. Mother Nature never makes a mistake, and all unknown to the young things themselves, she is superintending and guiding them in the course of self education and development upon which they have entered at her own inspiration. Play is their work, whilst work is their play; and it is this principle which is the keynote to the kindergarten system, which, has brought about such a revolution of ideas upon the whole subject, and with it is a glorious emancipation for children of to-day from the cast-iron rules which fettered and circumscribed so many of the children of the past.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ H.A.B., "The Educative Value of Amusements," *Farmer's Advocate*, 15 July 1901, 475.

Children could enjoy this play in a structured 'kindergarten' environment, viewed as a revolutionary idea at the outset of the twentieth century.

Clothing did not afford young girls the same freedom to play that their brothers enjoyed in their knee trousers and overalls.¹⁰⁵ Theoretically, girls could wear aprons and pinafores over their dresses, which curtailed freedom of movement but kept their dresses clean. The first reference to play clothing for girls appeared in 1912, at a time when play clothes for girls had not yet entered the pages of catalogues. It is important not to directly compare changes to boys' and girls' clothing in this period. While girls did not appear to wear knee trousers or overalls, their garments did change throughout the period as they increasingly became simpler and lighter and were often made from cotton. The point here is that women's fashion changes occurred, first then boys', and finally girls'. Girls eventually wore 'bloomers,' but not until the 1920s, and still within the confines of a dress. Rompers offered the greatest degree of freedom to girls and meant that mothers had to learn yet another pattern of children's clothing. It was only a small relief that rompers were often made of cotton crepe or seersucker and did not need ironing. Young children under the age of three could wear the romper style. In the case of older children, girls beyond the romper stage wore bloomers instead of underskirts and underwear.

In this case, city dwellers were represented as pioneers of children's fashion in this regard: "The little ones are so comfortable, too, when not over-burdened with clothes. Last summer I used to pass, every day, a lawn upon which played two children, of a prominent physician. Not a tack had they on, apparently, but rompers, sun hats, and sandals, and never did children look sweeter, happier, or cooler. The fashion is one that

country folk would do well to follow.”¹⁰⁶ There was no discussion providing insight into why rural families may not have adopted this garment for children. Were there other garments more practical for outdoors on the farm? This advice appeared even though rompers had been advertised to farm families, informing mothers that they were ideal for play, easy to get into, and that they were healthy.

	<p align="center">FROM FACTORY TO YOU</p> <p align="center">ROMPERS PLAY GARMENTS</p> <p align="center">The only thing for the young ones in warm weather. Cool, Comfortable and Sanitary.</p> <p align="center">PLAY CLOTHES</p> <p>have made happy mothers and children from coast to coast, because they are the garments especially designed and made for their purpose — perfect play garments. They are designed, cut, and sewn with care and accuracy. The buttons are on to stay, the finishing is neat and lasting. They are easy to put on and take off — and are always comfortable. Best of all, they are healthy clothes, giving protection to the romping youngster, and not binding or pinching the little body in the least.</p> <p>Send in your orders now, and they will be promptly filled. Do not fail to state size and colors required.</p>	
<p>170—Girl's Romper, light neck and long sleeves. Made of best quality chambray, in tan with white piping, or blue with white piping. Note: Romper buttons around inside hem. Sizes six months, one, two and three years. Price..... 98c.</p>	<p align="center">CHILDREN'S WEAR</p> <p align="center">Room 402 518 St. Catherine St. West Montreal, Can.</p>	<p>181—Girl's Romper, without collar, made of best quality chambray, in tan, with white piping, and blue or brown with white piping. An ideal play garment. Sizes one, two, three, four, five and six years. Price..... 98c.</p>

Figure 2.16: "From Factory to You: Rompers Play Garments," *Farmer's Advocate*, 13 June 1911, 1104.

Many commentators in the nineteenth-century outlined the virtues of country life.

It is surprising, then, that in the early twentieth-century, it was suggested that boys in

¹⁰⁵ Overalls in the twentieth-century were made with durable denim, a cloth viewed as appropriate for work and play.

¹⁰⁶ "Scrap Bag: Rompers," *Farmer's Advocate*, 27 June 1912, 1182-1183.

cities had more play-time. While work was an important part of childhood experience, boys need some time to play and romp:

In the country, often, the play spirit gets as little chance to grow as in the large centres of population. But the difficulty is not lack of space- that goes without saying. No one begrudges the youngster all the room he want to gambol in, but he is begrudged the time to have some out-door fun. This isn't the unhappy fate of every country boy, but there are enough of them whose waking time is so filled up with chores and odd jobs that there isn't a minute between daylight and dark for them to devote to that play which is natural to every other healthy animal, human or other. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, of no interest to himself, or to anyone else. All play and no work makes him a lightweight. But there is a judicious mixture that should be possible in every home where there is a boy. Give the boys some time to play and they will find a place to play in.¹⁰⁷

In the 1920s, this sentiment was expressed for girls as well, this time suggesting that 'All work and no play, made Jill a dull girl.'¹⁰⁸

Even though children were encouraged to play, the games were thought to prepare them for their lives as 'men' and 'women':

She's learning very useful lessons,
For mother knows the way to teach her little daughter
Good housekeeping in play¹⁰⁹

The value of play and learning demonstrates the ways in which gender characteristics in girls were reinforced. In the nineteenth century, girls were taught practical sewing skills, an important domestic duty in their lives. As families changed, so, too, did images of girls' abilities to participate in domestic duties. The idea of play and domestic duties, however, persisted. In a 1911 'competition for Junior Beavers', children were invited to write letters about a photograph of a young girl doing the wash. About two months later,

¹⁰⁷ "Home Journal: The Country Boy Deprived of Play," *Farmer's Advocate* 21 October 1908, 386.

¹⁰⁸ Photograph caption from Canadian National Railway, "Canada is the Fisherman's Paradise," *Farmer's Advocate*, 26 May 1927, 846.

six stories written by girls pointed to the duties of young girls' to wash their doll's clothing.¹¹⁰ Even though 'new boys' were counseled to be kind to their sisters, there were clear limits to their activities with their sisters. Playing with them might be one thing, but playing with their toys and dolls was never considered for 'new boys'.

Play was also seen to have implications for mothers, including more work mending and repairing clothing. In addition, it meant that mothers had to be more concerned about the clothing that boys wore – would it withstand their rough and rugged play? Mothers were regularly provided with advice on restoring, mending and making children's clothing after the clothing needs of older family members had been addressed. One article stated: "After that, the prudent mother will cut them over for Johnny's school pants, with the blessed certainty that there will be plenty of patches. If, when the knees of Johnny's short pantaloons are mended they are ripped up the sides, and the piece set in is nicely pressed at its join with the upper part, and then stitched and hemmed as before, the repairing will hardly show. Sometimes the lad comes in with the appearance of having been riding a buzz-saw, and, certainly, he has been known to slide down a rough hemlock board-and then there are various damages to repair."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Cousin Dorothy, "The Children's Corner: Washing Day," *Farmer's Advocate* 1 October 1902, 725.

¹¹⁰ "The Beaver Circle: A New Competition for Our Junior Beavers," *Farmer's Advocate*, 8 March 1911, 411. "The Beaver Circle: Our Junior Beavers," *Farmer's Advocate*, 18 May 1911, 883-884. Senior Beavers: For all contributors between the ages of ten and sixteen, inclusive, who are in the Fourth Book, Continuation Classes or who have left school; also for those of ten years who have passed the Third Book. Junior Beavers, for all pupils in third book and under, not yet over ten years of age.

¹¹¹ "Minnie May's Department: Mending Men's and Boy's Clothes," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 March 1892, 104. Very few references to children's clothing appeared in this column in the 1890s. A few essays appear discussing clothing, but the practice of having a 'Fashions' component to the column disappears until the early 1900s. There is no column



Figure 2.17: "Reducing the Rent," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1913.¹¹²

that stated "we're no longer paying attention to fashions", or "we will no longer provide advice", but there is a change in focus.

¹¹² An early meaning of 'rent' was the result of rending or tearing apart; esp. a large tear in a garment; torn, formerly also wearing torn or ragged clothing. *Oxford English Dictionary*, Volume 2, 2546.

There were no similar images of girls with torn dresses nor advice on mending girls clothing because of rough wear and tear.

As family sizes decreased and attitudes toward children changed, the mother-daughter relationship was subtly altered as well. At first glance, mothers' role appeared to be clear-cut: they were to train their daughters for domestic duties. Yet while daughters continued to be regarded as helpers to the family, mothers were also encouraged to let their daughters play. Advice in the *Farmer's Advocate*, suggested that play time was an opportune time for mothers to teach their daughters important domestic lessons: "It is a wise mother who can find occupation for her children that will afford education for them as well as amusement, and yet these little home-makers of the next generation are generally more eager to "help mother" at seven than they are at seventeen."¹¹³ Indeed, as the quotation below illustrates, the words of play and work did not have to collide, as learning could be playful and play could be used to train the homemaker of tomorrow:

'You spoil that child dreadfully!' Molly's mother said to Molly's Aunt Margaret. Molly was a dear busy-fingered little girl, just four years old, who always wanted to help her mother, no matter what the latter might be doing...Aunt Margaret's investment of a little over two dollars has meant a wonderful saving to Molly's mother's nerves. She is not "spoiling the child dreadfully." For the mother's 'Don't!' she has substituted 'Do!', and Molly is already showing her capable handling of her tiny housewifery tools that by the time she is big enough to do things her mother is going to have a deft fingered little helper in place of nerve-racking little hindrance.¹¹⁴

Perhaps because ready-made clothing became increasingly prevalent in many homes and because there were fewer children in families, a girl learned to sew by making clothing for her doll instead of learning to sew by mending clothing.

¹¹³ "The Children's Corner: Occupation for Little Hands" *Farmer's Advocate*, 15 June 1899, 358.

It was, in particular, a retrospective nostalgic view of girlhood that captured the imagination of columnists. Interestingly, if boys entered the 'male' world at seven years of age or even earlier, female children remained 'little girls' until the age of fifteen:

She flourished thirty or forty years ago. She was a little girl until she was fifteen... We do not suppose she had her hair in curl paper or crimping pins, or had it "banged" over her forehead, and flounces were no trouble to her... The old fashioned little girl did not grow into a young lady and talk about her beaux before she was in her teens and she did not read dime novels, and was not fancying a hero in every plow boy she met... She did not think she knew as much as her mother, and that her judgement was as good as her grandmother's.¹¹⁵

In describing the story of 'the old-fashioned girl' this commentator evoked a golden past 'where girls were girls'.¹¹⁶ His nostalgic longing for past virtues might have been prompted by the emergence of the 'new woman' in the late nineteenth century, who consistently violated codes of 'proper' female behaviour. In a similar vein, if in a more humorous fashion, the following poem sought to reinforce the gendered identities of 'a wee little lassie' whose role in life was to be sweet, dear and utterly inoffensive:

Mayn't I be a boy? said our Mary,
The tears in her great eyes of blue,
I'm only a wee little lassie,
There's nothing a woman can do.

'Tis so, I heard Cousin John say so,
He's home from a great college, too;
He said so, just now in the parlor,
There's nothing a woman can do.

My wee little lassie, my darling,
Said I, putting back her soft hair,
I want you, my dear little maiden,
To smooth away all mother's care.

¹¹⁴ L.D.M., "When Your Child Wants to Help," *Farmer's Advocate* 11 August 1921, 1256.

¹¹⁵ "The Old Fashioned Girl," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 November 1887, 342.

¹¹⁶ Cousin Dorothy, "The Children's Corner: Grandmother's Remedy," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 March 1902, 184.

Is there nothing you can do, my darling?
 What was that 'pa' said last night?
 My own little sunbeam has been here
 I know, for the room is so bright.

And there is a secret, my Mary,
 Perhaps you may learn it some day-
 The hand that is willing and loving
 Will do the most work on the way.

And the work that is sweetest and dearest,
 The work that so many ne'er do
 The great work of making folks happy
 Can be done by a lassie like you!¹¹⁷

This poem did not allow for the existence of 'tomboys,' who could never hope to earn similar praise for just being themselves. By being 'tomboys' young girls broke the first rule of being 'good' girls. Instead of keeping neat and clean at all times, 'tomboys' ran the danger of soiling their dresses. While it was considered 'natural' and 'inevitable' for boys to dirty their clothes, a similar behaviour for girls was deemed unacceptable. Even worse, instead of merely soiling their garments, girls in dirty dresses were accused of having put a black mark on their feminine notions that could never be fully removed. As 'new boys' were already enjoying the privilege of games and play that would prepare for lives as husbands and fathers, could 'tomboys' play and learn without damaging those feminine ideals? In a retrospective of views about girls and play, the following was noted:

It gives one a cold shiver to think of what it must be to those amongst us old enough to recall the memory of the dwarfing, cramping effect of the limitations which surrounded their childhood, when the small daughters of the family were told that "little girls were to be seen and not heard"; when they had to get hold of a rare little bit of fun by stratagem, as it were; when the slightest indulgence of

¹¹⁷ "A Little Girl's Wish," *Farmer's Advocate*, 15 July 1901, 474.

natural high spirits was termed “tomboyish”; when in the eyes of their nurses, to soil their pinafores was almost a deadly sin, but to make their courtesies gracefully and to behave prettily was “the whole duty of man.”¹¹⁸

In testing the boundaries of gender expectations, young girls could overcome the view that not playing with dolls was ‘strange’ as long as they displayed the kind and caring behaviour of ‘good’ girls. To exchange one’s dolls for kittens was thought to be charming ; to romp around like a boy was not.¹¹⁹

How were gender expectations for girls reflected in clothing and play? Were girls given more freedom to play? While commentators discussed the importance of physical exercise and play for very young girls, they were expected to don dresses at a much earlier age than boys were expected to don long trousers. Only girls who played beyond the years set aside for childish games were called tomboys. As the century progressed, boy-like qualities in girls became increasingly acceptable. Indeed, in 1921, a father’s musing about his deceased daughter lovingly described a female ‘Peter Pan’. ‘Tomboys,’ like ‘new boys’ who had appeared in 1905, did not think much about their clothes:

Clothes meant little to her. It was a fight to get a new rig on her; but eventually a harder fight to get it off. She never wore a jewel and had no ring but her high school class ring, and never asked anything but wristwatch. She refused to have her hair up; though she was nearly seventeen. “Mother,” she protested, “you don’t know how much I get by with in my braided pigtailed that I could not with my hair up.” Above every other passion of her life was her passion not to grow up, to be a child. The tomboy in her, which was big, seemed to loathe to be put away forever in skirts. She was a Peter Pan who refused to grow up.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ H.A.B., “The Educative Value of Amusements,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 15 July 1901, 475. This article contains the earliest Canadian reference to ‘tomboys’ found.

¹¹⁹ “The Beaver Circle: An Odd Little Girl,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 11 December 1911, 2006.

¹²⁰ William Allen White, “The Dearly Beloved Daughter,” *Farmer’s Advocate*, 1 September 1921, 1348.

Would mother have been as positive about her 'tomboy' characteristics? Unlike many girls, it was difficult to her to wear new clothing, and she wore her hair in a fashion that provided her freedom. She was also apparently 'loathe to be put away forever in skirts'. What did she wear then? Did other tomboys feel that skirts were the ultimate symbol of confinement and entry into the adult female world?

In the eyes of many nineteenth-century observers, the clothing of rural families was far from fashionable. In the 1890s, ready-made clothing became increasingly available. As rural families moved from the production of clothing at home to the consumption of ready-made clothing, they also struggled to adapt to changing expectation of consumption. Between the 1890s and the 1920s, functional clothing that could be made at home could not always accommodate the increasing varieties and changing functions of the latest children's fashions. At the outset of the period under investigation, clothing for infants was made at home, as was most clothing for girls. Over time, however, families purchased clothing in neighbouring towns and cities or by mail-order catalogues. Instead of producing clothing, families worked to earn wages to buy clothing, sometimes produced by the daughters of farmers in cities.

Contributors to the *Farmer's Advocate* were well aware that they were witnessing a transition from a period when clothing was made at home to a time when boys wore clothing purchased at a department store. In depicting this transition, the quotation below includes the now familiar reminder that it was character, not clothes, which made a boy a 'boy':

In order to present the boy of forty years ago to a cultured modern audience I must dress him in his best for great occasions. Let me see-what did he wear? On state occasion, such as going to church or to the fall fair, he wore a paper collar and put butter on his hair. He also wore a home-made, full-cloth suit...If he was trying to be real stylish he wore a "dickey," or false shirt front, over his flannel shirt...I am afraid that if such a boy appeared among the correctly gloved, department-store clothed boys of to-day the modern boys would laugh-but they would do it at their peril. Inside of that uncouth clothing there was usually a boy who was sensitive to ridicule and ready to fight at the drop of a hat.¹²¹

In the early twentieth century, advertisements in the *Farmer's Advocate* also point to the increasing popularity of Eaton's and Simpson's mail-order catalogues that brought the latest boys' fashions into rural homes.¹²²

Ready-made clothing was available in dry goods stores and department stores from the 1880s onward, and by the 1900s, the quality of clothing reportedly improved substantially. Interestingly, there was comparatively little discussion in the magazine sections of the *Farmer's Advocate* about this new consumer product. Only after the Great War, this industry made its way into rural communities in the form of advice columns. At that time, clothing by this time was as no longer a seasonal concern of rural families but had varied and diverse functions. Advice regarding spring and summer needs did not fulfill the requirements of providing clothing for children. Rather than having a set of winter and summer clothes, children were now required to have garments for school, play, work, social events, the beach or picnics, some of which could be bought at reasonable prices while others could be more easily made at home. In addition, as stages of childhood further complicated by professionals and popular culture, then there was more clothing mothers had to consider for their children. They now had to dress infants,

¹²¹ Peter McArthur, "My Boyhood and My Boy's," *Farmer's Advocate*, 14 December 1916, 2034.

tots, young school children, juveniles, juniors, misses and youths. In order to lift the considerable burden, commentators in the *Farmer's Advocate* encouraged their readers to resort to ready-made:

And why should both city and country woman heap scorn on the 'ready-made?' I see many city people wearing them and looking well dressed, too. Are dress-maker or tailor-made gowns always perfect in fit? How much from start to finish does it take to get a new dress made? The fact that I can get a ready-made at one trip-or even order it from the catalogue-instead of taking two or three long drives to town for tiresome fittings, is a point very much in favor of the ready-made.¹²³

As women were increasingly represented as 'consumers' rather than 'producers' they were furnished with advice on how to purchase clothing specifically for children. What about the boys' and their 'special' relationship with their mothers? What about rites of passage regarding their first pair of trousers made at home? The following musing, "Those Pants!" written from a boy's perspective raises a number of questions about the views of boys and mothers regarding manufactured clothing:

I hate those pants that mother makes,
And "leaves me room to grow;"
That's why they drag around my legs
That's why they wobble so.
That's why the pockets at the side
Are way down by my feet;
And the way I know the front from back,
Is the patch that's on the seat
That's why they look so kind of queer;
I'm going to tell her so;
I hate those pants that mother makes
With 'lots of room to grow.'¹²⁴

¹²² Advertisement, "Canada's Largest Exclusive Men's and Boys' Outfitting Store," *Farmer's Advocate*, 20 February 1903, 169.

¹²³ "The Ingle Nook: Clothes, Books and Other Matters." *Farmer's Advocate*, 4 January 1917, 21.

¹²⁴ Anonymous, "Children's Page: Those Pants!" *Farmer's Advocate*, 26 June 1924, 972.

On the surface, this musing that appeared in 1924 in the *Farmer's Advocate* is a simple reflection of a boy's dissatisfaction about homemade garments. His mother has sewn them to accommodate her growing son; however, this makes them 'different' from other pants – presumably, ready-made ones. This representation offered readers an exaggerated view of how these oversized, homemade trousers appeared to boys. Pockets out of place and likely of no use as well as visible patches further added to this boy's harsh feelings about these pants; he would tell her that he 'hated' them. While boys needed clothing and pants were part of the daily ritual of getting dressed, another function emerges from the family perspective, and that were to extend the use of the pants made by mother. The tension between homemade and ready-made increasingly appeared and was more noted in the 1920s. How did retailers and manufacturers relate to these changes? These questions can be addressed by studying the retailing advice and marketing of children's clothing during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

**Chapter 3: 'New Boys', Modern Women and Clothes-Conscious Girls:
Retailing ready-made Clothing and the *Dry Goods Review***

38

THE DRY GOODS REVIEW



Figure 3.1: "The New Boy," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 February 1896, 38.

The 'new boy' made an early visual appearance in the *Dry Goods Review* relative to the images of boys in formal photographs or in the *Farmer's Advocate*. This 'new boy' appeared in 1896, wearing overalls, short hair and a loose-fitting shirt that might be pulled over his head or buttoned in front. The image brings to mind a character from a Mark Twain story, rather than the darling boy represented in *Little Lord Fauntleroy*.¹ There was no discussion of this image in the *Dry Goods Review* but its existence during this period raises a number of questions about 'new boys' and 'modern women' and challenges us to consider family relationships in the context of changes in how mothers dressed children.

This chapter examines children's clothing from the perspective of the manufacturing and retailing industry in Canada. A systematic study of the *Dry Goods Review* during the period 1891 to 1935 provides insight into the world views of clothing manufacturers and retailers. While the *Farmer's Advocate* columns were directed at a 'family' of readers, the *Dry Goods Review* was a trade journal written for owners of dry goods stores, retailers and wholesale salesmen. While both publications carried advertisements that provided vivid visual representations of children and clothing, they were aimed at different audiences and contained somewhat distinct prescriptive advice. Thus, a close reading of the *Dry Goods Review* can help us gain a better understanding of the ways in which mothers and 'new boys' were being constructed in turn-of-the-century Canada.

¹ See Chapter one, the image of Little Lord Fauntleroy, Figure 1.6. Little Lord Fauntleroy was a popular fictional character in the 1880s and 1890s. Also see images Master Sydney Lyman, Figure 1.7, Master Kirkpatrick, Figure 1.8 and Master Sclater,

The *Dry Goods Review* was distributed throughout Canada at the turn of the nineteenth century into the twentieth century. Advertisements from clothing manufacturers, retailers and ready-made clothing companies were regular components of the journal from its beginning. The trade journal also served as a source of information about everyday business and trade affairs by reporting on trends in window dressing, home furnishings, millinery styles, fashions and furs, home decorations, wallpaper, carpet, linoleum and fixtures for retailers. Importantly, between 1891 and the early 1920s, the retail trade appears to have been a predominantly male domain, again in contrast to the family section of the *Farmer's Advocate*. In the early years of publication, founding editor J.B. Maclean published it as an eight-page trade journal. By 1893, the *Dry Goods Review* had branch offices in Montreal, New York and London, and its yearly subscription rate had doubled to two dollars per year.² In 1905 it appeared as *The Dry Goods Review and Men's Furnisher*.³ By 1910, it required an entire production, and editorial teams to publish the two hundred and forty page trade journal that appeared bi-monthly.⁴ One of the few female reporters was E. Cora Hind, who, in the late 1890s, signed her news features from the West simply as 'E.C.H.'. ⁵ Otherwise, male writers dominated the pages of the *Dry Goods Review*. An editorial shift in the 1920s

Figure 1.9. as examples of images of boys that look more like Fauntleroy than the 'new boy.'

² *Dry Goods Review*, 1 February 1893.

³ "Special Spring Number," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 January 1905, cover.

⁴ John Bayne Maclean, "Coming-of-Age of The Dry Goods Review," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 January 1910, 178.

⁵ E.C.H., "Dry Goods Items from the West: The August Bargain Sales in Winnipeg This Season," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 September 1898, 62; "Good Trade in the West: A Crowd of People at the Winnipeg Opening," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 October 1898, 18. Her articles appeared in the form of letters from the West until 1904. E.C.H., "Spring Styles in the West: Stobart & Sons & Co.," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 January 1904, 258.

increasingly focused on female consumers and trends in the ready-made clothing industry.⁶ The journal's new focus on female fashions was aptly recognized in its new name in 1935: *Style*.⁷

Throughout the 1890s, the imagery in the *Dry Goods Review* tended to cast women as 'hapless shoppers'. These women had to be 'wooed' by male representatives of the retail and manufacturing industry: "If it were not so childish and out of date I could take a real good cry," said the woman with the short hair. "What is the matter, dear?" "I wore my husband's vest downtown shopping yesterday by mistake, and there were three big cigars sticking out of the top pocket. I never noticed it till I got home."⁸ Short as it was, this 'joke' brimmed with gender stereotypes: Crying is childish, short hair is masculine, shopping is a female activity, smoking is a male pastime, and women make foolish mistakes. Other musings, as well, used clothing as a focal point in the construction of gendered identities.

⁶ She simply signed her articles E.C.H. and began writing for the *Dry Goods Review* in 1898 and continued for about three years. E.C.H., "Dry Goods Items from the West: The August Bargain Sales in Winnipeg This Season," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 September 1898, 62 to E.C.H., "Fair Week in Winnipeg," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 August 1901, 12.

⁷ Editorial, "Between Us," *Dry Goods and Stylewear Review*, 1 February 1933. This editorial announced the name change to Canada's National Style and Merchandising Paper. Three years later it appeared as simply the *Stylewear Review* and continued publishing into the 1980s under that name. The collection is located at the Thomas Fischer Rare Book Room, University of Toronto.

⁸ *Dry Goods Review*, 1 October 1, 1894, 16. This appeared as a musing, to fill space.



She : " It's very absurd for men to make fun of the fashions which women adopt, when their own attire is so unreasonable."

He : " It seems to me that men dress very sensibly."

She : " But look at the absurdly high collars they wear !"

He : " Don't you know what they are for ?"

She : " No."

He : " They're for us to rest our chins on so that we won't get tired looking over the hats in the theatre."

Figure 3.2: *Dry Goods Review*, 1 July 1897, 36.

Just as the concept of 'separate spheres' distinguished between 'male' and 'female' spheres, so, too, was clothing supposed to reinforce 'male' and 'female' identities. This, in part, may explain present-day surprise at nineteenth-century boys wearing petticoats.

Similarly, nineteenth-century women wearing 'masculine' attire presented the focus of much amusement:

A biker asked a farmer.
 "Has a lady wheeled this way?"
 And the farmer told the biker,
 "It's mighty hard to say,
 From the costumes they are wearing,
 From the mountains to the sea,
 If the biker is a she one,
 Or a biker is a he!"⁹

That some women were wearing what was considered to be male attire caused concern and provided material for jokes and musings. Can links between references to 'new women', female cyclists wearing bloomers, and an increased availability of bloomers for boys be made, as they were all practical and afforded the wearer freedom to enjoy athletic endeavours? 'New boys' or 'real boys' wore bloomers or attire that permitted them to be different from young boys and perhaps more 'independent' of their mothers. Another 'humorous' image, Figure 3.3, from the *Dry Goods Review* again underlines tensions between boys and women regarding appropriate gendered dress:

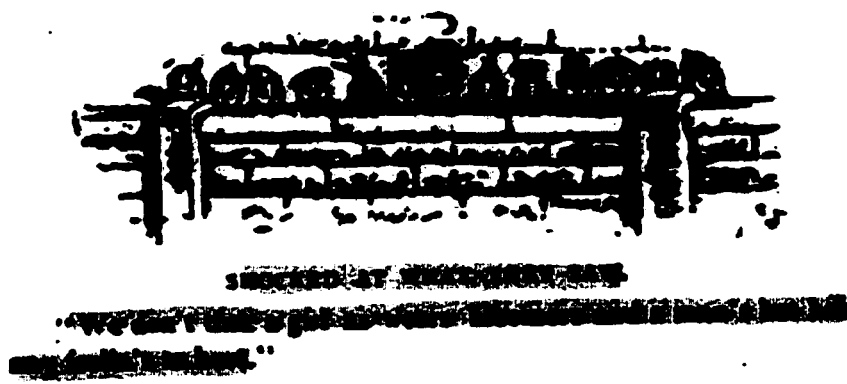


Figure 3.3: "Shocked at what they Saw!" *Dry Goods Review*, 1 July 1897, 26.

⁹ "The Costume is a Puzzler," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 July 1898, 50. An earlier reference to the prevalence of this cycling attire appeared in 1895. "The New Costume," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 August 1895, 7. This article was a serious feature regarding women's dress reform and the reaction of manufacturers providing women with acceptable cycling attire. "The idea of a reform dress, a longing to abandon the clumsy skirts now worn by women, has slumbered long in the minds of the brightest, cleverest and most daring of English and French speaking women..."

The boys, hiding behind a fence, find no shame in ridiculing a girl dressed in 'bloomers and a man's hat,' as she was not a real girl with 'real' feelings to hurt.

The department store was the first feminized social space, offering refuge from the pressures of shopping, transcending class, and away from avoiding the drudgery of making children's clothes at home. It was contrasted with the pleasures of 'look' and 'shop' and 'buy':

The only reason why men still run dry goods stores and women patronize them is because men –or at least the successful one- know when to give in to a woman, and women don't. If it were not for this fact do you think that you would be 'in it' for a moment in this age of female supremacy? Give this more than a passing thought when next you have a case of trouble to smooth over or a complaint to hear and settle. But allowing a woman to have her own way when paths cross and wills oppose is only going half way to secure her loyalty and good will, for such opportunities do not occur every day. *The whole store should be dedicated to her use and pleasure and the fact should be so obvious that a stranger should at once recognize it...* Is the customer weary after a morning's shopping? "This way to the ladies sitting room." Does she feel all mussed up after a hot ride from the suburbs? "This way to the toilet room...It is just such attention that has done more than anything else to make the department store what it is to-day-the popular trading place for all classes. It makes a woman feel quite at home in a place designed expressly for her use and comfort, where there is the greatest freedom to come and go, to merely look and shop or buy, or do much as she pleases...¹⁰

While the increasing 'purchasing power' of women was acknowledged, unflattering views of women and their 'bargain' nature held:

When Government runs the railways
And women affairs of state
The trains that went at 5 o'clock
She'll "mark down" to 4.58.¹¹

¹⁰ "Women Customers," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 July 1897, 32. Reprinted from the *Dry Goods Economist*. Italics mine.

The portrayal above raises an interesting question about women shoppers: What fueled their perceived obsession for bargains? While we can only speculate, it is interesting to note that articles on ‘bargain hunters’ coincided with a gradual transition from home-made clothing to ready-made clothing. At a time when women were targeted as consumers of children’s clothing, and, in particular, boys’ clothing, they were seen to feel the need to not only save time but also money. Instead of praising the rational shopper, however, poems tended to gently ridicule the irrational female quest for bargains:

Bargain sale! Bargain sale!
 Newspapers thundered.
 Up to the palace of trade
 Strode the Six Hundred.
 "Forward! Our fortune's made!
 Charge on the clerks!" they said.
 Into the palace of trade.
 Rushed the Six Hundred.

Bold and well they fought
 Then home her spoil brought
 Each wife and daughter.
 Let this be their defence,
 All saved at least ten cents-
 Some saved a quarter.¹²

In other articles and representations, retailers noted that women because they were constantly searching for bargains, were unlikely to be loyal to small stores. Their loyalty seemed to be captured by department stores that had weekly bargain sales. Yet, if

¹¹ “The Tendency of the Sex,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 December 1896, 36.

¹² “Charge of the Bargain Brigade,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 July 1898, 14. The original poem was published April 10, 1864 by Lord Alfred Tennyson. “The Charge of the Light Brigade.” I am grateful to M. Eamon at the National Archives for finding this reference for me.

women were depicted as demanding, difficult shoppers, boys were often described as potential loyal, life-long customers who needed to be 'won over' for future sales.¹³

As we have already noted, the task of clothing children was seen to fall almost entirely to women. Not surprisingly, then, portrayals of women as bargain hunters were gradually supplanted by more favourable views of mothers as shoppers. More specifically, the *Dry Goods Review* advised retailers to carry boys' suits in order to lure mothers into their business:

Boys' and children's clothing is better sold in the dry goods and general stores than in the exclusive clothing houses, for the women buy the children's suits, and prefer to get them at a dry goods store. Many merchants start their clothing department by putting in boys' and children's suits, and later add the men's clothing. They carry work clothing and furnished goods, so it requires less than half the additional capital for a dry goods store to add the clothing line than for a clothing store to carry the same sized stock. Considering saving in expenses, the benefit of other lines and the advantage in buying which comes from a better rating. It is not to be wondered at that the general man is now selling so much clothing that the wholesalers are eager for his business.¹⁴

How could boys' departments address the needs of both mothers and their sons?

One solution was to separate boys' clothing from the men's department so mothers would feel at ease. Once retailers had decided to showcase a separate department of boys' clothing, the *Dry Goods Review* provided advice on how to sell boys' clothing by showering the clothing with four, by six, inch cards that could be easily read, and waxed

¹³ The image of women as bargain hunters was a popular one. Poems and musings and 'news' articles appeared on this topic. For instance the following described the death of a woman who died shopping for a bargain: "Death or a Bargain: A London Shopper is Crushed to Death While Squeezing into Sale." There was apparently an inquest into her death, with the following verdict, "Inside half an hour, and after hearing medical testimony, the coroner's jury returned this verdict. 'Deceased died from syncope caused by exertion and excitement of getting into a bargain sale, and that such death was due to natural causes.'" *Dry Goods Review*, 1 October 1897, 62.

eloquently about the 'outstanding' and 'stylish' qualities of boys' garments. The 'best' were published in a feature review of tickets on boys' clothing:

'Boy's delight,' 'Material and cut perfect,' 'Such patterns are in demand,' 'Choice patterns and well made,' 'Excellent workmanship,' 'Boys' choicest patterns,' 'Pleasing the lads and mothers,' 'Few only as rare as this,' 'Highly appreciated by boys,' 'Good to wear, hard to tear,' 'New designs,' 'Made for wear, not for tear,' 'Boys' delight in this,' 'Worn by dressy lads,' 'Fashionable and durable,' 'For up to date lads,' 'Few to compare with this,' 'Made of lasting material,' 'Rare and novel,' 'Quality unsurpassed,' 'Our aim is to please the boys,' 'Made of resisting material,' 'Irresistible for wear and purchase,' 'Pride of the loom,' 'Foremost in quality, rearmost in price.'¹⁵

Three consistent messages were repeated on these 'tickets;' the first being that these garments were durable; the second, that they were modern in style; and, finally that they were made to appeal to mothers and sons. All these messages were targeted to mothers and were concerned with quality and economy.

In the early twentieth century, the trade literature considered boys important enough as customers to devote special boys' departments for them rather than including boys' clothing in men's wear sections. As early as 1914, 'mannish clothing' for the 'new boy' occupied a prominent position in the country's leading department stores:

A department for the boys where the little man can get the same attention and consideration for his style ideas as his father and big brother, is the idea behind the establishment of a new Department in the store of the John Murphy Co., Ltd., of this city [Montreal]...There are mannish coats for the little fellows as young as six which are made on the big brother style.¹⁶

¹⁴ "Clothing in Western General Stores," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 May 1899, 62. From the *Dry Goods Reporter of Chicago*.

¹⁵ "Tickets on Boys' Clothing," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 November 1897, 13.

¹⁶ "Providing Mannish Clothing for Boys," *Dry Goods Review*, 8 August 1914, 45. "Making the Boys' Department Pay; Separate Department for Little Men: Grafton's of Hamilton, Use Lady Clerks in Boys' Department – Liberal Use is Made of Premiums-Boys Always Remembered in Clothing Advertisements- Circular Advertising," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 August 1920, 62. A later article again encouraged retailers to separate men's and boys' fashions, noting that women did most of the buying of boys' clothing.

In establishing boys' departments, the *Dry Goods Review* asked retailers to take into account mothers' needs to feel welcome and at home in their retail and advertising spaces. Too often, the *Dry Goods Review* wrote, women felt uncomfortable in the men's clothing departments: "When women come into a store to buy clothes for their boys, they prefer not to go into a part where men are buying: they like to be off by themselves. In the same way we feel that we can get the attention of mothers better if we appeal to them in an advertisement all for themselves (and their boys); not mixed up in one of men's clothing and haberdashery, which they might not read."¹⁷

The managers of the shop in Montreal felt they could meet the needs of mothers and still provide boys' styles for their fathers and older brothers. This store for women provided clothing for the 'little man':

Now we find that the growing consideration for the wearing apparel of the boy which has been more and more in evidence during the past few years, has had its effect, and in the expansion scheme there is space devoted to a boys' department alone. There will be clothing for the little chap of two years and there will be the latest thing in mannish effects for the boys of 14 or 15; but when he reaches the age where he begins to think of covering that portion of legs between the knee and the shoe top he will have to go elsewhere.¹⁸

Mothers, it was suggested, bought their sons ready-made clothing and retailers were again counseled to market to women. Indeed, it was maintained that even though "The problem has been successfully met by many stores, nevertheless, although the department store has naturally the best chance of success with boys' furnishing by reason of the fact

"The Men's Wear Department: Is the Small Boy Worth Special Attention?" *Dry Goods Review*, 1 April 1926, 46.

¹⁷ "Direct Appeal to Boys' Mothers," *Dry Goods Review*, 17 December 1913, 47.

¹⁸ "Providing Mannish Clothing for Boys," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 August 1914, 45.

that women are the principal purchasers, rather than the boys themselves.”¹⁹ Therefore, if a retailer chose to sell clothing for boys and men together, it was suggested that they would need to consider women’s tastes and not only boys’ tastes.

The debate surrounding space for boys’ clothing was frequently revisited in the *Dry Goods Review* in the early twentieth century. Merchants were faced with the view that they needed to target female shoppers, and at the same time, appeal to boys as customers. Retailers were advised to establish boys’ departments in their businesses. In doing so, the *Dry Goods Review* advised its readers, they “bring women into the store and they are always good buyers of men’s wear.”²⁰ In turn, retailers looking for ways of improving their sales were encouraged to gear their advertising strategy towards ‘the female population’:

C.H. Mason, who has recently opened a furnishing store in Preston, Ont., intends to specialize in children’s wear. He believes that children’s goods are a fine drawing card and help to advertise the store. Besides, in a town like Preston where a great part of the male population is busy during the day the presence of children’s clothing in the store attracts considerable custom from the female population.²¹

In order to attract the ‘female shoppers’, the *Dry Goods Review* also advised businessmen to think carefully about where to put their boys’ and children’s departments. After all, if one subscribed to the view that mothers would be selecting their children’s garments, storeowners needed to plan their retail space accordingly. In no uncertain words, the *Dry*

¹⁹ “Profitable Trading with the Boys: Manager of New Department in Ottawa Store Says Meagre Stocks and Poor Assortments Drive Customers Away-Barber Shop Has Become Very Popular-Keep Men’s and Boys’ Distinct-Ogilvy Store of Ottawa,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 May 1922, 31.

²⁰ “Develop Boy’s Department,” *Dry Goods Review*, 20 March 1912, 108.

²¹ “Will Specialize in Clothing for Boys,” *Dry Goods Review*, 4 March 1914, 62.

Goods Review warned retailers in 1908 they would miss sales opportunities if they ignored women's roles:

A great many dry goods stores in Canada are missing opportunities of making money by neglecting or ignoring the growing demand for juvenile clothing. The general dry goods store is the most natural place for the mother in search of a new suit for her young son to look. It is where she buys her own clothing. It is reasonable to assume that he would be able to supply the wants of the sons of their lady customers... One of the trade tendencies of the present is the development of the children's clothing industry. It is a rational tendency, too, because, what mother would not prefer to visit the store in which she does her buying and procure a child's suit ready to wear, than to go to the trouble of having one made, particularly when she recognizes that the latter is an exceedingly problematical process... There is opportunity for such scope in the originality of design of children's clothing, and such a wide variety of styles are possible that it is much more satisfactory to go to a store where the boy may be fitted and have the suit sent home the same day, than to run the risk of having something made which, when it is completed may not be suitable... The manufactures of this class of garments in Canada have produced some particularly dressy and attractive lines, and the merchant that puts in a stock and displays them effectively will find that his store has developed a new popularity with the youngsters and their mothers.²²

This article explicitly acknowledges mothers' role in clothing their sons, and emphasizes the convenience manufacturers and retailers could offer mothers by providing ready-made clothing, thereby alleviating their work load at home. Unlike the ubiquitous image of the 'Lionel' suit that appeared in numerous ladies magazines in the nineteenth century, this article suggests that children wore a diversity of styles and that their wardrobes were more complicated than those of a previous generation. Merchants were thus encouraged to attract both boys and their mothers.

The advertisements of the *Dry Goods Review* mirror a shift from dress goods for women sewing at home to textiles suitable for manufacturers of ready-made clothing

²² "Men's Furnisher: Opportunity for Children's Clothing," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 March 1908, 197.

lines. Articles also point to the emergence of the 'female shopper' who, by the 1910s, was seen to dominate retailing stores. In 1912, one article states that women presented the vast majority of customers in boys' departments:

What percentage of the buying in a department such as this is done by women? Enquiry goes to show that in the boys' department fully 75 percent of the purchases are made by women, and that of this number probably one-half also brings out the man of the house and other members of the family. In the men's clothing department it is estimated that, in about 20 per cent of the purchases, "there is a woman in it," or in other words the purchaser is accompanied by his wife or other feminine authority who constitutes the court of appeal on perplexing sartorial questions.²³

The power of women as consumers was officially recognized in a feature reporting on an address by Marian Farrell, advertising manager of Almy's in Montreal, to the local Women's Press Club in 1921. Her lecture emphasized the importance of women for the advertising industry in Canada. Farrell asserted that women made up ninety per cent of the 'purchasing' world. She reasoned their contributions and perspectives, therefore, should be considered within the advertising industry. She suggested that articles written from a female viewpoint could enhance the quality of coverage on men's and boys' wear: "Women are making good at writing copy concerning men's and boys' wear, perhaps it is because they know how she likes their own men folk to look."²⁴ Discussions about promoting boys' clothing to boys, their mothers or their parents appeared often throughout the period. The primary objective of the manufacturing industry was to sell more ready-made clothing, and the *Dry Goods*

²³ "Women an Important Buying Factor: In some lines of men's wear selections made by men are in the minority," *Dry Goods Review*, 30 March 1912, 100.

²⁴ "Equipment and Display: Appealing to the Female Mind," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 August 1921, 116.

Review acted as a mediator between families and stores, and, more specifically, mothers and sons.

At a time when the concept of the 'new boy' was developed, middle-aged men were counseled on how they could best 'preserve the impression of youth'; appearance was linked to modernity and modern business demands. In the realm of fashion, 'man' could learn from 'the example of the weaker sex'. In this view, no longer did men have to fear that they would be labeled as 'dandy' if they dressed with care; just as clothing linked daughters and mothers, so too did it link sons and fathers. While mothers were seen to play an active part in clothing their sons, this point should not overlook fathers' importance as a fashion role model:

Paraphrasing we might say that a man is as young as he dresses. But the average male when he gets to the age of forty-five can hardly expect to change clothes with his down-chinned son. The point is that it is the modern tendency for the middle aged-man to look as young as his bout with time and nature will permit. Modern business demands a man of smart appearance, and the impression of aggressive youth is an important asset...Remarks more or less suggested by the comic papers are heard commentary of the tendency of modern women to defy the advance years by dressing in the same styles as her daughter. There are few models now for the woman of middle age which, so far as styles is concerned, would not suit the debutante. Man in his dress is following the example of the weaker sex (no discourtesy meant to the militants).²⁵

The 'common sense' clothing for women was described and prescribed in the *Dry Goods Review* much in the same way as 'natural' fashions for boys. For example, in a detailed review of New York fashions, Jack Worth noted that the modern woman was addicted to athletic recreation just as 'new boys' reveled in play and sport. Instead of condemning 'masculine' fashions for women, Worth heartily endorsed the new 'common sense' style of clothing:

Mr. Worth is a believer in common sense fashions for women and what is more to the point, he voices the prediction that the ideas now prevailing in the matter of dress will become practically permanent. Feminine dress to-day is modeled on lines which approach closer to what common sense would dictate than at any previous time. The straight, slender lines are conducive to comfort. The modern woman has become a devotee to sport, motoring, golfing, riding and walking being regular features of her daily routine. For such purposes the present dress styles are admirably adapted and, as woman's addiction to athletic recreation is likely to become permanent, the chances are that styles will never get far away from the present standards. At any rate, all will feel inclined to lend affirmation to the prediction of Mr. Worth to this extent, that radical departures or reversions to the days of crinolines and flowing skirts, are practically out of the question.²⁶

Even though the *Dry Goods Review* did not discuss explicitly how 'American' fashions were received in a Canadian context, its endorsement of authors like Jack Worth indicates tacit approval of 'common sense' clothing.

Using a familiar image that characterized mothers' position at home '—the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world—' the journal applied nineteenth-century images of women to the changing position of mothers and wives. Representations in advertisements of women linked women's role in the retail world firmly to her role in the home. Women controlled decisions about clothing their families. Even though styles of clothing constantly changed, women's role in clothing their families remained central:

Remember that it is well to bait your advertising hook according to the fish you seek. Remember that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the (purchasing) world. Women are buyers. Men occasionally get themselves measured for suits and overcoats, but the purchasing power is effected by their wives or their mothers. The feminine eye is really the eye to catch in most goods...If Joe is so unfortunate as not to possess a wife, mother or sister to advise him, he usually buys from the first store he chances to see.²⁷

²⁵ "Father and Son Can Wear the Same Styles," *Dry Goods Review*, 16 December 1914, 61.

²⁶ "Common Sense to Rule," *Dry Goods Review*, 7 May 1913, 22-23.

²⁷ "Good Advertising... Women are the Ad Readers," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 February 1903, 36. The poem "Hand that rocks the cradle Is the Hand that Rules the World" was

At first, advice to retailers described home sewing as a practice of the past. Yet, with practice, and persuasion, women could be educated about the value of ready-made clothing for all children's garments. Modern women, the *Dry Goods Review* suggested, had more important things to do than sew:

There is an increasing disposition in ready-to-wear departments to stock children's and misses' garments, and stores that have not bestowed much attention on these lines are going in for them now. Mothers have so many other cares and modern women are becoming so accustomed to filling their wants in the dry goods store, that the time and energy that once went into the home sewing is now spent in other directions.²⁸

This early reference to ready-made clothing for girls, the 'misses', preceded the mass manufacture of girls clothing by over a decade. It was not until the 1920s that advertisements for ready-made clothing in the *Dry Goods Review* portrayed girls as customers.

Since female customers were foremost in retailers' minds, the industry sought to gain their patronage and instill confidence in ready-made clothing departments. At first, trade journals counseled retailers to target female consumers by advertising boys' ready-made clothing. By the 1920s, they also featured advertisements of ready-made items for infants and toddlers. Compared with American retailers, Canadian wholesalers were viewed as 'backward' when it came to retailing and selling children's wear. While it was commonly acknowledged that children's clothing was not in great demand trade journals held that demand could be created by responding to women's perceived needs:

written by American poet and lawyer, William Ross Wallace, born in 1819. It is believed that this poem was published in 1865 in his book, *What Rules the World*.

²⁸ "Cloaks, Costumes and Skirts: Children's and Misses' Styles for Fall," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 July 1904, 197.

There is not the demand for them [children's wear], of course; but this can be overcome by placing a good range of all sorts of children's garments in sight of customers, few of whom have any idea that they can purchase them. A large proportion of the garments for children are made in the home, when it is possible for the retailer to supply them cheaper and better made... All that is required is to educate customers. When a large trade is done the goods can be sold at a much lower price than they could be made. But the trade in children's wear is not always a cheap one. Mothers as a rule, are willing to spend more on their children than on themselves, and many a Christening robe, for instance, has been bought for an infant at a price greater than the mother would spend on a cloak for herself.²⁹

The excerpt above also illustrates that the ready-made clothing industry increasingly presented its products as a way to save mothers time, especially by relieving her from the work of making her children's clothing since it did not 'pay' to make children's clothing at home:

Manufacturers of juvenile wear are busy with their preparations of cotton dress lines for the coming Spring. This is a line that is now specialized upon and since this has taken place, not only have the styles been improved but also the class of fabrics that are used in their make-up and this department has shown a constant increase. The cut and finish is so good and the prices are so reasonable that mothers are finding that it no longer pays to make up dresses for the small folks at home, and as for the dressmaker, she is left completely in the rear.³⁰

Viewed through the eyes of the industry, the advantages of ready-made garments were manifold. Not only was it economical for mothers to buy ready-made garments rather than to sew them, it also saved them many visits to dressmakers. In addition, retailers in small towns were afforded a chance to compete with department stores like T. Eaton Company that increasingly offered a large selection of children's clothing:

More merchants are becoming interested in children's dresses, and are adding this line to their garment stock, as they find that it is not only a good paying proposition, but its presence helps to keep customers at home who otherwise would patronize the mail order business. The ready-made child's dress is a boon

²⁹ "Children's Wear," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 June 1902, 84.

³⁰ "Ready-to-Wear Garments: Juvenile Wear," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 June 1910, 84, 86.

to mothers in places where dressmakers are scarce, and if they cannot get a smart little dress from local merchants, they are going [to end into] the city for it.³¹ [sic]

Eventually, however, the *Dry Goods Review* took a moderate approach to home sewing; it accepted that home sewing materials would continue to present an important component of retail sales.

Home sewing, dressmaking and the integration of the ready-made clothing industry presented important issues for merchants and retailers. For example, as articles in the *Dry Goods Review* revealed, wholesalers had to ensure that their stores carried sufficient supplies of paper patterns for its customers:

Say, neighbor, how is your business in Paper Patterns? Not what we expected! No! and it won't be. Smart people Won't pay 30 to 45 cents for your pattern when The New Idea Pattern guaranteed as good as the best, can be bought in most of the towns of Canada for NOT MORE THAN 15 CENTS.³²

More specifically, the *Dry Goods Review* endorsed the publication *Children's Clothes*, a booklet that was devoted exclusively to clothing for children up to the age of fourteen, and that contained many helpful suggestions for mothers sewing at home.³³ Given the repeated reminders that home sewing materials presented an important component of the business, it appears that some retailers desired to do away with the difficult dress goods department. These retailers were reminded that, although ready-made clothing was

³¹ "Children's Dresses for Spring: Increasing Number of Merchants Putting in this Department," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 November 1910, 86.

³² Advertisement, "The New Idea Pattern Co.," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 January 1898, 71.

³³ "Catering to Sewing at Home: Manufacturers Putting Out Many Articles to Help the Woman who Sews-It Pays to Feature Dressmakers' Supplies and Home Sewing Needs in One Department-Collar Forms, Bust Forms, Dress Linings, Skirt Markers etc.," *Dry Goods Review*, 20 January 1915, 14. "Home Sewing Week' Helps Fabrics: How the Home Sewing Week is Conducted and What Its Purposes Are - Wise Publicity Can Appeal to the Thrift Tendency of the Housewife- Linking up with other Departments with Event," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 November 1921, 47.

gaining ground, home sewing was not going to disappear from Canadian households, particularly since practical cotton garments could easily be sewn at home. Thus merchants were advised to boost their sales in this department by providing expert advice by promoting a 'Home Sewing Week' in which, the *Dry Goods Review* held, they would be able to increase sales of home sewing supplies. The *Dry Goods Review* also lavished praise on Eaton's innovative retail policies its stores, and women who wandered into the store to 'window shop' for styles for home sewing were warmly welcomed rather than treated indifferently.³⁴

While retailers were told to promote and acknowledge the market for home sewing, it is notable that advertisements for children's ready-made clothing described home sewing as laborious. At the turn of the century, manufacturers used the *Dry Goods Review* to communicate to retailers the economic benefits of selling ready-made clothing. Manufacturers advertised that ready-made clothing saved 'mother' work: "It would seem as if it was no longer necessary for the mother of the family to know how to sew, as everything is made to her hand, from capricious kitchen aprons to nobby Summer suits for Jack, aged 10, and dainty frocks for Gladys, just budding into the importance of 14."³⁵ Manufacturers did not only advocate ready-made clothing as a way for mothers to save time by sewing fewer garments at home; they also suggested that boy's ready-made clothing was durable, sturdy, and double stitched. The clothing, in other words, matched 'real' boys needs. Mothers could purchase suits with not one but two pairs of pants because, as it was noted, boys tended to be tough on their clothing: "Our Two-Pants

³⁴ "The Efficiency of Department in One of Canada's largest Stores," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 January 1918, 37-38. This article outlined retailing policies at the T. Eaton Company.

Suit...saves mothers a world of pants patching, button sewing, seam stitching and relieves them of a lot of worry and trouble. They are ideal suits for boys who are hard on their clothes, and each suit is chock-full of smartness and style..."³⁶ Retailers were thus encouraged to emphasize how ready-made garments saved mothers time-consuming upkeep and mending of boys' trousers.

Newspaper advertisements and the catalogue of the T. Eaton Company touted that ready-made boy's clothing had become increasingly popular in late nineteenth-century Canada. Advertisements for boys' suits appeared both in the *Manitoba Free Press* and the *Globe*.³⁷ One of the earliest Canadian boys' clothing manufacturers could be found in the East: Clayton & Sons in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In late 1893, the first advertisement for boys' ready-made clothing appeared in the *Dry Goods Review*, featuring an inexpensive suit for boys, "The clothing Trade Manufacturers of the \$1 Boys' Suit Write for Samples Clayton & Sons, Halifax, N.S."³⁸

³⁵ *Dry Goods Review*, 1 January 1902, 66.

³⁶ "Direct Appeal to Boys' Mothers'," *Dry Goods Review*, 17 December 1913, 47, 54.

³⁷ Advertisement, "Arnett's Golden Lion," *Manitoba Free Press*, 17 July 1880. Advertisement, "James Lyster's Red Ball Clothing Store," *Manitoba Free Press* 1 October 1881 appeared advertisements for little boys' suits.

³⁸ "Boys' Suits" *Dry Goods Review*, 1 November 1893, 2.

THE LARGEST CLOTHING FACTORY IN THE DOMINION

A little more than a year ago this building was reconstructed and greatly increased in size and convenience. But within twelve short months it was again found inadequate to the demands made upon it by a clothing manufacturing business, and another storey was added to the building; Clayton & Sons accordingly determined on adding another floor to their factory, and without delay the addition was made. Now this building stands 100 feet square at the corner of Jacob and Barrington Streets with five floors of 10,000 square feet each, an ornament to the City and a hive of industry.



The cutting room has labor saving machines which are a marvel of exactness, speed and ingenuity, while in the work-room are a vast array of sewing machines, which are the best that the world can produce. Without burdening our readers with details which they could hardly be expected to remember it is sufficient to mention but one class of machines, which will give some idea of the equipment of this room. It is a sewing machine which makes 3,500 stitches per minute, the acme of speed and perfection. From top to bottom of Clayton & Sons' factory all the machinery has been selected, as have these swift machines, with a view to making only the best quality of clothing most rapidly and with the least possible cost. There is no other wholesale house engaged in the manufacture of clothing in the Dominion of Canada who have as large a factory, as much machinery, or employ as many hands in their factory as Clayton & Sons.

May this representative Halifax industry continue to grow and prosper in the future as it has in the past.

CLAYTON & SONS, Halifax, N. S.

Figure 3.4: "The Largest Clothing Factory in the Dominion," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 February 1897.

According to the 1890 edition of the T. Eaton Company catalogue, boys' suits ranged in price from \$1.50 to \$ 8.75.³⁹

³⁹ T. Eaton Company, *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1890.

By the 1910s, the function of boys' clothing had changed for both mothers and boys. Wash suits, primarily made of cotton, meant that clothing was manufactured to be more comfortable and cooler in the summer. These garments were also less expensive. The *Dry Goods Review* advertised 'wash suits' as clothing for the 'real' or 'new boy,' who could not be both comfortable and keep his clothing clean at the same time. Mothers, in turn, were sold on the value of 'hygienic' clothing that could be washed easily and frequently:

Apart from saving in cost, the sanitary features of the wash suit can be truthfully played upon advantage. The heavy tweed suit cannot be carefully and thoroughly cleaned, and any attempts to wash same are disastrous to its welfare. Boys who are real boys and not sissy's [sic] will be in all sorts of places, dirty and clean, sanitary and unsanitary, and a cotton suit that can be put in the boiler and thoroughly boiled will appeal to the mother in these days when sanitary methods are being so thoroughly commended by authorities everywhere.⁴⁰

The writer also considered the time required to frequently mend boys' clothing. That boys were 'hard' on their clothing was not lost upon retailers: "While there is not much money invested in a boys' clothing department, Mr. Watson states that the turnover during the year is quicker than in men's clothing. A boy will wear out two or three suits of clothes while his father is wearing out one suit."⁴¹ 'New boys' presented retailers with the prospect of increasing sales.

In this instance, garments that were easy to put on were described as clothing for 'real boys': "Every boy wants a Jersey. It's a real boy's garment – easy to slip on, will stand any amount of hard wear, and stops all fussing about 'saving your clothes.' Mothers like Ballantyne Boys' Jerseys, too – they keep the boy always looking neat; they cannot

⁴⁰ "Selling Boys' Wash Clothing," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 January 1918, 46.

pull out of shape, and they are the most economical garments for boys.”⁴² Again, boys were described as liking the freedom and independence while mothers appreciated quality, economy and hygiene. The availability of ready-made jerseys or sweaters is another example of how clothing was increasingly available in stores.

Advice to readers on the successful sale of boys’ bloomers emphasized the imperative of responding to boys’ tastes: “Usually the little fellow has already made up his mind as to the style he wants. It must be like Tommy Jackson’s, Lion Brand, or must have pockets like ‘daddy’s.’ Little suggestions like these go a long way to making a sale and we must satisfy the boy. It is a good thing to satisfy the boy; you are developing a customer.”⁴³ At the same time, the central role of mothers was not overlooked: while boys might wish to resemble their older brothers or fathers, mothers needed to approve the garments’ quality.

⁴¹ “Making the Boys’ Department Pay: Separate Department for Little Man,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 August 1920, 63.

⁴² Advertisement, “Ballantyne Boys’ Jerseys” – in this instance, this is a reproduction of suggested advertisements based upon this Stratford, Ontario company.

⁴³ “Essentials of Profit in Boys’ Clothing,” *Dry Goods Review*, 15 November 1911, 85. A comment from the article suggests why there was an emphasis on boys’ clothing: “Personally, I am impressed with the fact that there is no article of general merchandise so hard to sell as boys’ clothing. A boy’s suit is the last consideration in the average household, especially if there are more than one or two boys to provide for.”

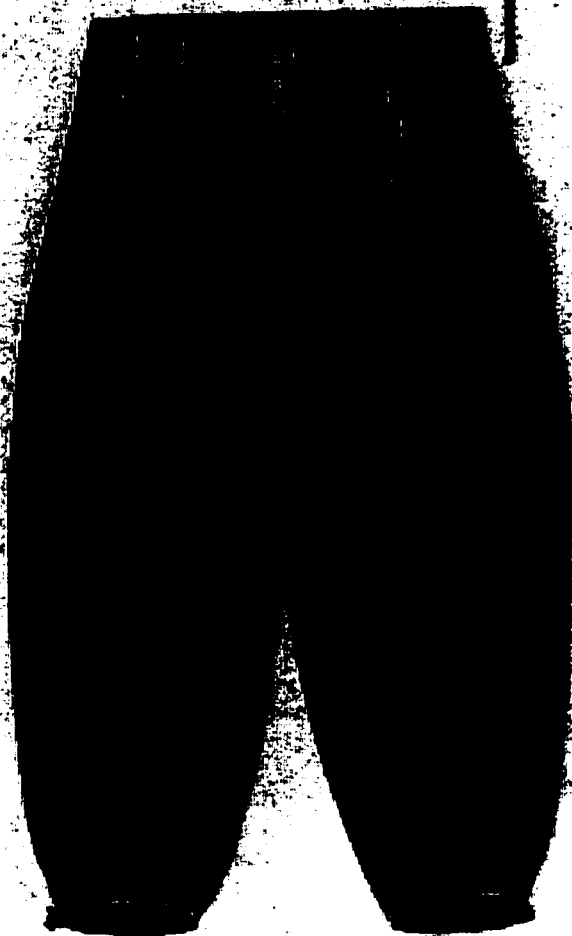
A boy's a boy

no matter what

Who would have a boy anything else than a romping, rollicking boyish boy? You know the parental tendency. Mr. Merchant, is to buy boy-proof clothing. Instead of attempting to curb the boyish spirit, and you know that if you supply such clothing you have the parents' trade assured. So why not handle

Lion Brand Bloomers

These are the strongest, toughest boys' pants in the world to-day. Our values are right, too. Send to-day for our range of Fall samples.



"The Jackson Bloomer"

The Jackson Mfg. Company
CLINTON, ONT.

Factories at:— Clinton, Goderich, Exeter, Zurich

Figure 3.5: "A Boy's A Boy: Lion Brand Bloomers," *Dry Goods Review* 21 February 1912, 76.

Retailers' practice of limiting window displays to men's styles was quickly rebuked by the *Dry Goods Review*. To ignore boys, the trade journal wrote, would result in long-term economic losses, because once boys were old enough to shop for themselves, they would refuse to patronize a business that had neglected their childhood needs:

Complete window displays of ready-wearing apparel for boys and children are essential to the success of a department devoted to these lines just as well as to the larger items in any other department of male attire. The merchants heretofore holding back on this line in favor of men's wear will have to come in on a new tack, because in looking to the future, it is the point of wisdom to cater to the child who, later on, becomes the man who, as a customer, is either for or against on account of these early recollections and lack of attention.⁴⁴

While retailers were being counseled on how to attract mothers and boys to their stores, manufacturers of boys clothing tried to improve their sales by developing trademark clothing based upon popular fictional characters that appealed to boys and children. In the nineteenth century, three popular boys' styles were based on characters and fashions popular with the British Royal family. In the 1870s, sailor suits were found in many 'summer' images, first of boys, and in the early twentieth century, for girls. Little Lord Fauntleroy suits and Oliver Twist suits both appeared in the 1890s. In the early twentieth century, a new style was based upon a more widely popular through the increased mass-circulation of daily newspapers. Buster Brown, a popular newspaper cartoon figure, was the follow-up character to the first protagonist of the colour comic

⁴⁴ "Complete Boys' Wear Windows for Spring," *Dry Goods Review*, 15 January 1912, 90. "Clothing for Men and Boys: Browns Picked to Lead," *Dry Goods Review*, 20 March 1912, 120.

strip in American newspapers, 'The Yellow Kid.'⁴⁵ Buster Brown was an early character used to advertise boys' clothing and accessories to a larger audience.⁴⁶

A Winner Wherever Sold

The BUSTER BROWN STOCKING



Are You Handling the Buster Brown?

The Buster Brown Stocking is made of cotton, ribbed, and dyed with the richest shade of black dye ever used on Cotton Hosiery. This dye is positively guaranteed not to fade or turn green. It is acknowledged as the leading boy's stocking on the market.



TRADE MARK REGISTERED

This cut of our trade-mark is on the lid of every box containing Buster Brown stockings. It is a protection to you and your customers as it stands for well-known, persistently advertised quality. Take advantage of the prestige of this celebrated Trade Mark.

Sold by all the Leading Jobbers

The Chipman-Holton Knitting Co.
Limited

HAMILTON ONTARIO
E. H. WALSH & CO. Sole Selling Agents TORONTO and MONTREAL

Figure 3.6: "Buster Brown Stockings," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 September 1909, 77.

⁴⁵ The term yellow journalism comes from this cartoon character as a competition between newspaper magnets ensued over who would retain publishing rights at the turn of the century.

⁴⁶ *Dry Goods Review*, 6 January 1915, 48. Advertisement for Chipman-Holton Knitting Company stockings made in Canada.

During the Great War, the popularity of 'Buster Brown' fashions waned as boys' clothing was increasingly fashioned after the British soldier and War hero, Tommy Atkins:

"Every Boy Wants One. Tommy Atkins Junior outfit: tunic, breeches, cap and puttes, double stitched and made for Boy Service from Durable government dyed khaki drill. With Real Soldier buttons and badges. Sized from four to ten years; larger for Cadet."⁴⁷

Throughout this period, the *Dry Goods Review* and the ready-made clothing industry increasingly embraced the practice of advertising boys' clothing with recognizable characters. In contrast, the *Farmer's Advocate* viewed these popular children's characters and fashion trends as harmful. Indeed, one view expressed in the column 'Ingle Nook', written by Junia, suggested that extreme dress fashions for women and comic characters were harmful to children and helped to line the pockets of a few businessmen:

...take just a little stock of the extremities to which dress and the things that go with it are driving the fashionable women of our time; glance at the page of newspaper over when nine young men out of ten are poring on street-car or railway-train, the sporting page, and seldom any other; notice how even the little children bubble over Mutt and Jeff and Buster Brown in the dailies. Are we really insane, and are a few men behind the scene, who are quietly sweeping in the dollars, exploiting our lack of attending to worth-while things for their own ends?⁴⁸

Retailers, however, continued to use name recognition increasingly among children to sell garments and accessories. The following advertisement appeared in 1924 for boys' Tommy Tucker suits, made in Toronto:

⁴⁷ Advertisement, "Every Boy Wants One: Hudson-Parker-Cowley Ltd.," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 January 1916, 122. "Khaki for Small Boy," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 January 1916, 114.



Tommy Tucker Suits

For Boys — 2 to 6 Years

Always in Demand

OUR travellers will be on the road in April with a full range of "TOMMY TUCKER" samples, INFANTS' and CHILDREN'S HEADWEAR, CHILDREN'S and MISSES' DRESSES, etc.

We are also showing a new line of attractive models in CHILDREN'S COLORED COATS, in addition to those attractive little LLAMA Coats for Kiddies, which prove such good sellers when made by

Tommy Tucker
GARMENT

Children's Wear, Limited

Established 1897

579 Richmond Street West

TORONTO

CANADA

Figure 3.7: "Tommy Tucker Suits," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 March 1924, 74.

Brand names based on female characters, by contrast, were rare. Girls had to be content with clothing for 'Buster Brown's Sister' or, more ironically, the 'Oliver Twist Suit' for girls: "So well have the little Oliver Twist suits for boys been received that manufacturers have brought out Oliver Twist suits for the small girl. These dresses are ideal for the season that is coming as they consist of a waist blouse with pantaloons attached with a short, flaring skirt which is attached like the little pants with buttons outside."⁴⁹ Girls' sailor suits became fashionable only after they became less popular for boys of all ages. Similarly, girls' suits were re-patterned after the styles worn by boys, and in some cases, a style only became available years after it was fashionable for young

⁴⁸ Junia "Ingle Nook," *Farmer's Advocate* 3 May 1913, 956-957.

boys. There were some limits to when girls could wear refashioned boys' styles. There was no comparable Little Lord Fauntleroy suit for girls, nor were any modeled after the Tommy Atkins style. Increasingly in the 1920s, ready-made party dresses appeared, and the method for marketing girls' clothing changed significantly with new, popular female cultural references.

As manufacturers appeared to focus on boys' clothing, retailers were often reminded about the benefits of providing adequate floor space for displaying and selling boys' clothing. It was suggested that sales would be improved when clothing was prominently displayed and not hidden at the back of the store, as was reportedly the case in many Canadian stores. According to advertisements in the *Dry Goods Review*, there was an improved selection of boys' ready-made clothing, and looking after the boys' trade meant improved sales. A salesman for the boys' departments, it was suggested, should be "an experienced man with the required patience and good nature that has much to do with pleasing the boy." Customers included the boys' mother, father, or an older member of the family, all of whom had to be acknowledged: "In greeting, be sure to speak to the boy as well as to the person accompanies him." [sic] Sales staff were reminded to respect the boy's opinion: "In discussing the merits of different suits, let the boy have a word to say, as in some cases he may be paying for the suit himself and this consideration of the boy's opinion helps decide many a sale." Furthermore, salesmen were encouraged to win boys' confidence and loyalty by dispensing small gifts:

The giving of some small novelties or article of interest to boys with each suit has been proved to be good advertising as boys show these "treasures" to each other

⁴⁹ "Ready-to-Wear Garments: Fall Garments in Juniors' and Misses'" *Dry Goods Review*, 6 May 1914, 92. See also "Companions: Buster Brown and Buster Brown's Sister's Stockings, Sunshine Hosiery." *Dry Goods Review*, 1 July 1929, 14.

and the question arises, 'where did you get it?' So the boy keeps this in mind and often influences mother or father to go to that particular store when purchasing his next suit...A well assorted stock of boys' furnishings will be found to be a help in increasing and holding boys' business as in almost all cases the boy needs a new hat, cap or other furnishing to go with his new suit.⁵⁰

These strategies, the *Dry Goods Review* assured its readers, would handsomely pay off in revenues.

Two years later, in 1914, one author outlined the success story of the Toronto retailer, the Murray-Kay Company, which had dedicated its business to supplying clothing to the 'rising male generation':

Everything that the boy can wear-and the boy means everything from the bouncing baby of two and a half years to the youth with his first long trousers-can be found in this department, which probably is unique in several respects in the Canadian retail business. Whether he is going to church, to school, to college, to the athletic field or the gymnasium, he can find-or his parents can find for him, exactly what he should wear in the stock that is carried in this department-suits, furnishings, hats, or shoes.⁵¹

The writer of this article praised Murray-Kay's as a high-class store. Its policy of buying was to select garments that followed trade trends and respected high standards of quality. In the store, the men's department also occupied a prominent position. In linking boys' wear to a men's wear selection, the author suggested, the store made shopping more convenient for family, parents and, in particular, mothers. At Murray Kay's, boys of all ages were considered important. As a result, retailers across the country had much to learn from the sophisticated sales strategies developed by this Toronto store. Salesmen followed personal preferences and requirements by keeping records on all young customers: "When an order is taken a card is filled out which records the age of the boy,

⁵⁰ E.E. Bell, "It Pays to look after the Boys' Trade," *Dry Goods Review*, 20 March 1912, 121-122.

his address and the school he attends, and the sizes of the different garments he wears; if desired, a copy of this can be given to the parent for reference.”⁵²

While higher-class clothing businesses appeared to market boys’ clothing primarily in men’s departments, the country’s prominent department stores that employed large numbers of sales staff were more likely to cater exclusively to mothers and their sons.⁵³ In November 1914, the *Dry Goods Review* presented further suggestions on how ready-made clothing departments could win the loyalty of their young male customers. First, the author argued clothing departments had appeal to boys and parents alike. In doing so, salesmen were advised to always focus on the boy, even though his mother was present with him:

In nine cases out of ten the boy is accompanied by his mother. Women are always looking for values, and it will require infinite tact on the part of the salesman to meet that instinct intelligently and when it is all over, assure himself that the sale has been satisfactory. With the great variety that is now shown in boys’ clothing the proposition is not becoming an easier one, but the man who knows his business, so far as the juvenile department is concerned, has one of the greatest levers for general business development. In men’s wear stores, as in every kind of store, the feature that attracts the children will surely pull much other business as well.⁵⁴

Indeed, as the following quotation reveals, stores had to strike a delicate balance between winning the boys’ interest and gaining their parents’ support:

The interest of the boy will be found to be two-fold so far as the power of attraction is concerned. In the first place, it will be found best to supply some other attraction than the goods themselves-and then to make the good of interest. Of the two the latter is perhaps the more essential for the reason that in that

⁵¹ “Unique Clothing Department for Boys,” *Dry Goods Review*, 17 June 1914, 60.

⁵² “Unique Clothing Department for Boys,” *Dry Goods Review*, 17 June 1914, 60, 65.

⁵³ It is difficult to tease out what was happening based upon this source and the other sources used for this study but there was a link between boys, fathers and a higher class of goods. Fathers and sons were sometimes mentioned in the context of tailors and men’s styles.

⁵⁴ “Clothing for Men and Boys,” *Dry Goods Review*, 21 July 1912, 81.

connection the interests of the parents are to be considered as well, and this means combining the style which will attract the boy with the quality and wearing ability which will satisfy the parent. This is a combination which is sometimes difficult to achieve for the reason that the sale of a boy's suit is a sort of double-barreled proposition with two parties to be satisfied-and each is likely to be very critical. And do not forget that, getting down to first principles, it is the parent that holds the purse strings.⁵⁵

Again, the *Dry Goods Review* had offered detailed, practical advice on how retailers could increase sales by wooing a newly discovered customer: Canadian boys. Stores went to great lengths to go after the 'little men's trade': "The distribution of souvenirs in connection with any special event is also a trade-winning method that never fails to create a favorable impression – and it is an impression which works for the store long after the sale has been made. Merchants who have specialized in this class of trade will declare without hesitation that once they obtain the patronage of the children of a household, the other older members are a much easier proposition."⁵⁶

One Canadian store even registered boys' birthdays and subsequently sent them small gifts, tokens of appreciation for their loyalty. Sports equipment and other goods that might catch boys' attention also presented useful tools for retailers. One elaborate scheme used to lure boys into stores was to create a space customized for them – in this case, a mini-gymnasium:

Particularly for the benefit of the merchant who may be considering plans for opening a boys' department, let me refer to a scheme which was successfully worked out in connection with a new department for the little men, which was located on the fourth floor of a large store, and to which it was desired to direct the attention of the lads. Here on one side of the department was fitted up a little gymnasium for the juveniles. There were boxing gloves, and bars, and hand balls, etc., for them to play with, and when boys got started it was hard to get them downstairs again. Such an event makes a big impression on the mind of the boy,

⁵⁵ "Get Boys Interested in Clothing Department," *Dry Goods Review*, 18 November 1914, 51, 55.

⁵⁶ "Clothing for Men and Boys," *Dry Goods Review*, 21 July 1912, 81.

and he is not only likely to remember it, but will talk of it to his cronies... In this instance the appeal to the athletic side of the boys' nature was so successful that a further step was taken in the Spring, when interest was centering in outdoor games. A supply of inexpensive baseballs, masks and gloves was secured, and with each purchase of a suit or overcoat the boy was given his choice of any of the articles. It should be mentioned that this was an attraction at the end of a season, when it was desired to clear up some lines, and the manager who carried it out is satisfied that it had a better effect and cost less than it would have to have made the reductions from the regular prices which are usually necessary to clean up the stock at such a season.⁵⁷

Fifteen to twenty years earlier, department stores and merchants had designed spaces to accommodate women shoppers. Feminized shopping spaces were the norm by this time and the new focus was providing space for boys. For retailers, the bottom line was to increase store sales. Investments in sports equipment could yield the desired results if they presented a reliable marketing strategy. An investment in sports equipment on the part of a retailer could yield the desired sales results.

In a series of interviews and letters requested from retailers across the country, the *Dry Goods Review* outlined the most successful strategies of selling boys' clothing. One reader, Mr. Tobey, suggested winning mother's approval by commending boys for their desire to have a suit 'like father's.' According to Mr. Tobey, fathers would support their son's choice and override their mothers' objections. Mr. Tobey went on to relate how he would share his experiences as a boy and his memories of shopping for clothes. He remembered vividly the name of the company that had offered a watch with a suit purchase:

...I would tell her how when I was a boy living in the little village of Leamington, that a big firm in Detroit, Mabley & Co. advertised to give a watch with every boy's suit, how I cried and pleaded with my father to go to Detroit and buy me a suit so that I might get one of the watches, and how I made up my mind that if I

⁵⁷ J. Willoughby, "Get Boys Interested in Clothing Department," *Dry Goods Review*, 18 November 1914, 51, 55.

ever got into business I would give a watch with every boy's suit at \$5.00 and over I think by that time they would be landed... There is no way in the world to reach a mother or a father quicker than through their children; that's why I claim that the sending of the post cards addressed to the boy, keeps your name in the home continually...⁵⁸

Another reader suggested salesmen should lavish praise on the 'stylish' taste of young customers. Yet another retailer, Alex Rodger, thought that the need of boys to be boys should be reflected in their choice of clothing. Since the selection of boys' clothing had improved considerably by the early 1910s, Rodgers felt confident that he could fulfill boys' every clothing need.

An emphasis on a space for boys within clothing stores was also reflected in the description of boys and their summer-time activities. Again, retailers continued to emphasize the durability of boys' ready-made clothing within the context of their boyish activities. 'New boys' required simple and practical clothing, and 'careful' mothers needed inexpensive garments, able to withstand boys' summer activities. An image of the 'new boy', vigorous, healthy, active, good-natured and not a little mischievous, was described as follows in the *Dry Goods Review*. This description would make the young voice in the verse "The Wish of a Small boy," discussed in the Introduction, very happy:

This is a good season to call attention to the lines of summer clothing for the boy. The school bell will not be heard again for weeks and play has taken the place of study in the routine of the youth of the country. This will be a hard period upon the clothing of the rising generation and careful mothers are looking for something cheap and serviceable and of material suitable for the hot days and vigorous exercise... The usual summer uniform of the boy is simplicity itself; there is little more or less to it, from the standpoint of style, than the uniform of a hod carrier and considerably less as to extent... The Summer definition of a boy might be put down as something like this: The male of the species of uncertain age, but usually between five and fifteen clad in a pair of khaki knee trousers upheld by means of a belt and a shirt of the same of some other equally

⁵⁸ "Making Son's Choice Appeal to Mother," *Dry Goods Review*, 15 November 1911, 66.

serviceable color with the collar attached, a hat and a pair of running shoes; this to be mixed with health, good spirits and devilment in about equal quantities.⁵⁹

In comparison to ideas about childhood in the nineteenth century, a boy between the ages five and fifteen, give or take a few years at either ends of the spectrum, could participate in the boyhood activities according to the above description.

The 'new boy' liked to be dressed up as seldom as possible. It was when boys were dressed in formal attire that they were they considered 'little men'. 'Rough and ready' apparel was most practical for the boys' 'regular daily escapades' that often took place in places such as alongside railway tracks:

Of course there are boys and boys, but this hits the average about in the middle. Exception there are as to the nature of the being and exceptions also as to clothing. Sandals may be used for the feet instead of running shoes-with stockings optional-or neither, digits may be allowed full freedom to encounter stones, thistles, and railroad cinders. The trousers or pants may be extended after the fashion of grown-ups, and overalls are sometimes worn, and there may be some differences in material but these things do not get away from the general idea. Light trousers of washable material and white shirtwaists make a nice combination for the little man but usually this will be found suitable wear a little more formal than the regular daily escapades. For dressing him up there are tasteful suits of white serge or other light Summer material but for the usual boy the regular program is to be dressed up as seldom as possible, and the rough and ready apparel is the thing that will be in demand."⁶⁰

⁵⁹ "Making Son's Choice Appeal to Mother," *Dry Goods Review*, 15 November 1911, 67.

⁶⁰ "Play Suits and Uniforms for Boys'," *Dry Goods Review*, 15 July 1914, 60. Other clothing included baseball uniforms and bathing suits as well as Boy Scout uniforms: "However, the play spirit of make-believe, and imitating the grown-ups, has not stopped with the Scout movement. The scout idea gives the play idea of some reason for scouting and as it is more realistic to the boyish mind to sneak after red skins than after other scouts, there is a demand for Indian uniforms and feathers. There are other scouting uniforms which appeal more to the boyish mind than the regulation uniform, and there are cowboy suits which fit into the youthful idea of life on the prairies." See "Men's Wear Section: Have a Boys' Scout Section," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 September 1916, 27, to see a discussion of Goodwin's Limited.

The importance of providing clothing appropriate for boys' play while maintaining mothers' interest in ready-made clothing presented ongoing challenges for retailers. Until the Great War, advice concentrated upon the importance of providing space that accommodated mothers; thereafter retailers had to learn to negotiate between the buying power of mothers and the quality and economy ready-made clothing offered. In addition, retailers were advised that clothing should meet the needs of active boys.

By the end of the Great War, departments for boys' clothing were standard within most stores. In order to maintain the patronage of mothers, retailing required innovative strategies to attract shoppers. Advice in the *Dry Goods Review* described for retailers how they could get boys into a store. For example, one strategy was to put a Barber shop in the store. The *Dry Goods Review* reported, that a 'genial Barber', specializing in children's hairstyles, could be visited at Almy's in Montreal. Mothers could read the details of the scheme in French or English: "He is an expert who is ready to consult with you, not only as regards the best way to cut and trim a child's hair, but also concerning any treatment to improve growth and appearance." The objective was to bring boys into the store but mothers' sentimental relationships with their sons provided the transportation for the trip. A small transparent envelope, especially printed and with space to fill in a name and date, provided a souvenir of a boys' first hair cut for mothers reminiscent of that ritual as explored in the *Farmer's Advocate*. The *Dry Goods Review* characterized the marketing strategy as a "wise as well as thoughtful 'stunt'."⁶¹ At the end of the Great War, bringing boys into the store barbershop was the primary goal of

⁶¹ "Children's Barber in Department Store," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 May 1919, 115.

many retailers. However, in the 1920s, another change to retailing expanded the consumer market to include girls.

Five years later, when the ready-made clothing industry was adjusting to an increased focus on much younger children's ready-made garments, the idea of the barber in a store gained popularity. In Ottawa, for instance the Charles Ogilvy Department Store had envisioned a barbershop in the basement "for the convenience of mothers who wished to have their young sons' hair cut. At the same time it would bring them into the clothing section for the boys. It has been the means of developing a lot of business in this particular department." As it turned out, however, the barber shop was also frequented by young girls and women in search of a friendly place to have their hair bobbed: "With the large number of girls and women who have their hair bobbed, our barber shop has become the Mecca of hundreds of ladies of the capital. It is no longer only the boys who are brought here...a good many ladies and girls come into the store for the express purpose of using the barber shop."⁶²

Like the first hair cut, a boy's first pair of trousers was a ritualized symbol of independence from mothers and entry into boyhood. Not only was the age lowered when boys wore their first pair of trousers, or when they were 'breeched;' it also appears that the ritual itself was becoming less common. In 1891, readers of the *Dry Goods Review* were alerted to a debate that appeared in the American clothing journal, *Clothier and Furnisher*. In the United States, ready-made clothing manufacturers were advocating that boys be put into breeches straight from their swaddling garments, while 'certain feminine

⁶² "Kiddies' Barber Shop is a Profitable Feature." *Dry Goods Review*, 15 September 1924, 116.

writers' were in disagreement.⁶³ Despite this debate the rituals surrounding a boy's first pair of trousers did change over time, a change intimately linked to the transition from home-made garments to ready-made clothing for boys. Throughout the period, the number and diversity of ready-made garments for boys steadily increased according to the *Dry Goods Review*.⁶⁴

A subtle yet important difference is evident in the coverage of the *Dry Goods Review* and the *Farmer's Advocate* concerning the relationship between mothers and sons. Rather than experiencing their childhood between petticoats and long trousers as the happiest time in their lives, boys appeared in the *Dry Goods Review* as impatient to don trousers 'like daddy's'. Mothers, however, it was suggested, resisted this change for reasons of maternal pride and 'bits of vanity':

Have you ever noticed, by the way, how the mamn [sic] of fine, big-legged boys hesitate to take them out of knee-breeches? This is particularly the case if paper is not equipped with a pair of underpinnings that would stand the sculptural test. Not that it is to be inferred that the maternal pride finds a reputation in this display, but it is one of those bits of vanity that will ever prevail as long as the world goes round. It is really an incentive, moreover, to a proper physical development among the boys themselves, and many a shank-legged youngster has walked around on his toes for days at a time to increase his calf measurement to dimensions that will put him beyond the ridicule of his fellows. By all means keep the youngster in short clothes as long as is feasible. It marks the happiest period of his lifetime.⁶⁵

According to an article written in 1914 for the *Dry Goods Review*, the age when boys shed petticoats and slipped into trousers was in transition. Mothers and sons were characterized as being in agreement regarding the need to wear 'smartly cut little garments':

⁶³ "Boys' Clothing," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 April 1892.

⁶⁴ "Unique Clothing Department for Boys," *Dry Goods Review*, 17 June 1914, 60.

⁶⁵ "Boys' Clothing," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 August 1891.

The small boy early passes the period of petticoats in these days, and the mother and son are at one as to the need for the smartly cut little garments. Few boys of this age are satisfied with home-made garments and the development that has taken place in the manufacturing of small boys' garments places small suits in the store at most reasonable prices...Not only are the garments well cut and well made but the suitability of materials used is given careful consideration: duck, drill, galatea, and various makes of cotton suitings that will give good wear, which stand the constant tubbing to which the garments of small boys must be subjected.⁶⁶

An emphasis on the quality of materials used in ready-made boys' clothing was central in many appeals to mothers. Repeatedly, manufacturers assured mothers that their clothing was easily washed and durable. This article also describes key changes regarding boys' dress and its role in the relationship between mothers and sons. These changes, observed by a writer for the *Dry Goods Review*, involved lowering the age at which boys experienced, through clothing, a rite of passage in the transition toward boyhood. During the early twentieth-century, according to images and representations from the time, boys as early as the age of two or three began wearing garments other than petticoats.⁶⁷ An associated feature of the rapidly decreasing age at which boys were encouraged to wear ready-made clothing was the question of who made their garments. At the heart of the changing relationship between mothers and sons was the implication of boys being unhappy with home-made clothing.

Clothing 'new boys' required that mothers purchase ready-made clothing because sewing boys' garments was reportedly displeasing to boys, and was also more complicated, as styles required new techniques and accessories: "The little boy's first trousers are open on each side, fastened on a waist, which may be in the same material or different; for instance, serge trousers will have a waist in tussor or crepe de Chine.

⁶⁶ "Military Models the latest," *Dry Goods Review*, 18 November 1914, 69.

There is always a round collar, and some cuffs of white hemstitched nainsook pleated like a Pierrot "fraise." I have seen youngsters' trousers turned up at the bottom, 'like daddy's'!"⁶⁷ Of course, while the bottoms may have been turned up like 'daddy's', boys' trousers were different from those of adults in several ways. For example, men's trousers often included a fly front. Trousers for boys, especially young boys, required fastening trousers to a shirtwaist, which required help. The delicate material, Crepe de Chine, used for the shirtwaist was not suitable for rough play. Still, what is of interest here is the fact that long trousers were already available for very young boys and the rituals associated with breeches were no longer noted.

Boys were increasingly depicted in a variety of garments like creepers, rompers, overalls and coveralls. According to manufacturers, these garments had to be durable to withstand the play of energetic boys. There were so many options available to mothers regarding clothing their boys that they might wear overalls to play, a pair of shorts and a shirt waist at times, or even a suit for special occasions. Eventually, boys would graduate to long trousers for formal occasions, once he could be trusted not to put holes in the knees. A variety of garments permitted 'new boys' to play and romp.

Overalls, often associated with workers and farmers, were introduced as practical garments for children regardless of class or occupation. Indeed, advertisements and articles confirm the fact that the perceived play needs of children were more important than class identity: "There is big demand for Brotherhood Brownie this year. Mothers of both rich and poor kiddies are beginning to see the advantage of letting the youngsters

⁶⁷ "Ready-to-Wear Garments: For Little Boys," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 June 1918, 89.

⁶⁸ "Ready-to-Wear Garments: For Little Boys," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 June 1918, 89.

'run loose' a little."⁶⁹ In the 1920s, representations and advertisements for overalls became more common for all children and family members.



It Is Not Yet Too Late to Get Your Stock of

BROTHERHOOD
BROWNIE
OVERALLS

There is a big demand for Brotherhood Brownies this year. Mothers of both rich and poor kiddies are beginning to see the advantage of letting the youngsters "run loose" a little.

And Brotherhood Brownies are made to stand the abuse they are sure to get from the children. In fact the whole "get-up" of the Brotherhood Brownie is pleasing. They're right and your customers will be pleased if you will "put them wise."

Send in your order now and be sure of this extra summer trade. Sold direct from maker to merchant—you get the jobber's profit.

H. S. PETERS, LIMITED
WELLAND, ONT.

The complete Brotherhood Line includes Overalls, Smocks, Auto Suits, Munition Coats, Mechanics' Aprons—in all styles and colors.

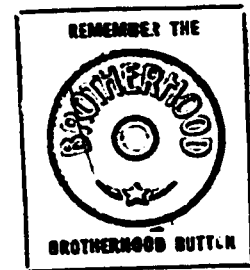
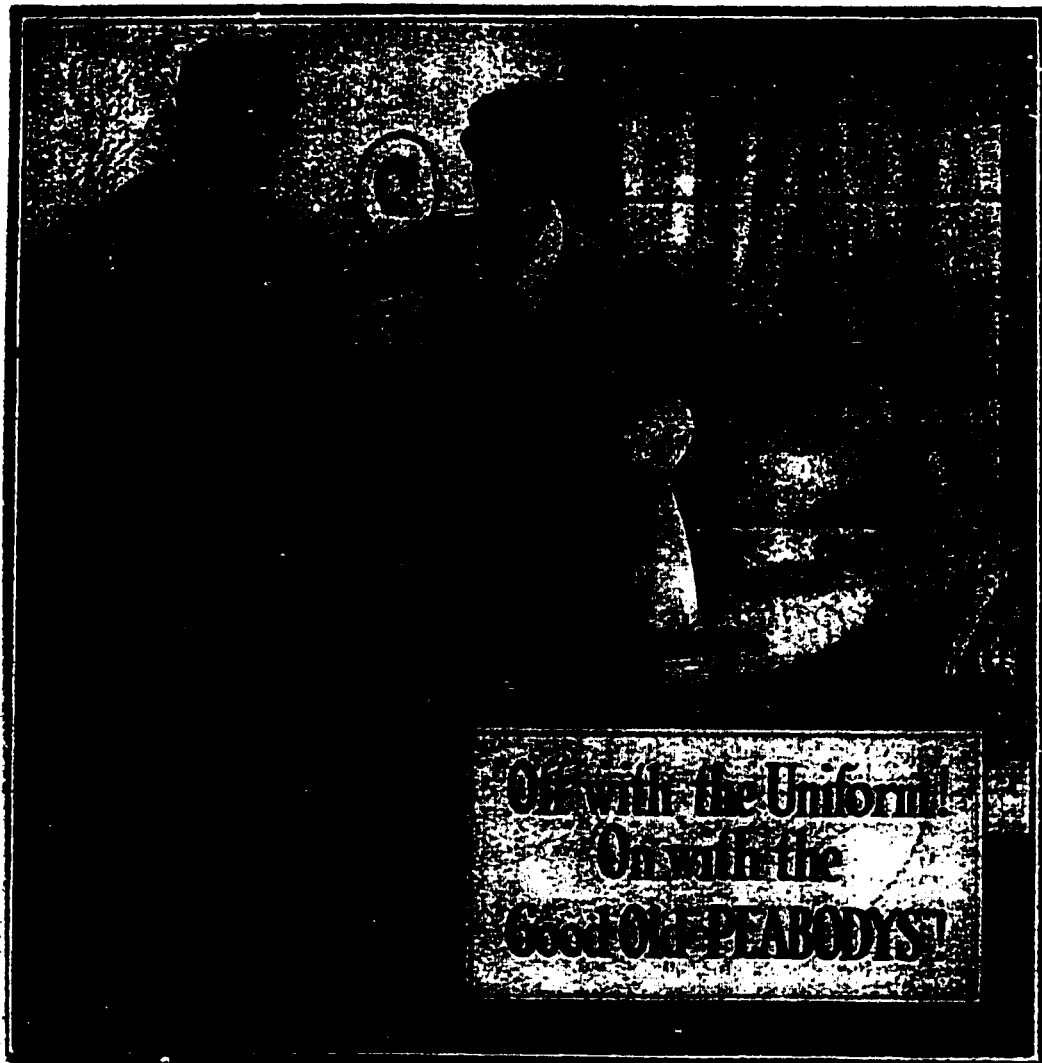


Figure 3.8: "Brotherhood Brownie Overalls," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 July 1917, 174.

According to many captions, overalls and coveralls protected clothing and did not necessarily point to a working-class background. Techniques like double stitching and riveted pockets and seams were almost impossible to use at home. In promoting overalls, the 'Peabody Overalls' company developed a catchy slogan that celebrated the garment as a symbol of Peace: "As the uniform means War, so the overall means Peace."⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Advertisement, "It is Not too late to Get your stock of Brotherhood Brownie Overalls," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 July 1917, 174.

⁷⁰ Advertisement, "Off with the Uniform! On with the Good Old 'Peabodys'!" *Dry Goods Review*, 1 February 1919, 31.



Peace with all its joys holds none more keen than that of getting back to home-life, the old job---safe and sound and strong and clean in honest OVERALLS

WONDERFUL Old Uniform! It has saved the World! But how good it will seem when the Boys are back and put it away---we hope forever? While it is a joy to us to remember that, when the Cause called us, the great Peabody factories worked night and day on War-clothing for Canada, England, and the States, making more than a million uniforms in all---yet---

How good it is to see and hear and feel our machinery busy NOW on plain, honest work-clothes again!

So, Men of Canada, back to the old job! Back to the overalls, on the farm in the engine-club, in the machine shop! As the uniform means War, so the overall means Peace.

*Doff the Khaki and don the Peabodys.
Beat the Sword into the Plough Share!*

PEACE!

PEABODYS
SALES CORPORATION
LIMITED
OVERALLS

*Are
Almost
Everybody's.
Are They
Yours?*

WALKERVILLE :: ST JOHN :: MONTREAL :: TORONTO :: WINNIPEG :: VANCOUVER

Figure 3.9: *Dry Goods Review*, 1 February 1919, 31.

The girls' ready-made clothing industry was much slower to develop than for boys' ready-made garments. Until the end of the nineteenth-century, girls' clothing was assumed to be home-made often by the girls themselves, from their mothers' discarded dresses. Discussions in the *Dry Goods Review* of girls' clothing included the role of dressmakers and women's 'innate' ability to make clothing at home. However, in the early-twentieth century, an article suggested that dressmakers were less inclined to make girls' clothing, thereby ceding ground to the ready-made clothing industry. Merchants were informed that investing in children's (girls') ready-made clothing would be profitable: "Dressmakers do not care for children's business and the factory-made garments can be sold cheaper than mother can make them-it is all a matter of style and the selection of materials, and when these are right business is easily done."⁷¹

In 1896, an early advertisement for girls' clothing appeared in the *Dry Goods Review*. The article noted that the 'changing models' were available in London, England, but not yet common in Canadian shops:

Juveniles are having great attention paid them, and very charming are the new winter models. Taking useful dresses first into consideration, there is a pretty blue, lavender grey tweed, with a line scarlet in it, employed in the production of a smart little school girl's frock. It has a full front, and straps 1.5 inch blue braid over the shoulders, with a gold button at the points as a finish. The bodice and skirt are made up separately, but joined with a waistband, showing braid straps, trimmed with button at the side. A braided band finishes the neck, as well as the cuffs of the small bishop sleeves.⁷²

While an increasing number of advertisements appeared at the turn of the century, it was not until after World War I that advertisements and images of clothing for girls, misses

⁷¹ "Ready-to-wear Garments: Misses' and Children's Wear," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 April 1909, 91.

⁷² "London Autumn Fashions," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 September 1896, 40.

and juveniles dominated the *Review*. More specifically, retailers were advised to sell party wear for girls. While everyday wear for girls would still be sewn at home, ready-made dresses for special occasions would save families the expense of a dressmaker: “These suits for girls and misses are carefully turned out as perfectly designed as those intended for their mothers and sisters, while the price is certainly less than it would cost to buy the material and have the dressmaker make them, and besides the effect is much superior.”⁷³ Sewing ruffles, lace, flouncing and edging on a dress required skill and patience. This ornamentation, the industry suggested, could more easily and efficiently be made by manufacturers: “For little girls’ party frocks the stores are showing a wonderful range of be-ruffled and filmy creations, usually made in the straight panel effect front and back and quantities of ruffles edging the sides. The most elaborate frocks feature clever little straight satin slips over which are placed flounces of lace or georgette set on below the waist line to give the long effect.”⁷⁴

The girls’ ready-made clothing industry followed similar retail and advertising patterns that dominated the boys’ clothing. Industry and retailers were encouraged to appeal directly to mothers and daughters, and suggestions that mothers could not afford to make homemade garments flourished in advertisements. Columns in the *Dry Goods Review* declared that mothers were too busy to make their children’s clothing: “Mothers have so many other cares and modern women are becoming so accustomed to filling their own wants in the dry goods store, that the time and energy that once went into home

⁷³ “Ready-to-wear Garments: Juvenile Wear,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 February 1910, 110.

⁷⁴ “New Styles for the Little Folks,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 April 1921, 136.

sewing is now spent in other directions.”⁷⁵ Shopping for ready-made garments, then, was also portrayed as a pastime of modern women.

While garments for special occasions were made available, every-day dresses manufactured in Canada were not common. Shortly following the Great War, the *Dry Goods Review* wondered whether or not merchants were paying attention to girls’ ready-made clothing: “Are you giving the little girls of your town enough consideration? They present great sales possibilities if you have a line of Dresses that will appeal.”⁷⁶ As in the development of the boys’ ready-made garment trade, attention to the trade in girls’ clothing could mean improved profits.

At the outset, descriptions of ready-made styles for girls were based upon women’s styles: “Suits made upon much the same lines as mother’s, only in modified styles, suitable for a young girl’s wear, were never more fashionable. This means that the smartly dressed little miss will wear a plainly tailored suit, consisting of a coat and skirt, or of a pinafore dress and coat to match.”⁷⁷ Evidently, the industry had to match garments to girls’ figures and characters and allow for some adjustments for growing girls: “For bigger girls and young ladies the materials used are pretty much the same as their mamma’s, garbadine, tricotine, etc. in light shades, rust in particular, being usually

⁷⁵ “Cloaks, Costumes and Skirts: Children’s and Misses Style for Fall,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 July 1904, 197.

⁷⁶ Advertisement, “G.F. Reid & Company, Specialists in children’s Dresses,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 March 1921, 141.

⁷⁷ “Ready-to-wear Garments: Juvenile Wear,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 December 1909, 92. “Misses’ and Children’s Wear,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 January 1910, 252. In an article advertising Home & Watts, again the fact that girls’ fashions followed their elders was discussed. “Useful Dresses for Children: Lines that are selling well—solid colours in Poplins and Repps,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 February 1912, 100, 102. “Dainty Frocks for Children: New Idea in Use of Plain Fabrics-Flounces and Frilly,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1

employed for their tailored costumes. The shape of these is similar too, yet juvenile.”⁷⁸

As in the case for boys, ready-made clothing for girls revealed a new phase of the lifecycle by distinguishing between younger girls and those on the verge of womanhood. From the perspective of merchants, the market for girls in their ‘teens’ was particularly promising:

Designing for the younger generation is a separate field, and requires the same degree of special experience and attention that is given to the costuming of their elders. Now that this point has been fully realized, and children’s clothes have been specialized upon, the industry has grown in a few short years to enormous proportions. Moreover, it is exhibiting a tendency towards further sub-division, and manufacturers who are prepared to confine their energies to just one branch of the children’s business are entering the field. This applies more particularly to misses’ garments, that is, to garments intended for young girls in their ‘teens’. Though the styles fashionable for their elders are drawn on to a great extent, there is a difference in line and effects, as girls of this age require that the garments they wear should emphasize their youthfulness; not give them the appearance of becoming older than they are. Manufacturers are becoming alive to this difference, and are putting their strength into the production of this new line.⁷⁹

Indeed, retailers suggested that children’s dresses were not appropriate for girls aged twelve to eighteen: “These models are intended for the 12 to 18 year old girl that is small for her age, and for whom a child’s dress would be out of place.”⁸⁰ In addition, many pattern styles focused exclusively on girls between fourteen and sixteen years of age. As for boys’ garments, mothers’ approval was key to selling these dresses: “The Home &

March 1912) 126, 128. “Home and Watts “Children’s Dresses: Tip Top Little Gingham,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 April 1912, 123.

⁷⁸ “Ready-to-wear Garments,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 June 1918, 89, 90.

⁷⁹ “Attractive Juvenile Lines: Manufacturers Giving Increased Attention to this Department,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 January 1912, 190.

⁸⁰ “Ready-to-wear Garments: Serge for Juvenile Wear,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 May 1912, 128.

Watts Fall showing is a credit to our past successes and will please both mother and child. The make, finish and fit of H&W Juvenile Dresses are unequalled.”⁸¹

Just as retailers ‘discovered’ the phases of youth and adolescence, they became aware of infants and toddlers, all of whom needed clothing made specifically for their needs. It is difficult to determine reasons for the transition from advertisements’ focus on boys’ clothes to their focus on girls’. Previously, advertisements depicted mothers concerned about their sons: “Your Baby-How Old is She? Two, or thereabout? – Beginning to talk a bit, and walk a bit, and find her way ‘into everything.’ Measuring her short length on the floor more times than you can count, exhibiting an extraordinary facility for getting her face and hands and clothes dirty half an hour after her bath. Sliding and crawling about until her little undergarments are loosened. She needs Rompers. Button her up in a pair and let her tumble, crawl and slide to her heart’s content. Nothing can tear or loosen. Literally hundreds of rompers here-add some to her wardrobe-both you and she will be happier. Price 94 cents to \$ 4.98.”⁸² While once they responded to requests for children’s clothing, now they were creating demand by distinguishing between garments for ‘misses’, ‘juniors’, ‘kiddies’, ‘boys’, and ‘girls’.

Evidently, the greater the variety of clothing ‘needed’ for different age groups, the harder it became to sew clothing at home. Indeed, prescriptive advice in the *Dry Goods Review* suggests that children’s wardrobes became much more diverse in the course of the twentieth century. The greater selection, choice of new materials and new designs were promoted as innovations of a child-friendly age:

⁸¹ Advertisement, “Home and Watts’ Limited” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 July 1912, 201.

⁸² “Infants’ and Children’s Wear,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 May 1920, 141.

Children's clothes must be serviceable and the designs must be planned so that they can be made in materials that will wear and wash and get up easily. They must also be loose and comfortable and give easy play and perfect freedom to the small bodies. All this designers have put into factory-made children's garments, and, besides, they have been given to children's clothes a style and finish that mother and the average home dressmaker finds hard to achieve.⁸³

As this quotation reveals, it became increasingly difficult to replicate ready-made garments at home. By thus marketing clothing whose production was both time-consuming and laborious, the clothing industry created a niche for itself that, over time, would lead to the decline of home-sewn clothing. Trade journals like the *Dry Goods Review* never grew tired of pointing out that new styles and techniques, clothing with diverse functions, and easily washed materials put increasing demands on mothers' time. Manufacturers also suggested that buttons, dome snaps and, especially, zippers required a knowledge that went beyond the average sewing skills of homemakers.⁸⁴

⁸³ "Ready-To Wear: Types of Children's Dresses for Spring 1915," *Dry Goods Review*, 21 October 1914, 27.

⁸⁴ "A New 'Dome Hook'," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 June 1918, 94.



Now
is the Time to Order
the *New 1930 Styles*

in

ZIP-ON
OUTDOOR TOGS

**Display Them During
The Shriners' Convention**

The big Shriners' Convention takes place in Toronto on June 10th, 11th and 12th. People with money to spend will be seeking gifts to bring home. Display Zip-On Outdoor Togs where these visitors can see them, and you will reap a harvest of sales. No woman — or man either — can pass by these smart little garments without asking about them. Order now and make added profits.



MORE practical than ever . . . lower in price . . . better materials . . . and more beautiful colors . . . the 1930 Zip-On Playsuits, the most popular garments ever designed for children, promise to eclipse all previous sales records.

Now is the time to order for early Fall delivery . . . to make certain of getting the styles, colors and sizes you will require . . . to be ready for the first eager demand.

Write at once for Illustrated Folder showing styles, fabrics, colors and prices. You can order from it with absolute confidence. We will ship your order when desired.

*Last year production fell short of demand.
This year we are doubling up. Early orders
indicate more than 100% sales increase.*

That's Why We Urge "Order Early"

HOWLETT & HOCKMEYER CO.
LIMITED

1030 St. Alexander Street

MONTREAL

Figure 3.10: *Dry Goods Review*, 1 April 1930, 33.

The advertising of ready-made garments for children emphasized the new independence afforded by such clothing. For example, it was suggested that the 'slip-on-waist' provided independence for mothers and their children.



"Mummy, Please Button My Waist"

and the busy mother has to stop what she is doing to help the youngster dress.

But this appeal can be stopped

Warner's
Slip-on-Waists

Go on over the head and have no buttons to fasten up:

There is a model for girls and a model for boys which are so designed that they can be either stepped into or pulled on over the head.

They are serviceably made to meet the strains from wear by active children. Washable bone buttons at the waist on which to attach the outer clothing, are strongly attached by double tape, and there are covered metal tubes to which the hose supports can be fastened.

Style 10K. Girl's waist. Made of soft muslin with lace edging at top and over shoulder. Ruffled in front. White only. Sizes, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14 years. \$5.00 dozen.

Style 17. Boy's waist. Made of strong jean, with elastic inserts over shoulders. Skeleton type waist. White only. Sizes, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14 years. \$5.00 dozen.

Terms, 6% 40 days, 5% 60 days, F.O.B. Montreal

Be the first to show them in your town
Display card is included with your order

THE WARNER BROTHERS COMPANY
356 St. Antoine Street
Montreal, P.Q.

Figure 3.11: "Slip-On-Waist: Mummy, please button my waist," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 March 1923, 74.

The familiar appeal from children of ‘mummy, please button my waist’ was no longer necessary. Advertisements for under-shirts that did not require help emphasized the benefits for mothers. Figure 3:11 suggests that the time mother saved from not having to do up buttons could be used to sit in her rocker and knit. This advertisement also provides information about gender differences regarding these undergarments. A girl’s waist was made from soft muslin with lace edging and ruffled in front while the boy’s waist was made of ‘strong jean’ material.⁸⁵

While both boys and girls, in some instances, were both portrayed as wearing rompers, bloomers and, when younger, dresses careful analysis of the *Dry Goods Review*, reveals that ready-made clothing was always gendered for either boys or girls. For example, one garment that appeared for girls was the bloomer dress. While boys wore bloomers, they did not wear bloomer dresses. Instead, they wore Russian suits and other garments designed as ‘wash suits’ popular in the late 1890s through to the 1910s. Bloomers were worn by boys under long ‘blouses’ that appeared to look like dresses and were commonly called Russian Suits. These suits were for younger boys and were not usually worn after the age of five or six. In one image of a three-year old boy, in the *Dry Goods Review*, his gender is also made clear by the train that he is pulling and the whistle in his left hand.

⁸⁵ “Slip-On-Wiaist: Mummy, please button my waist,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 March 1923, 74.



Russian model for boy of 2. Shown by
Home & Watts, Ltd.

Figure 3.12: 'Boys' Russian Suit' *Dry Goods Review*, 17 September 1913, 92.



Sailor suit for boys from 3 to 7. Shown
by courtesy of Home & Watts, Ltd.

Figure 3.13: "Styles in Suits for Small Boys." *Dry Goods Review*, 17 September 1913, 92.

Another gendered style that was popular for children was 'middy' fashions based upon sailor suit styles. In 1914, the *Dry Goods Review* reviewed styles for children and noted the popularity of these ready-made garments. Again, while the style was similar, there were clear gender differences: "The straight unbelted middy is worn by the small girl and her brother. With the middy the small boy wears trousers and the small girl a pleated skirt."⁸⁶ After the Great War, boys more commonly wore shorts, while girls' fashions adopted the bloomer style with much shorter dresses.⁸⁷ By the 1920s, the bloomer style was fashionable for the girl or 'missy' aged two to sixteen years.⁸⁸ In January 1922, the *Dry Goods Review* advertised the 'New Dutch Rompers' for boys and girls aged two to six years. Both styles were intended for young children and differentiated themselves from garments for older children by offering embroidered animals.⁸⁹ Other images like numbers or flowers also differentiated garments for 'toddlers' and 'tiny tots'.

Another traditional way to specify gender in children's clothing was the use of colour. Between the late 1920s and the early 1930s, many articles in *Dry Goods Review* discussed the importance of colour for children's clothing.⁹⁰ Until then, white had been a popular 'children's' colour for reasons of convenience: "It used to be that mothers bought white for children's wear continuously, simply because they knew that it would

⁸⁶ "Simple Styles for Children's Wear," *Dry Goods Review*, 21 January 1914, 28.

⁸⁷ The popularity of this style remained for another fifty years.

⁸⁸ "Ready-to Wear: Children's Wear," *Dry Goods Review*, 15 April 1923, 59.

⁸⁹ "Ready-to-Wear---Spring 1922," *Dry Goods Review*, 15 January 1922, 189. A Dutch Maid and Peter Pumpkin also appeared as appliqué designs. "Fancy goods and Toys," *Dry Goods Review*, 15 September 1923, 109.

⁹⁰ "Children's Wear: New Styles and Colors for Kiddies," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 August 1930. 38. "Children's Wear: Spring Fashions are Colorful for Children: Simplicity of

not alter color in the wash. Now that materials are so much improved in the mast of the fast dyeing of colours, coloured materials have the perseverance because they do not get dirty so soon and do not have to visit the wash tub quite so often as white.”⁹¹ Another article noted the colours for boys’ rompers overseas. According to the report, boys in Paris were wearing pink rompers with green jerseys.⁹² In Canada, according to Junia and the *Farmer’s Advocate*, pink was for girls.⁹³ However, the following analysis in the *Dry Goods Review* offered further insight into the interplay of colour codes and the construction of gendered identities:

Tradition has kept a tight rein on the choice of color for baby accessories. Pink and blue, once the only colors, still predominate. But where once pink stood for the baby boy and blue for the girl, today the tables are turned. It is now advanced that the baby boy in baby blue grows into the little man in darker shades of the same color; if he started in pink, he would have either to switch his allegiance or to appear one day in a scarlet jacket.⁹⁴

After having briefly outlined the symbolic significance of colours, the author proceeded to discuss colours used by the Royal Family. The Duchess of York, for instance, was using ‘maize’ for her baby daughter, a colour complimented by green. Early references to green and yellow broadened the hitherto restricted range of suitable baby colours.

Style, Brilliant Coloring Associated with Flowers – Jackets and Leather Belts,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 March 1931, 42.

⁹¹ “Simple Styles for Children’s Wear,” *Dry Goods Review*, 21 January 1914, 28.

⁹² “What the Youth of Paris Wear: Church Festivities, Weddings and Garden Parties Are Just as Important for Boys and Girls as for Older People-Many Material But Little Trimming Worn by Little Models of Fashion,” *Dry Goods Review*, 15 June 1924, 64-65.

⁹³ “A Winsome Trio,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 April 1920, 142. Drawing by M. Sutcliffe.

⁹⁴ “Children’s Wear: Analysis made of Infants’ and Children’s Wear Industry,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 December 1931, 26. An early reference to colours for infants did not provide insight into colour traditions for baby boys and girls, only that they were part of the infants’ department. “The cream colour scheme fits in with the merchandise, which is chiefly pale pink or blue, besides white.” “Infants’ and Children’s Wear: A Department for Infants,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 May 1919, 114.

Colour codes were not limited to infant wear. Viewed as practical play garments, rompers were manufactured for children. Like overalls, they provided practical garments for play and were available in different materials and colours for boys and girls. Advertisements in the *Dry Goods Review* reveal that practical play garments for young children, both boys and girls up to the age of six or seven, were being manufactured. In 1921, the makers of Haugh Kiddies' Garments introduced a line of coveralls/rompers for girls. Although 'rompers' were suitable for both boys and girls, the choice of material and way of trimming denoted 'male' and 'female' identities. Rompers were not for children; they were for boys and girls: "Order now...girls' line "Peggy Black" for children 2 to 6 years, in black sateen trimmed with yellow, red and blue."⁹⁵ Boys would not wear garments made from 'Peggy' cloth. Again, distinct gendered styles were designed for children and advertisements reflected concerns of mothers and children. In Figure 3.14, an advertisement for 'Kiddie Garments' the boy's and girl's again are shown wearing different styles. The girl's garment has short sleeves, different pockets and a different collar style. The boy's outfit has a sailor collar with long sleeves.

⁹⁵ Advertisement, "The J.A. Haugh Mfg. Co.," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 November 1921, 121. The photograph supplementing the advertisement for the 'Peggy Black' notes it as a new coverall for girls from 4-6 years old. Another advertisement that appeared in February 1921 outlined how these garments protected clothing and benefited children. "All dressed up – and must be careful"! This Haugh garment has been perfected to meet the normal, natural needs of healthy, happy children – a garment that enables them to play hard with that air of happy childish abandon that has no place worry about clothing." *Dry Goods Review*, 1 February 1921, 103.

Haugh Kiddie Garments

Stand the Hardest play!

Many a mother who reads Haugh advertising in MacLean's Magazine, Canadian Home Journal, Canadian Child, and Family Herald and Weekly Star, will save endless bother and expense by dressing her children in Haugh Kiddie Garments this summer.

Made for boys and girls (sizes from 2 to 8 years) in khaki, blue and various other shades. Priced so that they'll prove profitable for you.

Feature Haugh Kiddie Garments now!



Made and guaranteed by
J. A. HAUGH MFG. CO., Limited, Toronto
Established over Fifty Years

Figure 3.14: "Haugh Kiddie Garments: Stands the Hardest Play." *Dry Goods Review*, 1 June 1926, 19.

In 1925, another advertisement, targeting retailers, described how Haugh Brand garments appealed to mothers:

Mother Knows! They know the wear and tear a harum-scarum youngster can give any clothes. That's why so many boys and girls everyday are wearing Haugh Kiddie Garments. They're the kind of togs a mother can put on her children in the morning and forget about because they're just the thing for all around wear. Made from carefully selected material that will stand the hardest kind of play. Always neat and tidy. Saves stockings and endless washing and mending.⁹⁶

Retailers were assured that mothers valued these garments because they saved their time and energy for their domestic chores. Boldly, the advertisement asserted these ready-made clothes provided mothers with a 'peace of mind' and the knowledge that her children's good clothing was not being soiled or torn.

Advertisements and prescriptive advice for retailers consistently underlined the role of mothers in purchasing children's ready-made clothing. However, articles in the *Dry Goods Review* pointed to a new consideration for retailers that further complicated the process of clothing children:

Usually it is the mothers that we all have been thinking of in connection with an infants' or children's department in a store, but in a talk with *Dry Goods Review*, Miss M.E. Farrell, advertising manager of Almy's pointed out another test, one that probably is quite as sure a one as the other. "The children feel right at home; they run about from this to that, seen gathering together nothing but good that suit them and fit them, everything for their special benefit. It's so different in a department where there are goods for all ages; children are not so free; it isn't their own part of the store as this is."⁹⁷

The suggestion that children preferred ready-made to home sewn garments was not a new view for readers of the *Dry Goods Review*. What was new was that girls were identified as consumers, and, as having a 'say' in what they wore. Retailers were advised to

⁹⁶ "J.A. Haugh Mfg. Co., Limited," *Dry Goods Review*, 15 June 1925, 28.

consider the feelings of children. Increasingly, the *Dry Goods Review* implied, children judged their friends by their ready-made clothing.

In spite of the great growth made in this department there are still sections where mother is buying materials by the yard and making them up herself. The merchants responsible are running great chances of losing both their sales of piece goods and made up garments. Sooner or later some mother will send in to the catalogue houses for a few garments, and when she finds what a simple and an inexpensive matter it is to collect a child's wardrobe in the modern way, and how much added time it leaves her for other duties she will pass the good news on. Moreover, the child herself will aid, for children naturally appreciate smart well-cut, well-fitting garments, and the child in bought clothes will excite the envy of her companions, and will form a potent walking ad for ready-made garments.⁹⁸

Contrary to later advice, this article also presented readers with a warning against selling both cloth and dress goods for children because they risked losing business to the mail-order houses.

What role did 'clothes conscious' girls play in the construction of gender identities? Apparently, retailers could lay the foundations for healthy sales by considering these girls:

'When they're just growing "clothes conscious." That's an important time for the merchant who sees the wisdom of pleasing young but important customers who will in a very short time be more important customers. Mothers also appreciate the merchants who can offer them a line of Children's Dresses that will embody all the features – ornamental and practical- that they could possibly wish for if they were making the dresses themselves- and all at economical prices. We have concentrated on the production of an ideal line of Children's Dresses. The designs, the materials and the fascinating touches that eliminate that "ready-to-wear" look, all bespeak a careful consideration of the requirements peculiar to Children's Dresses.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ "Infants' and Children's Wear: A Department for Infants," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 May 1919, 114, 115.

⁹⁸ "Ready-to-Wear Garments: Children's Ready-to-Wear," *Dry Goods Review*, 5 November 1913, 30.

⁹⁹ Advertisement, "G.F. Reid & Company, Specialists in Children's Dresses," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 February 1921, 166.

Throughout the 1920s, the idea of boosting sales by marketing products to children became increasingly popular: “There is probably no surer means of securing profitable contact with the home than through the children. The store which accepts this fact and makes its plans accordingly is sure of a steady and constant growth.”¹⁰⁰ In the 1890s, retailers had ‘discovered’ and targeted boys as consumers; department stores of the 1920s began to focus on girls as consumers. By organizing doll-dressing contests and sewing classes, stores hoped to increase sales in dress goods departments. Just as the *Farmer’s Advocate* had described girls who playfully made clothing for their dolls, preparing for their later domestic duties, the *Dry Goods Review* implied that store owners could use the prevailing image of sewing girls for their own advantage because they were earning money working in war industries:

The statement, “Misses’ summer dresses have been selling particularly well,” is found to be true in practically every line of misses’ apparel. Many young girls are now out earning income who in normal times, would still be at school and perhaps wearing home-made frocks. When they earn their own money they want smart-looking clothes and have not time to indulge in elaborate garment-making at home, therefore the misses’ wear departments are flourishing.¹⁰¹

Almost ten years later, working women and women outside the home were taken for granted and advice reflected a new dichotomy between female consumers; those who shopped for economy and those who shopped for style:

The old adage claimed a woman’s place in the home, but a modern motor car advertisement declares boldly that “woman’s place is outside the home.” The question has many moot points, but whether she guides the destinies of a home or a desk at an office, there is not gainsaying the fact that her power over the consumer dollar is steadily growing. Women are susceptible to many things.

¹⁰⁰ “Infants’ Wear: Reach the Home Through the Children: Baby Contests, Doll Dressing Contests, Sewing Classes, Baby Books to New Arrivals, All Provide Mediums for Reaching the Home,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 November 1929, 30.

¹⁰¹ “Ready-to-wear-Garments: Children’s Wear,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 June 1918, 94.

They may be generally speaking divided into two types –those who consider price first, and the women who purchased on a style basis. Both are widely catered to, and both are very important...¹⁰²

At the turn of the century, retailers had to cater to women who shopped for ready-made clothing and women who shopped for materials to make clothing at home.

A blatant and startling example of sales advice that targeted young girls as consumers appeared in 1935. As columnist Gwendoline H. Morgan suggested in an article entitled “Psychology is Used in Selling Children’s Wear”:

In this modern age of education selling to the child is a distinct art. Children have very decided ideas on what is suitable for all occasions but we find that queer little quirk of liking to be dressed as the others are. They take a pride in the individuality of their mothers or older sisters but a marked difference in their own clothes is an embarrassment. The modern retailers cater to the children in that the clothes he handles are suitable for all occasions, yet simple, washable or cleanable, and very durable. Clothes that have to be taken care of are abhorred by the average child...Children very quickly detect the difference between the real and the imitation. If they don’t see it themselves some other child is sure to enlighten them in no uncertain terms that rather hurt the unsuspecting...So, as we have said, the manufacturer caters to the child as well as the parents...articles that must necessarily be useful and durable catch the eye of the child and sell with pleasure rather than with the feeling of having to ‘wear an old print dress to school again.’”¹⁰³

By the late 1920s, the *Dry Goods Review* described clothing rituals such as the rite of ‘breeching’ or the first hair cut as charming, yet old fashioned. Jeanne Ferrard, a regular contributor to the ‘Ready-made Garment’ section of the *Dry Goods Review*, suggested that modern children had to be consulted as to what they would wear:

Where has it gone, the long past time, when children, confined in their nursery, had nothing to do but wear, without a murmur, any clothes Mamma had selected for them? When little boys had to wait for their first pants, until they were at least

¹⁰² Editorial, “The Spending Power of Women,” *Dry Goods Review*, 1 June 1929, 18.

¹⁰³ Gwendoline H. Morgan, “Psychology is Used in Selling Children’s Wear: Modern Child is Keenly Sensitive to Any Imitation in Clothing,” *Dry Goods Review*, 15 November 1935, 16.

three years old, and have their locks done away with when they started school! Nowadays, they are quite up to date, I can tell you, and I know not one mother who would not ask her little five years old little maid which dress she wants. I know also many little boys under seven, whose main ambition is a Norfolk suit...
104

Another article echoed the sentiment that children were becoming more vocal about their clothing:

A short decade ago, little boys and girls were content to wear just what their parents chose for them. The child was seldom consulted in the matter of wearing apparel and was not expected to voice any decided preferences as to style and color. In recent years, all this has changed. Even very small children insist upon having the very latest in style, color and cut that the stores are showing. All this tends to make business better in the children's wear department and the wise merchant takes steps to develop this department by selecting and stocking as great a variety of up-to-the minute garments as his trade will warrant. He employs capable salespeople in this department, gives it ample quarters in the store for proper display and advertises the new lines as they are received. Every effort is made to popularize this department and make it a profit-maker on its own account.¹⁰⁵

While young girls were able to wear 'practical' play clothing like their brothers, their clothing was predominantly advertised to reflect 'feminine' gender characteristics.¹⁰⁶ Until the appearance of Shirley Temple, girls' ready-made garments were more likely to be sold through associations with typical characteristics such as daintiness and being darling or winsome.¹⁰⁷ When a fashion was created for a girl, it was

¹⁰⁴ Jeanne Ferrand, "Children Consulted To-day as to What they Will Wear. Ensembles are Necessary for Well-Dressed Children-Much Knitted Wear is Used, and Distinct Little Tailored Outfits-For Summer Wear Kasha and Sheer Materials Are Lavishly Used," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 August 1928, 40.

¹⁰⁵ "Children's Wear: Color is Coming to Dominate the Fashions in Children's Wear - Children are Becoming More Style Conscious," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 January 1931, 36.

¹⁰⁶ Advertisement, "Chipman-Holton Knitting Co., stockings made in Canada," *Dry Goods Review*, 6 January 1915, 48.

¹⁰⁷ "A Winsome Trio," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 May 1920, 141; "Children's School Dresses, Rompers, etc.," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 May 1919, 4.

usually her innate qualities in the sales pitch as had been the practice in marketing boys' clothing.

After the War, cloth shortages and increased retailing of manufactured clothing led to a further demise of home sewing that was also fuelled by the fact that many family members worked at an earlier age. Just as a surplus of cotton had helped to develop feminine hygiene products after the War, surplus of cotton for military clothing was now used to make overalls for children and, generally, more comfortable play clothing. In July 1919, the *Dry Goods Review* inaugurated a new section focusing on 'Infants and Children's Wear':

Readers of *Dry Goods Review* will, practically, without exception, appreciate the new department which is opened with this issue. Infants' and children's wear has for some time been receiving increased attention in large and small stores alike and a special section of *Dry Goods Review* giving news of those lines is only in keeping with the trend of the trade. Many factors are responsible for that trend and they are important enough to warrant separate departments in stores and in *Dry Goods Review* devoted to supply the needs of the little folks. These departments are here to stay and not merely a temporary fashion. The attention given by the Health Departments of the various Governments to the care of infants; the advanced education in caring for children which has spread through day nurseries, public clinics, the press and other mediums; the more suitable and valued outputs of manufacturers of infants' and children's apparel; the better means of displaying the uses and varieties of that merchandise in the stores; the 'Baby Weeks' which have become general in up-to-date communities, are all important reasons for considering the lines in question by themselves and so important that they should no longer be a side line to any other department. For these reasons the editors take pleasure in introducing the new Infants' and Children's Wear Department to the readers of the *Dry Goods Review*.¹⁰⁸

Another change for retailers after the First World War was the diversity of children's clothing advertised as well as the rise of infants' departments in stores. Besides providing advice for retailers regarding the establishment of 'Infants' Departments, the

Dry Goods Review offered suggestions on how children could be won over as life-long-loyal customers. One proposed strategy was to provide mothers with public health information:

When the baby grows up he generally loves his mother best because she was the one that attended to most of his wants when he was young. So, the store that tends to the small baby's wants is going to get the grown baby's trade... Your town needs one... Make Shopping Easy for Mothers... Helpful Stunts... Another stunt, possibly not so well known, is that of having the photograph taken of every child under five years which is brought to the department during the week. This is especially good when introducing the department as a separate entity in your store...¹⁰⁹

Merchants were also encouraged to link up with the local women's organization during a baby's welfare week: "When people are talking about their babies and hearing lectures about their health it is psychologically impossible for them not to think about buying them some new clothes for 'mama's darlings.'"¹¹⁰

Celebrations of 'Baby Weeks' or a 'Children's Festival' entailed focusing on infants and children (read girls) up to the age of 15. An interview with a Canadian

¹⁰⁸ Editor, "A New Department," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 January 1919, 59. "Infants' and Children's Wear: Infants' and Children's Wear Grows in Importance" *Dry Goods Review*, (January 1, 1919) 118-119.

¹⁰⁹ "Have you an Infants' Department: Reasons Why You Should Have, If You Haven't – If You Have, It Might Be Improved, Might It Not?" *Dry Goods Review*, 20 March 1920, 160.

¹¹⁰ "Have you an Infants' Department..." *Dry Goods Review*, 20 March 1920, 160. Many other articles addressed this issue. See for example, "More Attention to Baby Department: No Reason Why Special Effort to Sell this Type of Merchandise should be Left to a One-week Effort-Program Outlined for a Week's Event with the Babies-Featuring a Fashion Revue-The Appeal of the Window," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 November 1922, 108. This article also referred to the practise of The Henry Morgan & Company to send a baby book based upon birth announcements, "so that proud parents may record such momentous events as the appearance of the first tooth, his first attempts to walk etc." The article also refers to the baby as "His Majesty." In a later article, store owners were encouraged to keep copies of the "Canadian Mother's Book" in the Children's Department. "Keep 'Canadian Mother's Book' in Children's Dept," *Dry Goods Review*, 15 June 1923, 47. All books in the 'Little Blue Books' series were noted.

company that sponsored a Children's Festival in its store outlined a number of events that took place in an effort to bring mothers into the store. In the view of the retailer, the publicity and expected financial gain more than justified the expense and effort that had gone into the event. On Monday, the company had sent out an invitation, offering to weigh mothers' babies at the store. The heaviest baby in each category would win an award, while all children were to receive small gifts. On Tuesday, children aged four to six were invited to hear a professional storyteller. During the 'Mother's Hour', a lecture on 'Choosing the Proper Books for Children' was held. On Wednesday, a dentist informed mothers and children about dental hygiene. On Thursday, a leader from the Y.W.C.A. lectured girls aged eleven to fourteen on proper dress for sports and school and demonstrated calisthenics. In the late afternoon, the public was invited to watch a fashion show:

From 4 to 5 p.m. the public was invited to witness a fashion review of children's wear worn by girls up to the age of 14. Children of all ages, from a baby in arms to a girl of 14 years. The baby in question was wheeled in a lovely carriage by a correctly dressed nurse, while the older kiddies wore dresses and other garments suitable for different hours of the day and carried toys or school books, finishing up with party frocks and finally nightware...¹¹¹

Contests for girls at the clothing stores, and both boys and girls at the shoe store, were held, thus indicating a decrease in interest in the market for boys solely.

Advice for retailers of mass-manufactured clothing changed markedly during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By the turn-of-the century, the image of female bargain hunters had been supplanted by earnest appraisals of mothers' role in

¹¹¹ "Children's Week' Stunts Mean Sales: A Semi-Annual Feature as Carried Out By this Merchant, to Secure the Interest of the Boys and Girls of the Community Results in Sales of Kiddies' Wear Being Greatly Stimulated," *Dry Goods Review*, 15 June 1924, 24-25.

clothing their families. The tone of coverage, too, changed; from ridicule heaped on the hapless shopper to elaborate marketing strategies intended to entice them. Besides catering to mothers' perceived needs, the industry also discovered new customers: children who were increasingly shopping with mothers and whose voice played a more important role in purchasing.¹¹² Trade journals such as the *Dry Goods Review* advised retailers that an emphasis on children's wear would reinforce a mother's desire to spend money on her young children rather than on herself:

But in the infants' department proper selection and proper timing can be made to yield sure results in profit because "Baby" is an impatient mite always clamorous, and the doting mother is ever ready to buy more for baby than for herself. Furthermore it must not be forgotten that time waits for no man. Infants will grow despite hard times or good, and in the growing lies the secret of never ending replacement for junior and his sister. For "Baby" the buying begins ere ever the proud and distracted father lays eye upon his hopeful. The layette is first installment of a never ending stream of buying. It is an accepted requirement lending itself to a variety of choice and suggestion from bassinette to clothes, not forgetting the odds and ends necessary to the contented mother... Rompers, stockings, sweaters, coats, gloves, mitts, toques and what-nots all are needed and they must have style in their make up to satisfy an ever style conscious mother anxious that her offspring shall appear at its best... As They Grow... Past the age of toddling and slap we go into a period of several years when the youngster's own conception of what is what helps to temper mother's ardour to buy the right thing. For the growing male member of the family the wise merchant must be ever watchful for "What the other boys are wearing." Woe descends upon the youngster who feels that his mother has dressed him in a style peculiar to himself and out of tune with his playmates and school fellows. It is an age of recurring family discord and Junior begins to assert himself in the matter of dress. The merchant can do much to lead an erring mother into the right path of what to buy for her boy. In so doing he will have a powerful ally in the boy who feels that "The Right Store" knows what's what and has what a self-respecting boy should wear. It is the age of gangdom, a gangdom that it will pay a merchant to watch and foster.¹¹³

Girls could enter an embroidery contest while both boys and girls could enter a drawing contest.

¹¹² "Child of To-day Is Customer of To-morrow," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 July 1923, 35.

¹¹³ "Children's Wear: There is a Right Time for Everything in the Youngster's Wardrobe," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 March 1932, 26.

In an alleged 'age of recurring family discord', clothing was presented as yet another bone of contention between the fashion conscious boy and his mother. Salesmen were advised to side with boys, who, after all, were the customers of tomorrow. For girls, however, the story was rather different, as the columnist took pains to point out:

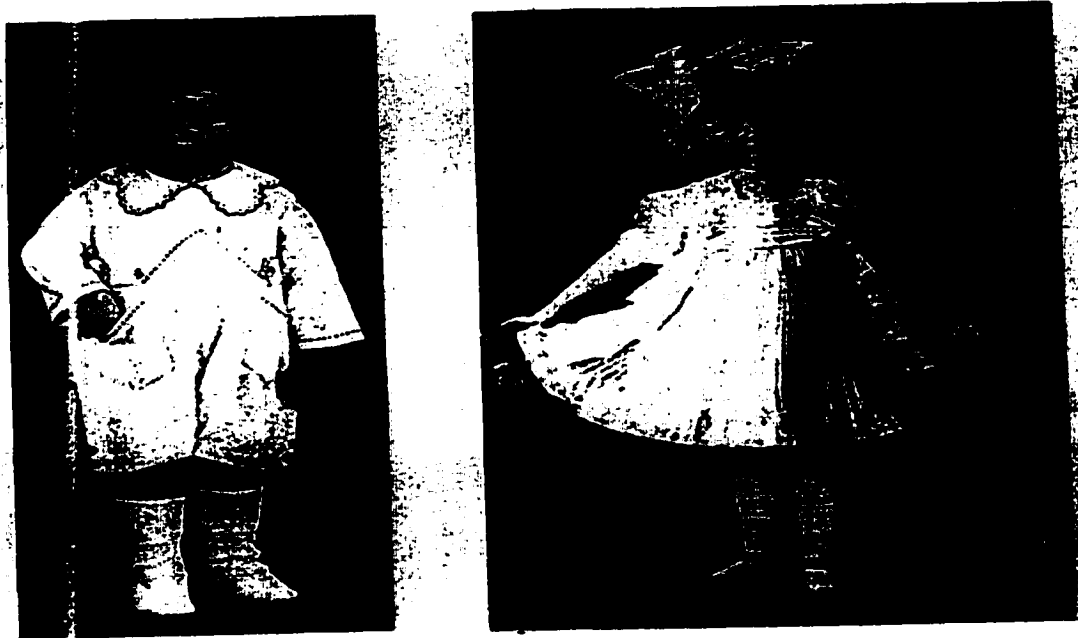
But when it comes to sister, a somewhat different story has to be told. Anxious of course, to be dressed in the vogue of little Miss, sister has ideas of her own and shrinks not from individuality. Very young ladies present a case of ever increasing style consciousness which frequently runs to extremes because of youthful lack of judgement. Here perhaps the wise merchant sides more with mother and diplomatically helps to guide youthful fancy into channels of stylish but sensible taste...And when our Miss reaches the intriguing year of sweet sixteen – what then? Then there is aplenty doing. With a mind of her own and a will most frequently to make it felt she is a whirlwind of fashion consciousness with a category of every day and special occasion needs that only a limited pocket book can hold in check. The teen Miss is a real customer – but alas she belongs no more to the tiny tot class and the problem of meeting her myriad ideas is the task of other departments. None the less if, during the years before, wise handling and right merchandise at the right time has met her youthful needs she remains a loyal and trustful customer until sad experience teaches her otherwise.¹¹⁴

Importantly, the industry first discovered 'boys' as customers and only later turned its attention to girls as well. However, it was suggested that the opinion of boys trumped their mother's opinion. In the case of mothers and daughters, mother's experience and insight into ready-made clothing provided her with a superior knowledge. Daughters, they said, inherently lacked judgement and therefore needed the guidance of their mothers.

The image of ready-made styles for 'Tiny Tots', Figure 3.15 depicts outfits specifically designed for a boy and a girl, even though the models are both small

¹¹⁴ "Children's Wear: There is a Right Time for Everything in the Youngster's Wardrobe," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 March 1932, 27.

children. By the 1920s, manufacturers and retailers offered space for boys, girls and children.



Styles for Tiny Tots

The little boy must also be remembered when purchases of "Sunday bests" are being made. This is one of the clever new hand-embroidery designs being shown by the T. Eaton Co., Toronto.

In this accordion plaited Georgette dress with side panels and trimming of delicate lace she is everybody's darling. This dainty frock is from Best & Co., New York, who have far-famed styles for children.

Figure 3.15: *Dry Goods Review*, 1 July 1919.

At the outset of the twentieth-century, retailers ridiculed 'shopping women' who were obsessed with getting bargains. Eventually, retailers acknowledged that these women were necessary to ready-made clothing sales and, indeed, profits. Debates and discussions about targeting women and boys and providing welcoming environments for them frequently appeared in the early twentieth-century. Merchants shared strategies, advice and views about selling ready-made clothing for boys. Retailers were told, time and again, about the importance of focusing on and appealing to 'new boys'.

Rites of passage associated with a boy's appearance, such as his first haircut, were moved to public shopping spaces in an effort to get boys and mothers to shop for ready-made clothing. By the end of the First World War, ready-made clothing focused on boys', girls, children's and even infant's departments. Central to all these departments was the patronage of women and the view that their decisions were central to retail success. A common complaint from merchants throughout the period was the competition small merchants and local retailers faced from Department stores and mail-order catalogues. Department stores were viewed as 'feminine' shopping spaces, and merchants were counseled to incorporate 'department' store strategies to appeal to women shoppers. How did these companies attract women to shop in their department stores? Did they advertise to 'new women' and 'new boys'? What kinds of ready-made garments were available throughout the period? The *Dry Goods Review* has provided information about what manufacturers were trying to sell to retailers, but how did Canada's largest department stores advertise boys' and girls' clothing? The next chapter provides an opportunity to explore these questions through a quantitative and qualitative analysis of Department stores and mail-order catalogues.

Chapter 4

'The Schoolboys' Scamper,'

Advertising Ready-made Clothing to 'New Boys' and their Mothers:

Department Stores and Mail-order Catalogues

A large store lunchroom transformed. The background, a painted scene, like the wall of a brick schoolhouse, and at the sides, scenery with autumn foliage running along the top giving a touch of realism. A wide platform along the front of the school and a runway at right angles extending for about 100 feet, the full length of the room. On both sides of this several hundred seats, filled mostly with mothers...A hubbub is breaking out, a crowd of boys let loose for play, and in a moment the school yard is swarming with little fellows, rushing to and fro, playing leap frog, football, boxing, tag, jumping; indulging in every form of noisy, healthy fun; the real article of boys' 'recess'... While your eye flashes around from one to the other in the merry hubbub, you notice this boy's suit seems strangely new and his stocking; and shiny shoes that never even looked at a muddy puddle by the roadside; and hat that was never jerked off his head in a rough and tumble melee. Ditto the next one and the nearby chum. Everyone togged out in his Sunday best. You notice it more when the teacher rings the bell, and they throw aside their play and line up and move sedately down the long platform, one by one, showing off their new clothes; new from head to foot. This is 'The Schoolboys' Scamper.' Yes, and about as clever a scheme for leading up to an all-round display of boys' clothing that ever has been devised: staged by the T. Eaton Co., of Toronto... 'The Boys' Scamper:' So realistic you could forget it was staged; and how far removed from the usual-and yet necessary-mode of demonstrating the correct toggery of boys and men. While the mothers looked on and enjoyed the fun, they were sizing up those natty outfits, and wondering which one of those velour hats or neat Norfolks would best become their six-and eight-and ten-year olds at home.¹

¹ "The Schoolboys' Scamper," *Dry Goods Review*, 15 October 1913, 54.

'The Schoolboys' Scamper' was staged by the T. Eaton Company in Toronto over a period of four days in 1913. Focused on boys and their clothing, this event centred on a runway extending one hundred feet, surrounded by several hundred seats in the T. Eaton Company lunchroom that was filled to capacity, primarily by women.² In the afternoon, a 'standing room only' audience that also included children, fathers and big sisters standing on their tip-toes to take in the 'show,' depicted a 'boy's world':

The school door has closed and the sign "Late" hangs upon it. Up saunters the boy of the nursery rhyme, "A diller, a dollar, a ten o'clock scholar;" he knocks; bangs; gets impatient and angry at the unresponsive silence. He spies a football, whistles to his "gang" of other "ten o'clock's," and in an instant the yard is alive with noisy, unstudious sounds. Out comes the teacher; very stern, but a coaxing gets a game, and oh, so real a one: and then for these older boys, a promenade down the line and a turn: all in their Sunday best, too.³

Mothers were said to be wondering out loud during the show which styles best suited their boys back home. As a feature article in the *Dry Goods Review*, the report was intended to inspire retailers to be creative in their displays of boys' clothing:

It was a demonstration of styles that was so novel that it attracted attention and talk; effective as a revelation of what the store contained in these important lines; and no less valuable in enlarging the prestige of the establishment that carried out so striking and original an idea. It was a novelty in display: and novelties in display has important a part in keeping a store in the public eye, and drawing custom to it, as novelties in goods. Both are essential for lifting business out of the humdrum, the deadly monotony, the mediocre average that is fatal to that healthy growth that should be as natural in a business as in a child or a plant in the Spring time of life.⁴

² In an article written twelve years later, the value of fashion shows was discussed in the context of women's and children's fashions. "Do Fashion Shows Pay in Dollars and Cents? Toronto Man Whose Living Model Displays Are the Fashion Event of His City Tell How Their Success Should Be Gauged-Review of Last Year's Fashion Events in Canada," *Dry Goods Review*, 15 August 1925, 21-22. A summary of fourteen fashion shows held in several cities was included in this article.

³ "The Schoolboys' Scamper," *Dry Goods Review*, 15 October 1913, 54.

⁴ "The Schoolboys' Scamper," *Dry Goods Review*, 15 October 1913, 58 - 59.

While 'new boys' gambled in ready-made garments, mothers considered the prospect of purchasing garments praised as 'boy friendly' and 'mother friendly'. For 'new boys,' these were attractive because they were made for play. For mothers, they not only were stylish but also saved her the work of sewing garments at home.

A study of the marketing strategies of major department stores and the emergence of mail-order catalogues can further illuminate our understanding of the cultural features of the transition from home made clothing to ready-made clothing.⁵ A survey of company catalogues from the 1890 to 1929 provides evidence of the changing perceived needs and priorities of shoppers. An analysis of catalogues provides examples of how retailers tried to mediate between the desires of mothers and the desires of children.⁶ As they told women that it was much less trouble to buy ready-made clothing than to sew

⁵ For the story of the T. Eaton Company, see Joy L. Santink, *Timothy Eaton and the rise of his department store* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990). This study follows the development of the business to T. Eaton's death in 1907 and focuses on the Toronto department store. Transitions in dry goods markets from selling sewing materials to selling ready-made clothing has been examined by Brenda Kim Newell. See her thesis entitled "From Cloth to Clothing: The Emergence of Department Stores in Late 19th Century Toronto." M.A. Thesis, Trent University, 1984. Several articles in the *Dry Goods Review*, obviously concerned about local store owners described in great detail how the emergence of large Department stores threatened to undermine the business of dry goods retailers. The issue of advertising in local papers was a difficult one. While it might have been lucrative to include advertisements from the T. Eaton Company, for example, a price would have been paid by losing local advertising from dry goods merchants. "Recently the same agency was commissioned to approach the Ontario publishers, and did succeed in placing Eaton advertisements in several papers, although, in nearly every case the proposition was turned down flat. The attitude of the publishers is not likely to change, for they realize that their best interests lie in protecting the local markets." Editorial, "Eaton Ads. In Local Papers," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 February 1907, 66. The issue of advertising and mail order catalogues continued to stir debate among retailers in the 1910s. "Mail Order Advertising Excluded," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 March 1917, 34. Butterick Publishing Company. *The Delineator*, a journal dedicated to providing women sewing and fashion advice, ceased publishing mail order catalogue advertisements.

clothing for children. Building upon previous studies that have examined children's clothing and catalogues, this chapter will pay particular attention to gender and age in the interplay of clothing and childhood.⁷

In examining representations of ready-made children's clothing between the 1890s and the late 1920s, this chapter will focus on two catalogues, that of the Hudson's Bay Company and of the Robert Simpson Company, that have hitherto not been used to study children's clothing. In addition, the chapter is based on the most well-known and enduring catalogue, that of the T. Eaton Company.⁸ First issued as circulars or pamphlets by T. Eaton for customers in the vicinity of Toronto, mail-order catalogues developed into national publications by the early twentieth century.⁹ In the late nineteenth century, both the Robert Simpson Co. Limited of Toronto and the Hudson's Bay Company of Winnipeg, distributed catalogues to compete with the T. Eaton Company.¹⁰ For many department stores, catalogues were also an important medium to communicate

⁶ As will be shown, parents were addressed directly a few times – but 'father' never appeared in text, related to children's clothing, in the catalogue entries studied.

⁷ Janice Smith. "Content Analysis of Children's Clothing in Eaton's Catalogues and Selected Canadian Museums, 1890 – 1920." *M.Sc. Thesis*, (University of Alberta, 1991).

⁸ The T. Eaton Company published its catalogue until 1976, enduring almost one hundred years. In 1999, the company was sold and *Sears* purchased store spaces formerly owned by Eaton's. In November 2000, eatons was re-opened and the catalogue was distributed to facilitate the e-commerce consumer business. Once again, a focus on shoppers unable to physically access stores was considered. "Sears revives long-dead Eatons catalogue: Glossy icon sent to 4.2 million households." *Ottawa Citizen*, 24 October 2000.

⁹ Advertisement, "Eaton's Big Sale," [Toronto] *Globe*, 13 July 1871, 2. This small textual advertisement also invited people to send for a catalogue.

¹⁰ Only three editions of the Hudson's Bay Company catalogue were located. The Robert Simpson Co. Limited catalogue fared considerably better and there are microfilmed copies available at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, as well as some issues in the general collection of the National Library and in its rare book collection. Eaton's catalogues have received most of the research focus and attention and were found to be a textually and visually richer.

information about their stores and merchandise. Taken together, these three catalogues allow for an in-depth analysis of advertisements for children's clothing over a thirty-year period. While many department stores and dry goods companies published catalogues throughout the Dominion, these three companies waged national campaigns and worked to obtain business from a disparate population. Only two would emerge unscathed from the bitter competition; the Hudson's Bay Company abandoned mail-order catalogues just before the First World War.

This chapter will first provide a brief overview of the history of these department stores, their marketing strategies, and their role in boosting Canadian ready-made clothing sales. Secondly, a systematic content analysis of catalogues published between the 1890s and the 1920s will reveal what clothing was available from ordering by mail. A total of ten catalogues were used for the content analysis, two from the Robert Simpson Company, three from Hudson's Bay Company and six from the T. Eaton Company, one of which was a Winnipeg edition. Information about a total of one thousand, one hundred and sixty-three (1, 163) children's garments was used to create a database for analysis of gender, garment type, material, construction, age, style, colour and cost.¹¹ Besides determining which garments were advertised for whom this database reflects a close reading of the catalogues' words and images. Indeed, catalogues provide evidence about the material aspects of clothing that cannot be garnered from either photographs or

¹¹ This database also captured detailed information about colour and costs of ready-made children's garments. Space constraints prevented a broader discussion of these findings; however, findings from the other categories provide rich analyses of questions posed. While this information will be discussed later in this chapter, another project could undertake to study these findings in conjunction with museum findings.

prescriptive literature.¹² Given that many customers were unable to purchase goods in person, the catalogues provided a wealth of information about the fabric, construction, style, and price of garments or goods.

Timothy Eaton, a dry goods merchant who first distributed flyers throughout the village of St. Mary's, moved his business to Toronto in 1870. From his Yonge street store, he continued to circulate pamphlets until the 1880s when he began publishing his catalogue twice annually for the Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter seasons.¹³ Although the earliest issues of catalogues were composed of text only, they provided customers with basic information about the goods for sale. Customers, in turn, were asked to send the company a detailed description of the goods they required. Women were encouraged to write to the company for cloth samples or to provide the mail-order department with specific details about material, style, price and purpose.¹⁴ Finally, the mail-order service

¹² Until 1905, T. Eaton Company was only located in Toronto and the Hudson's Bay Company in Winnipeg. The Robert Simpson Co. Limited was located directly across from Eaton's in Toronto and in Winnipeg, the Hudson's Bay Company worked for many years to move closer to the Eaton's on Portage avenue which was built in 1905. In the 1920s, the T. Eaton Company expanded to open other stores especially in Western Canada. See "T. Eaton Co. to locate Department Stores in Calgary and Saskatoon," *Dry Goods Review*, 15 November 1927, 86.

¹³ T. Eaton Company, "To Our Patrons," *Fall and Winter Catalogue* 1884. It was less than twenty-five pages and there were no drawing, engravings or images to accompany the text at all. The catalogue had a simple drawing of the store, located at nos. 190, 192, 194, and 196 Yonge Street. Edwin Rose. "The Man Behind the Store," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 July 1904, 163-164. This short article provides a rather caustic analysis of Eaton, his rise up from poverty and his relationship with various advertising media. In general, the Review was not generous in its commentary regarding the large department store. We know his motto from the catalogue, according to this article it was taken from Donnybrook Fair: "Whenever you see a head, hit it." (164)

¹⁴ The 1903, Hudson's Bay Company catalogue included material samples so that texture, weave and colour could be determined by shoppers.

included the offer to shop on behalf of customers and guaranteed full refunds if customers should be unsatisfied with their purchases.¹⁵

**EATON'S
BIG
SALE**
THINK OF IT!
T O - D A Y
Send for Catalogue,
T. EATON & CO.
Corner Yonge and Queen Streets.

Figure 4.1: *Globe*, 11 March 1871.

**MONSTER
CLEARING SALE**
T. EATON & CO.
Have commenced to chop off the heads
of their WINTER GOODS at such prices
as will please the million.
For further particulars, see small bills.
They sell so cheap they cannot afford
to pay the advanced rates to Mr. Globe
for long advertisements.
INSPECTION INVITED.
113 Yonge Street, corner Queen

Figure 4.2: *Globe*, 17 January 1871.

From the outset, the T. Eaton Company reached two groups of customers: the residents of Toronto and those across the country who ordered goods by mail.¹⁶

Customers were encouraged to visit the Eaton department store in Toronto: “Why do Thousands daily do their Shopping at 190 Yonge Street? It’s not a hard problem to solve. But first of all let us remind you that we HAVEN’T GOT or DON’T RUN any branch stores. All our energy and all our experience is centred at 190 Yonge Street.”¹⁷ Readers were also informed that “this store is to Toronto what Wanamaker is to Philadelphia, Macy to New York, Jordan-Marsh to Boston, Marshal Field to Chicago and the Bon

¹⁵ T. Eaton Company, “How to Order by Mail,” *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1886-1887, 2-3. T. Eaton Company, “For out of town Customers,” *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1893-1894.

¹⁶ T. Eaton Company, “A brief narrative of Canada’s Great Retail Shopping Enterprise: Shopping by Mail,” *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1889, 2-3; and T. Eaton Company “Shopping by Mail,” *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1897, are just two examples of the many conversations that discussed the system and advantages of mail-order shopping.

¹⁷ T. Eaton Company, *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1888-1889, 2. By the 1920s, T. Eaton Company did however begin to branch out further from its stores in Winnipeg and Toronto.

Marché to Paris.”¹⁸ A map of the city, along with directions to travel by boat, train and streetcar, appeared in the beginning of catalogues in the nineteenth-century. Eaton even provided readers with information about streetcar fares.¹⁹

By including a detailed description of the store’s expansion and growth in each catalogue, Eaton’s customers were assured that friendly staff would assist them, and, that the company would take care of its mail-order customers.²⁰ In 1890, the Eaton’s catalogue asserted that: “[n]o matter how far remote from this store, any one who can write a postal card asking for samples and prices, will get them by return post. A separate department gives its whole, undivided attention to all such correspondence.”²¹ The catalogue also promoted Eaton’s as a truly national store. Wherever the maple leaf grew in the Dominion of Canada, the mail-order catalogue would reach its readers: “We have facilities for filling mail orders satisfactorily, no matter how far the letter has to come and goods have to go.”²²


¹⁸ T. Eaton Company “Welcome,” *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1894-1895, 1.

¹⁹ T. Eaton Company, “T. Eaton & Co. 190 to 196 Yonge St. and 10 to 12 1/2 Queen St. West, Toronto, Ont.: Easy of Access,” *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1886-1887.

²⁰ T. Eaton Company, “Canada’s Greatest Store,” *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1896, 2.

²¹ T. Eaton Company, “Subscription Agency” *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1890, 46.

²² T. Eaton Company, *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1890 46.



T. EATON CO.
LIMITED
190 YONGE ST.
TORONTO

For Your Customers.

A small army of clerks, whose whole business it is to look after the mail orders and fill them promptly and with discretion.

Promptly means the same day as received.

With discretion means—as well if not better than you could fill them yourselves.

That's a case where experience counts for something.

THE T. EATON CO. LTD.

FACTS AND FIGURES.

Seventy-four acres of floor space. Floor for the Lumber yard, extending to the street.

Over London, occupying 100 horse-power, and requiring 200 tons of coal a week.

Two steam engines, with a combined power of 200 horse-power.

One hundred and twenty-five gas lights and the hundred-and-fifty lamps supplied by the "Edison" system—the largest private electric light plant in the country.

About 25 miles of steam pipe required to heat the building.

Its hydraulic elevator, driven by two pairs steam by driving pumps (Edison's hydraulic system for the Toronto Club System).

Twenty-four delivery wagons and 41 horses, delivering at times as many as 2,500 packages in a day.

THE T. EATON CO. LTD.

HOUSE FURNISHING GOODS

Wall Papers			Upholsteries			Furniture		
Carpets		ON Cloths		Mattings		Rugs		
Men's and Boys' Clothing		Wraps		Jackets		Furs		Shawls
Shoes		Umbrellas		Leather Goods		Notions		Books and Caps
Embroid'ys		Ribbons		Laces		Handkerchiefs		Trimmings Fans Millinery
Dress Goods		Silks		Velvets		Cloths		Woodware Corsets Trunks Valises Toilet Goods
Linen		Muslins		Sheetings		Flannels		Blankets Underwear Hosiery Gloves White Goods
Silverware		Toys		Pictures		Jewelry		Gents' Furnishings Bicycles Stationery Glassware Chinaware Lamps and Gas Fixtures Botanical Patterns

AS THE BASE OF COMMERCE WIDENS, SO WE RISE

Figure 4.3: T. Eaton Company, *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1890.

During the 1890s, T. Eaton Company expanded its business, especially its mail-order department, reaching out to shoppers who might never actually set foot in the Yonge Street store.²³ The *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1900 catalogue included instruction for 'À nos clients Français[sic]' and 'an unsere Deutshcen Geschaeftsfreunde,' thereby also responding to a diverse and disparate population.²⁴ Before T. Eaton Company opened a Winnipeg store, it had advertised its the mail order business in the West: "Send us Your Name for Our Spring Catalogue. It's a safe guide for those who do shopping by mail. It's a money-saver for homeowners and housekeepers all over Canada. It gives correct information about the latest styles for men, women and children. It's a great help to those who buy things to wear, things for the home and things to eat."²⁵ The company motto, "The Greatest Good to the Greatest Number," reflected its confidence that mail-order could provide services and goods to people scattered over an enormous territory.²⁶ According to the Eaton's catalogue, customers could expect equal treatment, regardless of their social class: "Rich and poor are treated with uniform courtesy, out-of-town customers are reached with the long arm of the post-office and telegraph, and every consideration of honest quality and right methods create the promise of a steadily increasing success."²⁷ As long as customers paid in cash and followed

²³ T. Eaton Company, "Canada's Greatest Store" *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1896-1897, 1.

²⁴ T. Eaton Company "Information for Shoppers by Mail," *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1900.

²⁵ Advertisement, "Send us your Name," *Farmer's Advocate*, 5 March 1903, 219.

²⁶ T. Eaton Company, *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1894-1895, front.

²⁷ T. Eaton Company, "Canada's Greatest Store," *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1896-1897, 3.

ordering instructions, they would be treated with 'uniform courtesy' and utmost consideration.

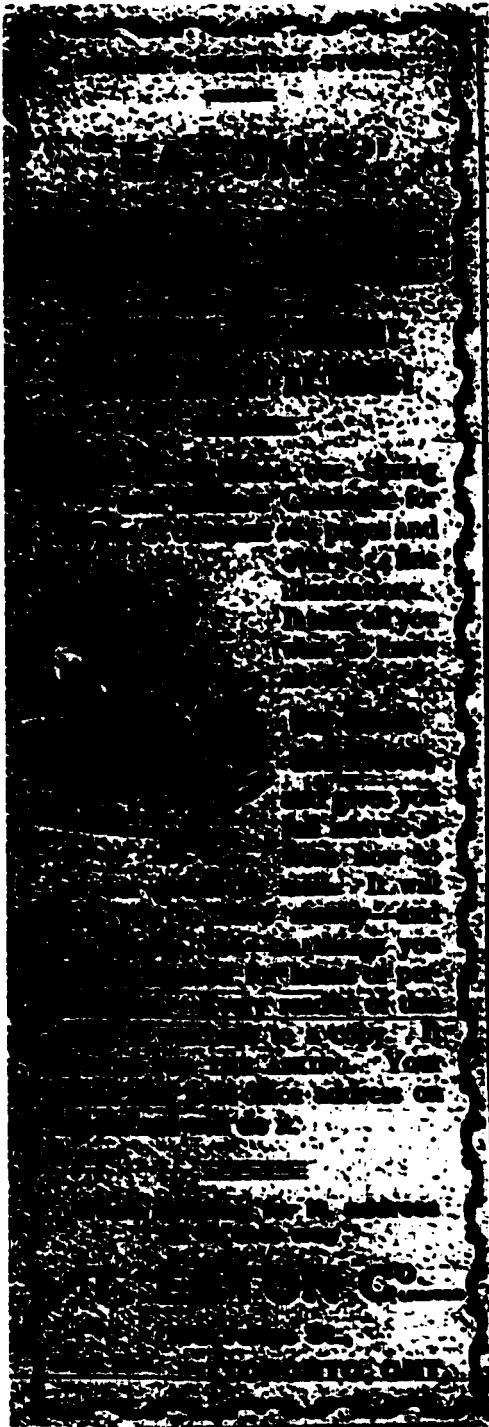


Figure 4.4: "Eaton's," *Farmer's Advocate*, 15 April 1899.

EATON'S

MAIL ORDER STORE

TORONTO

Ordering by MAIL

Is the Most Up-to-date and Economical Method of Shopping.



ARE YOU ACQUAINTED WITH EATON'S MAIL ORDER STORE?

If not it will be to your advantage to have an introduction at once.

Our new Spring and Summer Catalogue for 1904 has just been issued, and is brimful of money-saving suggestions.

From its pages can be selected the most up-to-date styles of Wearing Apparel, Boots and Shoes, Furniture, in fact everything required for the home at prices that will appeal to you. We have not in any one instance sacrificed quality for cheapness.

No matter where you live—if you have a post office address—the splendid organization of Eaton's Mail Order Department brings all the advantages of the store to your home. Our Catalogue enables you to make convenient selections from the same stock you would examine were you shopping in person.

We have decided to bring the attention of everyone in Canada to our Mail Order Department. We are doing this by giving values that will be instantly recognized as being exceptional.

See our prices and samples before ordering elsewhere. One trial order will convince you that shopping by mail at EATON'S is profitable.

Remember our Guarantee, "Satisfaction or Money Refunded," applies to every purchase.

Our Constant Aim:

A SATISFIED CUSTOMER.

ADDRESS

Write for Our Catalogue

THE T. EATON CO. LIMITED
TORONTO
CANADA

MAIL ORDERS FILLED PROMPTLY

Figure 4.5: "Ordering by Mail," *Farmer's Advocate*, 14 April 1904, 540.

The Robert Simpson Company emerged in the 1890s during a time of intense competition among retailers vying for sales.²⁸ The T. Eaton Company and Robert Simpson Company were adjacent to each other at the intersection of Yonge and Queen, and in their seasonal catalogues, details about improvements and modern implements featured prominently.²⁹ In its 1895 catalogue, Simpson's boasted another year of growth, as reflected in its extravagant department store. The new building, the catalogue enthused, used over 600,000 pounds of steel and reflected the latest trends in modern architecture. The writer did not even hesitate to liken a stroll through the store to a visit to Niagara Falls:

10, 000 square feet of glass have been used in the building, and one will travel far to find a shop front possessing the attraction to be found here. Large sheets of plate glass extend clean through and down into the basement, producing an effect, as one proceeds along either Yonge or Queen-streets, that cannot be described in cold type. Like the Falls of Niagara, it is one of the sights that needs to be seen to be appreciated.³⁰

The Company hoped to attract shoppers to visit its store and ride the modern elevators, regardless of their distance from Toronto.³¹ Evidence from the *Farmer's Advocate*,

²⁸ In a brief comment on the failure of another business, the competition between the T. Eaton Company and Robert Simpson Company was noted. See "The M'Kendry Failure," *Dry Goods Review*, July 1896, 48.

²⁹ For a more detailed discussion of the competition between Eaton and Simpson's see Brenda Kim Newell. "From Cloth to Clothing: The Emergence of Department Stores in late 19th Century Toronto," *M.A. Thesis*, (History Trent University, 1984).

³⁰ Rare Book Collection, National Library of Canada The Robert Simpson Co. Limited, No. 54, c. 1895, 2.

³¹ Rare Book Collection, National Library of Canada The Robert Simpson Co. Limited, No. 54, c. 1895, 3. "The sales people and the staff of the store are at your service, and whether it is to buy goods, secure a lunch, meet a friend, have a parcel checked, communicate with someone by telephone, or obtain information touching various matters likely to suggest themselves for inquiry, everything is here at your service. These are the lines on which this great departmental store, fittingly termed Canada's Modern Departmental Store, has been shaped and is to-day conducted. When you visit the city you'll certainly visit Simpson's."

suggests that Simpson's initially advertised its wares in the newspapers, hoping that distance could be overcome.

SPECIAL ADVERTISING

TREMENDOUS

CLOSING-OUT SALE

Having sold a million Dollars worth (1889) 1889, of Staple and Fancy Dry Goods to be closed out before the 1st of October.

Every department in the House has been thoroughly overhauled and sweeping reductions made in our already low prices. Our agents are now in Europe securing the European markets, and carrying out our great system of paying cash for all purchases, and thereby getting the lowest quotation and the best discounts obtainable. There is no bargain, however, great, or fabric, however, scarce, that is not within our reach or readily put in our way. To make room for our fall purchases, a Great Summer Closing-Out Sale is now being held, and we are determined to make a grand clearing at any cost, and if our loss is great, greater than will bring our customers' gain. Visitors to the city during exhibition week should give us a call.

R. SIMPSON

Bank-Well Corner Yonge and Queen

TORONTO ONTARIO

Figure 4.6: *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 August 1889, 261.

Like the T. Eaton Company, the Robert Simpson Company published mail-order catalogues in the 1890s, competing for business beyond Yonge and Queen. After the T. Eaton Company had enormous success in Winnipeg, the Robert Simpson Company also set its sights upon the West and began to court consumers from the prairies. The advertisement in Figure 4.7, published in 1908 in the *Farmer's Advocate*, suggested that mail-order catalogues afforded Western customers the 'experience' of shopping in Toronto. Shoppers in the West could benefit by buying Paris and London styles available from Simpson's in Toronto. Shopping from their catalogue could put westerners on par with the 'most discriminating shopping public in Canada'! 'Experienced shoppers' who 'represented' customers and were 'paid to please you' filled orders sent in by those who could not visit the Toronto store. Competition between Eaton's and Simpson's affected catalogue prices which also reflected freight charges and minimum orders. Unlike Eaton's, Simpson's often offered to pay freight or express charges on minimum orders.



IF YOU LIVED IN TORONTO

you would follow the crowd to Simpson's and do most of your shopping here. Then why not do it anyhow? Our Catalogue brings the store to you and gives you every advantage of Toronto goods at Toronto prices. With it you can sit down in your own home and do your shopping by mail with just as great delight and satisfaction as if you visited the store personally. Each order is given to an experienced shopper, who selects and buys the article for you. She represents you, and is paid to please you. In most cases, your goods are shipped same day your order is received.

TORONTO IS HEADQUARTERS FOR STYLE

and this store keeps sharp step with the latest fashion ideas of London and Paris. Your local merchant must content himself largely with staple goods that won't spoil by growing old, while we are constantly introducing new styles and novelties. In buying from us your orders are filled from exactly the same stocks as are shown over our counters to the most discriminating shopping public in Canada, and only such goods as we can thoroughly recommend for quality and satisfaction.

Send at once for our new Catalogue and compare our prices with what you are accustomed to pay. We prepay freight or express charges on all orders of \$25.00 or over.

THE
ROBERT **SIMPSON** COMPANY
TORONTO, CANADA LIMITED

Figure 4.7: *Farmer's Advocate*, 16 September 1908, 253.

Farmers were explicitly encouraged to compare prices, likely between their local dry goods merchants and, more importantly, between Simpson's and Eaton's.



GOOD TIMES AHEAD

FROM ALL PARTS of the Dominion come most encouraging reports regarding the harvest outlook, which will mean new encouragement to all kinds of business.

Do you realize what **THE ROBERT SIMPSON COMPANY** is doing to keep pace with this growth? When our new building in Toronto is completed this Fall, the store equipment will be doubled, and we will be able to fill twice as many mail orders, with a promptness that you've never known.

The new Fall and Winter Catalogue that has just been issued was compiled with this increased business in view. A comparison of prices will show you how well worth your while it is to **SHOP IN TORONTO AT TORONTO PRICES**. No matter where you live, our free delivery offer puts you on an equality with all our other customers.

Your address on a postcard will bring you the new catalogue by return mail, with full particulars about the free delivery.

THE ROBERT **SIMPSON** COMPANY LIMITED
TORONTO, CANADA

Figure 4.8: "Good Times Ahead," *Farmer's Advocate*, 26 August 1908, 1168.

With the two Toronto-based companies competing for markets in an expanding Western population, the Hudson's Bay Company, also hoped to reap the rewards of ready-made clothing.³² Most goods available at the Hudson's Bay Company were

³² Arthur Ray, *The Canadian Fur Trade in the Industrial Age*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990). This interest is perhaps also in part because of its failure in the

imported from Great Britain, and were described as 'the best' in the city and the Province. According to the *Dry Goods Review*, the store's role was long standing:

The Hudson's Bay Co. was here before Winnipeg, and catered successfully for the taste of the Indian women, then its only customers in fancy dry goods, and is still, in this year of grade, 1898, meeting with equal success in supplying the needs and fancies of Manitoba's most fashionable dames.³³

By contrast, other retailers ordered their stock of goods from wholesalers and manufactures in Toronto and Eastern United States.³⁴ In the 1890s, when consumer preference shifted to Canadian and American goods, the Hudson's Bay Company found itself at a disadvantage as its strength had always been its British products.³⁵ In 1896, in its two hundred and twenty-sixth year in business, the company launched its first catalogue and price list, thus entering the mail-order trade:

There are doubtless many who are unaware that nearly every requisite for which they have hitherto, in default of such information, been sending to Eastern Canada, can be obtained more quickly and with equal, if not greater advantage at the various stores of the Hudson's Bay Company, which are to be found at various points in Manitoba, the North West Territories and British Columbia... The greatest possibilities of the pioneer company of Canada, with its immense buying power and its great leverage on prices, makes it a responsibility to reach the people, every man, woman and child in this great North West – and we mean to do it.³⁶

The 'Report of the Sales Shops' noted an increase in the mail-order business between 1896 and 1897, and stated that more accommodation for packing parcels was required.³⁷

mail-order business. In the 1930s, its system of fur trading post served as dry goods stores for many remote locations throughout the northwest.

³³ "Trade in the Growing West: Business Active with Winnipeg Merchants," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 April 1898, 70 and 72.

³⁴ To Wrigley. "Winnipeg Report" (1889-90) 5. PAM, HBC Archives, File B235e/10.

³⁵ C.C. Chipman. "Report of the Sales Shops." (May 31, 1895). Reel 967, File A 75/33a.

³⁶ "Introduction" *Hudson's Bay Catalogue* 1896.

³⁷ C.C. Chipman. "Report of the Sales Shops" (May 31, 1897). Reel 967, PAM, HBC Archives File A/75/5.

In 1905, the Timothy Eaton Company mounted its biggest challenge to the Hudson's Bay Company by opening a Winnipeg store, serviced by the streetcar along Portage Avenue and accompanied by a Winnipeg edition of the catalogue.³⁸

Eaton's Mail - Order News

WRITE FOR OUR WINNIPEG CATALOGUE

It contains much that interests all who do any buying. It contains a list of the goods we sell and the prices we charge, and we sell almost everything that makes for comfort to the individual or in the home.

It is more than a mere catalogue: it is an authority on fashions. We are in close touch with the European and American centres of fashion, and as soon as any new design appears our expert designers modify it to the tastes of the Canadian woman, and we offer it for sale while it is still new where it was originated.

Remember, everything we sell we guarantee. If you send us an order, and are not satisfied with anything you receive, we will gladly exchange it or refund you your money.

If you have not already received a copy of our Winnipeg Catalogue, write without delay. It is free.

THE T. EATON CO. LIMITED
WINNIPEG, CANADA

Figure 4.9: "Eaton's Mail Order News," *Farmer's Advocate*, 13 September 1905, 1363.

By 1913 the Hudson's Bay Company's mail-order business was failing, after only fifteen years in operation:

³⁸ "Leading Canadian Centres: Winnipeg," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 July 1905, 212.

The Mail Order Department [sic] has been encouraged in every way, but I am now forced to the conclusion that only by operating it as a separate business in separate buildings, and being prepared to lose a large amount of money each year for several years to come, can the Company ever hope to make this part of their business remunerative. With the work now on hand of rebuilding at several important points and the re-organizing of these points, I do not think that the Mail Order section should be seriously considered at present, and in consequence arrangements are being made to withdraw the Catalogue for the present and allow each store to take care of the Mail Order Trade offering in the respective Districts and so foster same at the smallest expense possible until the Governor and Committee are prepared to sanction the necessary large expenditure for the developing of this branch of the business.³⁹

As a result, the Hudson's Bay Company closed its mail-order business in 1913. Many studies have focused on the 'feminine' shopping space in department stores within the context of a rising culture of consumption.⁴⁰

As we have seen in the previous chapter, retailers were concerned with attracting 'new women' to buy clothing for their 'new boys.' Mail-order catalogues similarly emphasized female shoppers. At first, stores encouraged women to travel to Toronto for the experience of shopping in a department store. Advertisements in daily newspapers and information in the catalogues reminded women to take advantage of regular in-store bargains.⁴¹ As the mail order business expanded, catalogues reflected the continuing focus on women as consumers. Companies advertised dress goods and ready-made clothing for children. A consistent message to female customers was that buying ready-made clothing from their stores was cheaper than making them at home.

³⁹ A 75/21 Hudson's Bay Company Report of the Sales shops for the year ending January 1913 [32-33].

⁴⁰ See Cynthia Wright, "'Feminine Trifles of Vast Importance': Writing Gender into the History of Consumption," in Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde, eds., *Gender Conflicts: News Essays in Women's History* and Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).

⁴¹ *The Globe* advertised Friday bargain sales at Eaton's.

For example, the Hudson's Bay Company, too, employed advertisement schemes addressed to both ladies and gentlemen in the *Farmer's Advocate*: "Our new handsome fall catalogue will be shortly issued. Now, you want to make certain of obtaining one of these by writing us to-day, and we will mail you a copy as soon as it is published." Like the Eaton's and Simpson's, the Hudson's Bay Company specifically tailored its services to female customers, focusing on their perceived interest in paper patterns from the Butterick Company for home sewing. The advertisement related to readers that "Fashion sheets and samples [were] forwarded on request. Our stock of dress materials is larger and more varied than any other in Western Canada." The catalogue advertised ready-made clothing for men and the company promised customers would enjoy sales during Exhibition week, benefiting from a swell of country visitors to Winnipeg.⁴²



Figure 4.10: "Hudson's Bay Company," *Farmer's Advocate*, 6 July 1903, 618.

⁴² Advertisement, "Hudson's Bay Company," *Farmer's Advocate*, 6 July 1903, 618.

In the T. Eaton Company, *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1887-1887, women were notified of an area specifically designed for their use. While shopping at Eaton's, they could leave their parcels free of charge in the ladies area, store out-door garments, send telegrams, telephone and even freshen up after a journey to the city:

Ladies, you come off the train, you are covered with dust, begrimed with smoke, you feel unrefreshed, you don't wish to beg anyone to allow you to make your toilet in their rooms without paying for it, you possibly have a long day's shopping before you, probably you have a number of parcels, you are getting disgusted. Listen! Get off your train, take a Yonge or a Queen Street car, as it may be, and bring your parcels with you straight to Eaton's...Wash as often as you please-wait as long as you like-get thoroughly refreshed before you start shopping. This is all that we can say, we give you the invitation and will be delighted with your acceptance.⁴³

In advertising their store as a 'female social space', retailers pointed to the lavish lavatories they had built for customers' convenience. Reportedly, Simpson's had the "...finest lavatory of any store in Canada."⁴⁴ The *Dry Goods Review* advised local merchants to follow the example of department stores that provided this convenience for women: "This is one thing that causes a great many ladies to go to stores of that sort. Now if merchants would all have a place of that description for women, they would find a great difference in their trade."⁴⁵ It is indeed noteworthy that retailers explicitly addressed women in their advertisements: "The spring and summer months are especially full of attractions. Take a holiday and combine business with pleasure...Bring with you,

⁴³ T. Eaton Company, "Ladies' Waiting Room," *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1886-1887, 5.

⁴⁴ Almost seventy-five years later, conveniences for women were the subject of a letter to the family owned company regarding the consumer power of women at the company. See the letter to Mr. Eaton from Dr. Judith S. Posner regarding breast feeding facilities at the Eaton's Centre in Toronto published in *Canadian Women's Studies* 1 (1980): 16.

⁴⁵ 'By a Head Clerk:' "Hints to Retailers: Lavatories for Women," *Dry Goods Review*, June 1897, 44.

your sisters, cousins and your aunts.”⁴⁶ Those unable to make it to the store for a shopping excursion could always rely on the convenience of shopping by mail: “Read the entire pamphlet through. We have written, aiming not to tire, but rather that it should represent a pleasant chat with our host of friends in this city and country.”⁴⁷

The T. Eaton Company advertised that the staff included many young ladies thus reassuring women that their shopping experience would be a friendly and comfortable one. According to the catalogue, the female staff was “...wholly independent of our regular selling force, who have been carefully selected for their painstaking dispositions and excellent judgement in matters of dress, thus eminently qualifying them to occupy the positions with which they are entrusted.”⁴⁸ These ‘lady clerks’ filled orders, responded to letters and provided samples based on descriptions of the color, style, price and purpose of the goods requested.⁴⁹ Indeed, by having clothing purchased for them and their family, women could be freed from shopping for clothes and sewing at home.

In the catalogues from the late nineteenth-century, ready-made clothing, primarily for men and boys was an important part of the T. Eaton Company. The 1887-1888 catalogue stated that “Clothing is our business, and we may possibly suit you better than you could yourself.”⁵⁰ In the eyes of companies, the mail-order business was appealing for many reasons. Most importantly, catalogues helped increase profits by reaching a

⁴⁶ T. Eaton Company, “Bargain Day,” *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1889, 5.

⁴⁷ T. Eaton Company, “A brief Narrative of Canada’s Great Retail Shopping Enterprise,” *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1889, 2.

⁴⁸ T. Eaton Company, “How to Order by Mail,” *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1886-1887, 2.

⁴⁹ T. Eaton Company, *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1887-88.

⁵⁰ T. Eaton Company, “Men’s and Boys’ Clothing,” *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1887-1888, 66.

greater number of shoppers than ever before. The invention of 'women as shoppers' was paralleled by the emergence of a new profession, the 'professional shopper':

This department is under the supervision of an experienced manager, assisted by a corps of young ladies appointed as shoppers, not sellers of goods, and whose daily contact with all departments naturally makes them experts in this duty. It is, therefore, safe to assume that those who avail themselves of this medium are better served than were [sic] they to do their own selecting.⁵¹

As the advertisement suggested, the 'professional shopper' brought a hitherto unknown degree of 'European' sophistication to the task of buying clothes. With only a select few families able to travel overseas, professional buyers would bring European fashions, tastes, and clothing styles back to Canada where the average customer could buy them at department stores:

It means a score or more of buyers -they are vastly more than buyers- who have to know the stuffs and know the moneys -turn dollars and cents into francs, and marks and piastres; know fashion changes, changes in makers as well, and their being able to educate people into buying what they ought to buy -sometimes in spite of themselves - and keeping their stocks always fresh, with hundreds of customers to pick them over every day.⁵²

This strategy, buying for, instead of selling to customers, became a staple of department stores like Eaton's and Simpson's. Mail-order catalogues provided this service to thousands of women and their families.⁵³

⁵¹ T. Eaton Company, "Mail-Order Department," *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1888-1889, 4-7

⁵² T. Eaton Company, "The Organization," *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1890, 2.

⁵³ The longevity of relationships between Canadian families and the Eaton's past is maintained in Canadian literature. Many authors have referred only to the Eaton's catalogue. For example, one of the most popular stories is Roch Carrier's *Hockey Sweater*. More recently, Alistair McLeod's novel, *No Great Mischief* reminds us of the Eaton's packages that arrived throughout rural Canada. Undoubtedly, there are many, many examples of these references by Canadian authors.

Another strategy adopted by the Robert Simpson Company, to encourage women shoppers and to engender confidence in mail-order stores, offered a parcel of pre-chosen dress fabrics, buttons, and other materials required to make a dress: "Try a parcel. The Proof of the Pudding is in the Eating of it. Wonder Value Sample Parcels of Dress Goods, Silks, Wall Papers Etc. 6 yards of Henrietta @45¢; 2 yards waist lining @ 20¢ per; 4 yards skirt lining @ 7¢ per; 1 yard canvas 12.5¢; 1 set of steels 10¢; 2 dozen buttons 15 ¢ per; spools, belting and 3 1/2 yards bias velvet 18¢ worth \$4.21, 1/2 our price \$ 3.25."⁵⁴ The advantages of these parcels were numerous: patrons would not only save money but also be freed of the labourious task of traveling to a store and selecting all the goods required to make a dress. Moreover, they could also choose from two other packages at equally reasonable rates. This service vividly illustrates the gradual transition from home sewing to the increasing diversity of ready-made clothing. The company recognised women's interest in dress goods and sewing supplies and sought to strike a balance between the demands of women and the company's desire to sell ready-made clothing.

The lengthy relationship between pattern companies and Department stores remained intact until the 1910s. Mail-order companies were dealt a setback as major pattern companies like Buttericks no longer advertised in mail-order catalogues. For department stores, a large reading audience was lost and had to be targeted through other advertising vehicles.⁵⁵ Department stores, and especially the T. Eaton Company due to its garment factories, increasingly discouraged women from sewing at home by

⁵⁴ The Robert Simpson Company, *Canadian Shoppers Hand-book R. Simpson's Repertoire of Fashion* No. 54, c. 1895.

⁵⁵ "Mail Order Advertising Excluded," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 March 1917, 34. The Butterick Publishing Company was the company excluding Eaton's.

suggesting there were no patterns of ready-made clothing available. Department stores increasingly sought to replace patterns with ready-made garments for the whole family.

To meet the perceived needs of their female customers, retailers emphasised that mail-order catalogues placed their stores into the 'very midst' of women across Canada. This image was vividly brought home in the 1890's T. Eaton Company's *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, which depicted a middle-upper-class woman filling out a mail-order form and having it mailed by a maid:

To most of our lady readers, this catalogue will come before September buying has begun. To others, north, south, east and west away in the Maritime Provinces, over the Rockies, and up in British Columbia-it may touch the feather-edged holiday time; but whichever and what ever it may be the great majority of its readers will find considerable of interest in its pages interesting because of our shopping by mail facilities, which virtually places the store in their very midst.⁵⁶

Mail order catalogues and department stores advertised goods and services to attract a female clientele. From the outset, dress goods, sewing 'notions', such as closures, ribbons and other accessories, and, in some instances, over-coats or mantles figured, prominently in both stores and catalogues. While department stores recognised the profitability of dress goods, ready-made garments presented another opportunity to increase sales. As already discussed in Chapter three, advice on how to appeal to mothers and sons frequently appeared in the *Dry Goods Review* and editorials linked the successes of department stores to this strategy. How, then, did department stores advertise ready-made clothing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century?

Close on the heels of the musing entitled the 'new boy' that appeared in the *Farmer's Advocate* in 1905, an advertisement for Eaton's in the *Farmer's Advocate*

depicted 'Canadian' boys from coast to coast. Turn-of-the century views about region, wealth and ethnicity immediately emerge from the image. The advertisement for a midsummer sale also depicts boys enacting 'masculine' work roles.

EATON'S MIDSUMMER SALE

For Mail Order Customers from all Parts of the Dominion



For this Sale—July 2nd to August 15th—we have prepared a

SPECIAL CATALOGUE OF SPECIAL GOODS AT SPECIAL PRICES

For months we have been preparing for this Great Sale, and immense purchases have been made. As the goods are all made specially and sold at special prices, it is advisable to order early. Our staff of experts handling Mail Orders will give you prompt and careful attention. If you have not received this Catalogue send us a post card and we will mail to your address. **Prompt Shipments, Large Assortments, Splendid Values and Satisfaction Guaranteed** are our attractions for this Sale.

Write for this Special Sale Catalogue. It's Your Opportunity. You Cannot Afford to Miss It

Prompt and Satisfactory Service	THE T. EATON CO. LIMITED TORONTO - - CANADA	Cash and One Price to All
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Figure 4.11: *Farmer's Advocate*, 28 June 1906, 1045.

As Figure 4.11 illustrates, mail-order catalogues are a rich source of information about how children's ready-made clothing was marketed during the turn of the century.

⁵⁶ T. Eaton Company, "Introductory," *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, September 1890, 1. In a 1904 advertisement in the *Farmer's Advocate*, a woman herself was mailing her

In order to systematically examine this evidence, single items of clothing in the catalogue were placed into one of the following categories: boys', girls', children's and infants'.⁵⁷ Each ready-made garment was assigned a type, such as 'dress' or 'suit'.⁵⁸ In addition to gender and garment type, this chapter explores styles of ready-made clothing by considering how garments were advertised. For example, how common was the Little Lord Fauntleroy style and was it eventually available for girls? Similarly, the evidence is examined with respect to age. Finally, the analysis focuses on the materials used to make children's clothing. Did manufacturers use the same fabric for boys and girls, and can we learn more about the colour of the clothing advertised? The last section of this chapter discusses these findings in light of an analysis of advertising text for children's ready-made garments. Table 4.1 defines the available catalogues, the company, year and season. Four periods, 1890 to 1899, 1900 to 1909, 1910 to 1919, and 1920 to 1929 provide the time-frame of this analysis.

order to the T. Eaton Company.

⁵⁷ Ready-made clothing departments advertised 'children's' clothing, but 'children' either referred to girls or the very young or both. The use of this gender-inclusive term was not always matched with a gender 'neutral' image.

⁵⁸ Unless otherwise stated, data has been compiled from the catalogues described in Table 1.

Table 4.1: Content and qualitative analysis, sample of mail-order catalogues

	Catalogue	Year	Issue
1890 – 1899	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T. Eaton ,Toronto • Hudson’s Bay Co. • Robert Simpson Co. 	1898-1899 1896 1899	Fall & Winter Annual Spring & Summer
1900 – 1909	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T. Eaton ,Toronto • Hudson’s Bay Co. 	1909 1903	Spring & Summer Spring & Summer
1910 – 1919	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T. Eaton ,Toronto • Hudson’s Bay Co. 	1919 1910-1911	Spring & Summer Fall & Winter
1920 – 1929	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T. Eaton ,Toronto • T. Eaton, Winnipeg • Robert Simpson Co. 	1927 – 1928 1928-1929 1928-1929	Fall & Winter Fall & Winter Fall & Winter

Throughout the period, boys’ garments made up the largest percentage of children’s ready-made clothing. Sixty-nine percent of the garments were for boys, while only twenty-four percent were for girls. Boys’ ready-made garments dominated catalogue advertisements and descriptions. Reconciling the data from catalogues and museums suggests that we must take into consideration the fact that, unlike girls’ clothing, many boys’ garments have not been preserved.

The tables below, Tables 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4, provide the breakdown of children’s ready-made garments according to gender. Throughout the period, the number of ready-made garments in the Eaton’s and the Robert Simpson’s catalogues surpassed the assortment of children’s garments available in the Hudson’s Bay catalogue. For example, in 1896, the Hudson’s Bay Company advertised thirty ready-made garments for children, while T. Eaton Company advertised one hundred and seven. Clearly, Eaton’s was the leading force in the ready-made clothing business, and the Robert Simpson Company

consistently but closely trailed. All three companies built up their selection of 'children's' clothing around boys' ready-made garments. Department stores 'discovered' the importance of girls' much later, and when comparing T. Eaton Company and Hudson's Bay Company, Eaton's did so before the Hudson's Bay Company. Interestingly, in the period under examination, girls' clothing never presented more than 20 percent of the Hudson's Bay Company's children's department. In the case of Eaton's, the percentage of girls' clothing rose steadily between the 1890s and 1910s, and appears to have leveled off in the 1920s.

Table 4.2: Ready-made Garments for Boys', Girls', Children, and Infants, T. Eaton, Toronto.

	Boys		Girls		Children		Infants		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1890-1899	94	87.9	12	11.2	1	.9	0		107
1900 -1909	75	71.4	15	14.3	10	9.5	5	4.8	105
1910- 1919	82	44.1	77	41.4	20	10.8	7	3.8	186
1920- 1929	112	67.0	50	29.9	2	1.2	3	1.8	167

Table 4.3: Ready-made Garments for Boys, Girls, Children, and Infants, Hudson's Bay Company, Winnipeg.

	Boys		Girls		Children		Infants		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1890 - 1899	23	76.7	2	6.7	5	16.7	0		30
1900 - 1909	52	86.7	8	13.3	0		0		60
1910 - 1919	47	72.3	13	20.0	4	6.2	1	1.5	65

Using the data collected from the Robert Simpson Company as an example, the number of girls' ready-made garments was much greater in the 1920s than in the 1890s. In the 1890s, there were only ready-made garments for children available in the Simpson's catalogue, and 95 percent of the clothing was for boys. In the 1920s, however,

the percentage of girls' ready-made garments significantly increased from zero to forty-one percent, while boys' ready-made still accounted for fifty-six percent.

Table 4.4: Ready-made Garments for Boys', 'Girls', Children, and Infants, Robert Simpson Company, Toronto.

	Boys		Girls		Children		Infants		Total
1890-1899	102	95.3	0	0	5	4.7	0	0	107
1920 - 1929	79	55.6	58	40.8	3	2.1	2	1.4	142

Within these numbers, what kind of ready-made clothing was available for children? As part of the transition from home sewing to ready-made garments, the diversity of garments for boys increased. As already noted, all garments for boys and girls were assigned a type that included the following: dress, suit, bloomers/pants, overalls/coveralls, creepers/rompers, blouse/shirt, skirt, sweater and 'other.' At the outset, the majority of garments advertised were suits. These suits varied over time. A two-piece suit included a pair of pants, knee-trousers or bloomers along with a jacket. Three-piece suits were similar, but included either a vest or a second pair of trousers or pants. Four-piece suits included two pairs of trousers, a jacket, and a vest. Wash suits were exclusively advertised for boys and were made from material that washed well, like cotton. Kilt suits and novelty suits were also advertised exclusively for boys, and included a top and bottom, and were fashioned after fictional characters or military styles. Knee trousers, bloomers, breeches, knickerbockers, and trousers were all listed as 'bloomers or pants'. However, their specific style was noted for qualitative data. Overalls and coveralls were counted together, as were creepers and rompers and blouses and shirts. In all three cases, gender was used to determine who wore which garments.

Table 4.5: Types of Ready Made Clothing for Boys, 1890-1929 in a sample of mail-order catalogues.

	Suits		Pants		Shirts		Overalls		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
1890-1899	189	86.3	16	7.3	10	4.6	4	1.8	219
1900-1909	109	85.2	13	10.2	5	3.9	1	0.8	128
1910 -1919	81	63.33	22	17.2	20	15.6	5	3.9	128
1920-1929	115	34.7	83	25.1	32	9.7	54	16.3	331

According to Table 4.5, a breakdown of boys' ready-made garments from the 1890s to the 1920s suggests that suits consistently presented the largest percentage of boys' ready-made garments, with forty-three percent of the total, followed by twenty-five percent for pants, twenty percent for overalls and, finally, eight percent for shirts. Up until 1919, very few pants, shirts or overalls were advertised. According to the 1919 T. Eaton Company issue, however, these garments became more common in the 1920s. For example, in the T. Eaton Company, (Winnipeg) *Fall and Winter Catalogue* for 1928-1929, seventy percent of children's garments were for boys. Overalls made up a significantly greater percentage in the Eaton's Winnipeg edition than in the Toronto catalogues.

These findings demonstrate that, over time, garments for boys' became more diversified. At first, suits dominated the selection of ready-made boys' garments; however, by the 1920s, catalogues advertised pants and shirts separately. In this way, families had more choices, and garments that could be sewn at home, such as shirts or simple trousers, were increasingly available ready-made.⁵⁹ In advertising boys' shirts,

⁵⁹ A strategy used by the ready-made garment industry and textile companies in the 1940s and onward was to make some materials unavailable for public consumption. This appeared to be the case of T-shirt material. Overtime, this material has become one of

catalogue descriptions emphasized their durable features: "Boys who engage in strenuous romps and games with the rest of their fellows will find these shirts just the right thing to wear. The boy on the farm, too, needs the strongest of shirts to stand hard wear."⁶⁰

Catalogues first advertised overalls for boys in 1898. 'Brownie' overalls, made of 'good strong' blue denim, with straps and bib, two hip pockets and one pocket in bib, sizes to fit boys four to ten years and priced at thirty-five cents a pair, were advertised in the T. Eaton Company catalogue.⁶¹ 'Brownie' overalls also appeared in the 1899 Robert Simpson Company, available for boys aged two to ten years for twenty-five to thirty-five cents and for boys aged ten to fifteen years for forty-five cents.⁶² By 1909 in the T. Eaton Company catalogue, overalls for boys, aged four to fourteen appeared, costing between seventy-five cents and \$ 1.25.⁶³ By the end of the World War I, overalls had ceased to be only a garment for farmers and workers and now occupied a prominent position in the boys' section of catalogues.⁶⁴

the most common material, used to make children's clothing, jersey-knit, t-shirt material, and plain cotton t-shirt material, but it is not available to home-sewing.

⁶⁰ T. Eaton Company Toronto, *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1919, 297.

⁶¹ T. Eaton Company Toronto, "Men's Smocks and Overalls," *Spring and Summer Catalogue* 1898, 118.

⁶² Robert Simpson Company, *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1899, 98.

⁶³ T. Eaton Company Toronto, *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1909, 153.

⁶⁴ During the War, there was also a lot of discussion about overalls for women participating in War work and to wear for work in the house and garden. They were available to American and British women before they were brought to Canada. See "Ready-to Wear: Women's Overalls," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 February 1917, 61 and "Overalls for Women Invade Canada," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 April 1917, 34.



No. 154.

154. Little boy's brownie overalls, made of heavy blue denim, with bib and strap for brace, 2 hip pockets, 2 front and 1 pocket in bib, sizes to fit boys from 4 to 10 years; as cut No. 154, 36c pair.

Figure 4.12: T. Eaton Company, *Fall and Winter Catalogue 1898-1899*, 105.

Ready-made overalls were difficult, if not impossible, to make at home as riveted pockets and bar tacking, secured stress points, but could not have been sewn with regular sewing machines. In addition, denim was also a difficult material to sew with and, again, almost impossible to double stitch or complete with double seams at home. Catalogues increasingly advertised overalls as useful boys' garments, for both work and play. An early advertisement for boys' overalls in T. Eaton Company catalogue noted: "Special

care has been given in making to ensure long, satisfactory wear.”⁶⁵ And two years later the following advertisement appeared: “This Overall is strongly made in full-fitting sizes from Blue and White Stripe Denim: will give long, satisfactory wear and allow plenty of freedom.”⁶⁶ Boys had a diverse selection of suits, pants, bloomers, knee trousers, knickerbockers, breeches, overalls and, finally, rompers – but what about children and girls?

In the late nineteenth century, descriptions of ‘children’s’ dresses appeared in mail-order catalogues. In images from the early twentieth century, very young boys sometimes appeared wearing these garments. However, increasingly, a variety of ready-made outfits replaced these garments that were also often made at home. Rompers were the first outfits tailored specifically for children and not associated with work. First introduced in 1906, catalogues advertised rompers for children in sized two to seven. ‘Creepers’ were based upon the same idea as rompers, but they were advertised for infants who crawled as opposed to ‘romping’ young children. According to the analysis of the catalogues, ‘creepers’ and ‘rompers’, only account for two percent of children’s ready-made garments.

Rompers and overalls were consistently the least expensive garments; however, rompers, unlike overalls, did not require special sewing equipment or techniques. Consequently, catalogues targeted mothers, consistently noting the usefulness of this garment. Perhaps because these garments could be replicated at home, catalogues consistently advertised their low price and even suggested that it did not ‘pay’ to sew them at home:

⁶⁵ T. Eaton Company (Toronto), *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1919, 292.

Easy to slip off and on over a little one's frocks or suits you will find these Black Sateen Overalls. They button on shoulders and at lower edges that is gathered on elastic at knees, are bound with contrasting color and boast pockets and applied nursery figure... It would never pay you to take the time and trouble to make your baby Creepers when these sturdy fresh looking Chambray may be obtained for so little.⁶⁷

Another way to induce mothers to buy ready-made rompers was to market the children's motifs:

Sand or blue; 2-6 years. Very pretty and attractive rompers, fashioned from peggy cloth which is a sturdy cotton fabric, in a neat check patter, piped with contrasting color, and finished with durable elastic at knees. Two quaint figures worked in bright-colored floss and a chic note in front.⁶⁸

**BUY CHILDREN'S
ROMPERS NOW**

**ALWAYS USEFUL AND A
BIG BARGAIN AT THIS PRICE**

29^c

TO FIT 1 TO 4 YEARS

74-440. Child's Romper Suit, made of strong, serviceable Gingham, blue and white check, with a trimming of white; opens down the back, drop-seat style, easily laundered, very neat and comfortable for the warm weather. Selling at almost half price. Sizes 1 to 4 years. **29^c**

Price

Figure 4.13: "Eaton's," *Farmer's Advocate*, 11 June 1914, 1135.

⁶⁶ T. Eaton Company (Toronto), *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1919, 291.

⁶⁷ T. Eaton Company (Toronto), *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1927-1928, 102.

⁶⁸ T. Eaton Company (Winnipeg), *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1928-1929, 124.

Clothing specifically for girls was less diverse than clothing for boys throughout the period. As depicted in Table 4.6, dresses accounted for 100 percent of the ready-made garments for girls until 1909. In the decade following, two trends are noted: the first is the increased number of ready-made garments available for girls; the second, the availability of garments that could easily be made at home, namely skirts and blouses. Only in the 1920s did the diversity of ready-made garments increase. The number of girls' ready-made garments increased eleven-fold from the 1890s to the 1920s.

In the 1920s, a style of coverall/overalls appeared in mail-order catalogues, but they differed from boys' overalls in a number of ways. First, they were called coveralls; second they were adorned with piping and materials used to symbolize femininity; and finally, they were unavailable for girls over the age of six or eight. While denim was predominantly the material used for boys', the overalls or coveralls for infants, children and girls were made from drill or sateen. Throughout the forty-year period surveyed, the 1920s Robert Simpson Company Catalogue was the only one to advertise pairs of coveralls for girls aged two to six: "Every little Miss delights in owning a suit of these sporty overalls. They are just the thing for play hours. Made from a good quality drill, nicely piping in red, and having a pretty design worked on pocket. The inside back and straps are lined with Black sateen."⁶⁹

⁶⁹ T. Eaton Company (Winnipeg), *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1928-1929, 124.

Table 4.6: Types of ready-made clothing for girls, 1890 to 1929 in mail-order catalogues.

	Dress (%)	Blouse (%)	Suit (%)	Suit (%)	Blouse/ Tunic (%)	Blouse/ Tunic (%)	Blouse/ Tunic (%)	Blouse/ Tunic (%)	Blouse/ Tunic (%)	N
1890-99	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
1900-09	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23
1910-19	87.8	5.5	5.5	1.1	0	0	0	0	0	90
1920-29	67.5	9.1	8.4	4.5	5.2	1.9	1.3	1.3	0.6	154

As we have observed in the catalogues thus far, there is a challenge in determining the age of children and relating it to the clothing they wore. Most descriptions for children's garments included an age range based upon size. In order to include an age range for each garment, advertising information was cross-referenced using catalogue descriptions and Table 4.7.⁷⁰

Table 4.7: Measurements of Chest and Waist Sizes used to determine age range of boys' garments.

Age	Chest in inches	Waist in inches
3	21	22.5
4	22	23
5	23	23.5
6	24	24
7	25	25
8	26	26
9	27	26.5
10	28	27
11	29	27.5
12	30	28
13	31	28.5
14	32	29

When possible, each children's garment was assessed for style and when possible, its style was assessed based upon the description provided. The following eight styles were assigned: bloomer, character, long pants, military, place, short pants, sport and tomboy. Bloomer refers to a specific style of 'knee' trouser that required more material than simple knee trousers for example. Character styles referred to Little Lord Fauntleroy, Oliver Twist, Buster Brown, Mother Hubbard, and Brownie. The only style

⁷⁰ This table is based upon tables and information published in several editions of mail order catalogues. T. Eaton Co. *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1896, 100-102; Robert Simpson Company, *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1928-1929 and T. Eaton Company (Winnipeg), *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1928-1929, 242.

specifically for girls was the ‘Mother Hubbard.’ In some instances, the style was difficult to capture because department stores sometimes advertised long pants and bloomers for suits. This practice in and of itself provides insight into changes to clothing rituals. Short pants refer to knee trousers and breeches specifically, common for boys in the 1920s. Catalogues also advertised ready-made garments linking garments to places like Eton and Norfolk in England, or even Panama. Descriptions of clothing also suggested that garments were practical for engaging in physical activity and sport. Military styles were based upon sailors, Jack Tar, Man-O-War, Middies, Russian, and Kilt Suits.⁷¹ Stylistic differences like single or double-breasted jackets were not noted. Finally, ‘tomboy’ styles, available exclusively for girls, were noted as distinctive from other styles.

The Military style was the most common for boys’ suits advertised in mail-order catalogues. This survey of catalogues found that, out of five hundred and twenty-nine suits for boys, one hundred and twenty-three, or twenty-three percent of suits, had military characteristics. Thirty-six percent of boys’ suits advertised between 1890 and 1910 were noted as containing military styles. These styles were first available for young boys, and were different from home made garments because they included accessories like lanyards and whistles, or because their white braids specifically depicted Nelson’s victories.⁷² Catalogues did not advertise military styles for boys older than twelve years of age. By the 1920s, military styles fell into disfavour for boys. A total of twenty ready-made garments represented this style: seven garments were for boys, all under the age of

⁷¹ A total of six kilt suits were advertised for boys. Five suits were categorised as Military styles because they were adorned with military braids and sailor blouses. One kilt suit was listed as ‘place’ because it was specifically advertised as a ‘Highland Costume’.

⁷² Hudson’s Bay Company, *Annual Catalogue*, 1910-1911, 109.

eight, and, of the remaining thirteen, ten were for girls between six and fourteen years, while three were for girls aged three to six. The trend of boys' styles being adapted for girls' fashions is repeated again, as noted in previous chapters.

Character styles, although they were described as popular styles for boys, appeared in only thirty-one descriptions for boys' ready-made garments. With regard to these styles, the age range for boys was more pronounced than for military styles, as 42 percent of the character suits were for boys up to the age of six, while 48 percent were suggested for boys up to the age of seven. Between the 1890s and 1920s, the catalogues did not advertise styles based upon characters for boys older than seven years old. In addition to this age-related finding, differences between boys and girls were also detected. Only four 'character' styles appeared for girls throughout the period. One dress had a 'Peter Pan' collar, one was fashioned after Buster Brown, and the two dresses were Mother Hubbard styles.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century stage of 'breeching,' whereby boys graduated from the 'feminine' world of 'petticoats' to the 'masculine' world of trousers, the trousers were almost always short and styled after bloomers, knee-trousers, knickerbockers and breeches. In the 1890s, catalogues advertised bloomers for boys. Bloomers could be worn on their own, as part of a suit, or, in the case of boys under the age of eight, with a blouse. An example of this latter garment is the Russian suit. In the 1890s, the Simpson's catalogue advertised these shortened pants for boys as old as sixteen. Up until the 1910s, advertisements for suits and pants for boys under the age of ten always featured shortened pants, except in the case of Man-O-War or Jack Tar sailor suits. Long trousers, except for those worn with military styles, were almost exclusively

available for boys, twelve years and older. During the first three decades studied, only seven pairs of long trousers were advertised, all in Hudson's Bay catalogues. In the 1896 edition, they appeared for boys, aged 12 to 15 years, and in 1910-1911, for boys, aged 14 to 16. Both catalogues described them as ideal for boys' first long trousers. By the 1920s, eleven percent of boys suits advertised long trousers, and the ages ranged as young to a minimum of three years.

In the late nineteenth century, as discussed in previous chapters, 'breeching' was a rite of passage enacted between mothers and sons. In the 1920s, catalogues portrayed boys as deciding when they would wear long trousers: "For the boy who has just decided to don his first long trousers, this suit is sure to meet with high favor."⁷³ One reason why boys could chose to wear long trousers for their suits earlier was that there was more clothing available to them. Boys could wear short pants for play, overalls for chores and long trousers for formal occasions. Clearly, though, catalogue advertisements associated long trousers with a male ritual and a masculine identity. The following description appeared for boys' suits in the 1920s:

Boys' "First Longer" Suits. Boys are sure to admire the mannish style and well-fitting lines of this suit that is made specially for boys who are leaving bloomer pants behind. Tailored in a highly-favored, double-breasted style with long roll lapels and inset body pockets with flaps. The material is a Brown English Tweed of splendid-wearing qualities and is well adapted for boys' clothing. Trousers are a popular width and have four pockets, cuff bottoms and belt loops... All-Wool Long-Pant Suit. Boys who feel that they have grown up sufficiently to wear long trousers will welcome this suit of All-Wool Blue Cheviot in either single or double-breasted style... A very manly-style Long Pant Suit for the smaller boy. Double-breasted coat and long pants with cuff bottoms.⁷⁴

⁷³ T. Eaton Company (Toronto), *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1927-1928, 230.

⁷⁴ T. Eaton Company (Toronto), *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1927-1928, 231-232, 236.

In this view, it was the boys who decided whether or not they were ready for long trousers.

In the 1920s, bloomers and blouses, or Russian suits, for very young boys, almost completely disappeared from the catalogues. Instead, it was more common for very young boys to wear knee trousers. Bloomers, often associated with 'new women' and 'new boys' at the turn of the century, took on a new meaning for girls in the 1920s. Bloomers were shortened and elastics added, and they were worn under dresses so that the length of a very young girl's dress could also be shortened. Bloomers or panties that could be seen beneath the skirt of the dress were worn. According to catalogue descriptions, these dresses allowed young girls to enjoy play, while maintaining their feminine appearance: "Quite the thing for the growing girl is the practical Bloomer Dress..."⁷⁵ Pantie dresses, another name for bloomer dresses, also appeared in the 1920s: "Imagine how cute your wee one will look in this nice warm pantie dress knit of soft fine wool. Fibre silk edges neck and sleeves and appears in open work pattern on skirt section. Separate panties."⁷⁶ Advertisements for boys' silk 'pantie' or 'bloomer' dresses never appeared.

Another style of garments made for girls was 'Tomboy' outfits. 'Tomboy' dresses, blouses and skirts, created an aura of demand and appealed to 'active' girls. Catalogues advertised these garments for girls aged six to fourteen only. One description differentiated its style from one that might have been made at home:

The popular Tomboy blouse of cotton broadcloth with pocket and contrasting silk tie...The New, Smart Tomboy Dress...The swagger Tomboy outfits have made "a great hit" with girls and a new and convenient idea is having the blouse and skirt

⁷⁵ T. Eaton Company (Toronto), *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1927-1928, 58.

⁷⁶ T. Eaton Company (Toronto), *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1927-1928, 104.

joined to form a one-piece Tomboy Dress like this model...Inexpensive Tomboy Skirt, made in our own workrooms of All-Wool Ottoman Cord...Cotton Broadcloth composes this Tuck-in Tomboy Blouse that makes a swagger outfit with skirt.⁷⁷

It is difficult to determine precisely what materials were used to make garments based upon photographs or newspaper representations. In contrast, catalogues described, sometimes in great detail, what materials had been 'chosen' for children's garments. Knowing whether or not a garment was woollen or silk determines care, durability, and, in some cases, its texture. Fortunately, almost every catalogue description provided information about material. For this research, the primary fibre and fabric for each ready-made garment were entered into the database either according to an explicit reference to wool, cotton, silk, 'union' or mixed, linen, or synthetic fibres. In cases where no explicit reference appeared, the fibre was determined by cross-referencing information about fabric. Table 4.8 provides a breakdown of materials based upon fibre and fabric. For example, a pair of bloomers described as made of 'duck' or, perhaps from 'drill' is listed as cotton based on the type of fabric.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ T. Eaton Company (Toronto), *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1927-1928, 57- 58.

⁷⁸ Table 4.12 is based upon the content analysis the catalogue advertisement of garments between the 1890s and the 1920s. All fabrics listed in this table appeared in catalogues from the period. I assigned a fibre for unknown fabrics either by comparing other garments made from the same fabric; one description may have provided the fibre whereas another did not. Otherwise, a dictionary of textiles was consulted. See Dr. Isabel B. Wingate, *Fairchild's Dictionary of Textile (Sixth Edition)* (New York: Fairchild's Dictionary of Textiles, 1979).

Table 4.8: Fibre and Fabric from mail-order catalogues, 1890 to 1929.

Wool	Cotton	Non Domestic	Silk	Other	Wool
tweed serge cheviot	pique prints gingham	cord whipcord ⁷⁹ beach cloth ⁸⁰	Shantung Habutai crepe de Chine	crash Holland Mercerized	tweed serge rep[p]
worsted tartan venetian cloth mackinaw crepe	galatea denim duck drill lawn	covert ⁸¹ crepon ⁸² Daytona cloth tennis cloth Vienna cloth Empire twill Panama melton voile	Chechene art taffeta velvet Jap		homespun plaid worsted Frieze melton
delaine flannel frieze kasha sedan cashmere garbadine knit melton plaid poplin	jean cloth zephyr sateen broadcloth nainsook cambric Oxford Shepherd's check novelty cottonade flannelette flannel khaki kimble cloth moleskin 'Peggy' sultanade corduroy poplin percale velveteen serge muslin jersey				cheviot jersey union

⁷⁹ Characterized as rugged that could be made from either a cotton or wool mixture.

⁸⁰ Burlington Industries, G.S. Division for men's, women's and children's outer garments.

⁸¹ This fabric could also be mixed with either wool or cotton.

⁸² Characterized as more rugged than Crepe.

This evidence reveals a number of distinctions between boys' and girls' ready-made garments. There were clear differences in the fabrics used for boys and girls. The most common fibre for clothing, according to the catalogues, was wool, accounting for forty-seven percent of the advertised garments. Cotton followed closely behind, with thirty-five percent of the garments. Between the 1890s and 1900s, ninety-four percent of woollen ready-made garments were for boys. Two trends can be detected in this regard: boys' garments were more likely to contain wool and, over time, mixed fibres. Wool was a constant staple of fabrics used in tweeds, serge and worsted materials. It appears that boys' garments were more often made from a mixture of wool and cotton in the 1920s, while girls' garments were most often made from cotton. Few girls' garments were made from a 'union' cloth, and when garments were made from 'mixed' materials it was most often because two fabrics were used to complete its appearance. No boys' garments were to be made of synthetic fibres. In contrast, no garments for girls' were made from linen. In general, it was surprising that so few garments were made from linen. Perhaps linen was considered a material used for other household needs, like bedroom sheets or tablecloths. Perhaps linen was only appropriate for small boys' formal garments, while girls' every day dresses, which could not be repeatedly ironed, were made from cotton.

Table 4.9: Fibre of ready-made garments, 1890 to 1909, in mail-order catalogues.

	Boys		Girls		Children		Infants		Total
Fibre	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Wool	266	94.3	12	4.3	4	1.4	0	0	282
Cotton	50	46.7	20	34.6	15	23.4	5	4.7	90
Mixed	8	66.7	4	33.2	0	0	0	0	12
Silk	5	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Linen	6	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Synthetic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not noted	11	78.6	1	7.1	2	14.2	0	0	14

Table 4.10: Fibre of ready-made garments, 1910 to 1929 in mail-order catalogues.

	Boys		Girls		Children		Infants		Total
Fibre	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Wool	157	69.2	99	37.9	3	1.1	2	.77	261
Cotton	176	55.9	101	32.1	21	6.7	17	5.4	315
Mixed	111	87.4	14	11	2	1.6	0	0	127
Silk	0	0	11	84.6	0	0	2	15.4	13
Linen	4	66.7	0	0	2	33.3	0	0	6
Synthetic	0	0	2	100	0	0	0	0	2
Not noted	10	33.3	17	56.7	1	3.3	2	6.7	30

Table 4.9 and Table 4.10, reveals that, of the twenty-eight infants' garments described, only seven percent were woollen. An example of a common fabric for children was flannel, made from either wool or cotton. Cotton, clearly a favoured material for children and infants, could be laundered many times and was more comfortable next to the skin. Mixed fibres, according to the catalogues, were a combination of wool and cotton. It might appear 'impractical' and even expensive to make boys' garments from silk, yet, as Table 4.99 reveals, velvet in the nineteenth century was often made from silk and Little Lord Fauntleroy suits were velvet.

Table 4.11: Fibre of boys' ready-made clothing, 1890 to 1929.

1890 – 1899	176	85.9	25	12.2	4	1.95	205
1900 – 1909	90	75.6	25	21	4	3.4	119
1910 – 1919	28	23.3	63	52.5	29	24.2	120
1920 – 1929	129	39.8	113	34.9	82	25.3	324

Overall, the catalogues, show that the majority of ready-made garments were boys' woollen suits. The most common fabric used to make boys' suits was tweed, a coarsely-textured material, popular in Great Britain. Overall, 70 percent of woollen garments were tweed. Only two examples of girls' tweed garments appeared in the catalogue descriptions analyzed: a pair of tweed bloomers and a tweed skirt, both from the 1920s. In the early twentieth century, cotton appeared in more boys' garments in keeping with the popularity of wash suits. Shirts were also available ready-made and were almost exclusively made of cotton. Finally, in the 1920s, the increased use of mixed fibres can be connected to changing textile technology and the fact that mixed fibres were a stronger material and more easily washed, appealing to boys and mothers.

Knowing a garment's fibre helped consumers determine what kind of care ready-made garments required. A knowledge and understanding of fabrics added to the information about durability, the weight of the fabric, and the quality. It is possible to examine how gender differences can be determined from fabric by considering three different types of cotton fabric: galatea, moleskin and lawn. Galatea, named for the 'HMS Galatea', a vessel commanded in 1867 by the Duke of Edinburgh, was strong cotton material, usually with blue and white stripes, and commonly used for making sailor

suits.⁸³ Many boys' galatea wash suits were sold for their durability, among other features: "Wash suit of English galatea, neat striped patterns in sailor blouse style, large sailor collar braid trimmed attached fronts, knee pants; a good durable suit for little money, sizes 21 to 27."⁸⁴ Another example of cotton was Moleskin. This fabric was also advertised as durable for boys eight to eighteen years, and was not used in girls' clothing: "These should prove one of the hardest wearing and most serviceable breeches for boys. Heavy, tough, drab moleskin, closely woven, strongly tailored, and made more comfortable with flannelette lining. Breeches finished with belt loops, three pockets and laced bottoms. Excellent garments at a moderate price. Eaton made."⁸⁵ Not until the 1920s did bloomers appear for girls and, when they did, they were not made from Moleskin.

According to the catalogues, lawn, another popular cotton fabric, exclusively advertised dresses for girls, children or infants. It was recognized for its sheer and fine quality, and could be considered anything but durable. Rough and tumble wear would quickly tear this delicate material, as the following description reveals:

Dainty white lingerie dresses. Sizes 2 to 6. Lengths: 19, 21, 23, 25, 26 inches. Smart Dress of Lawn and Embroidery. Color white pink or blue ribbon. Charming little best dress is composed of sheer white lawn and fine scalloped embroidery. Pleated skirt of the embroidery is joined to waist beneath ribbon, finished at back and front with rosette. Buttoned back of waist shows insertion and tucks. Beautifully trimmed panel front extends over skirt in new apron effect.⁸⁶

⁸³ *Oxford English Dictionary*, 1052.

⁸⁴ T. Eaton Company (Toronto), *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1909, 152.

⁸⁵ T. Eaton Company (Winnipeg), *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1928-1929, 240.

⁸⁶ T. Eaton Company (Toronto), *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1919, 154.

This material suited girls' wear. Interestingly, it was adorned with white, pink or blue ribbon. 'White Goods' advertised many girls' garments and often included small adornments. Were these colours available for boys and girls alike?

As we have observed in the previous chapters, colour of clothing was seen to play an important role in gender constructions of boys and girls. While customers often had several colours to choose from, two colours dominated catalogue advertisements throughout the period: twenty-four percent of ready-made garments were available in white, while twenty-eight percent were available in various blue hues. Some styles required navy blue or blue and white, to follow military styles. Navy blue and white were colours that appeared for both boys and girls. Besides blue and white, sombre colours like grey, brown and black dominated boys clothing. Colours like yellow and peach accounted for less than one percent of colours.

Catalogues advertised what colours were available and 'fashionable.' Pink garments were never advertised specifically for boys. Some descriptions suggested that both 'sky' and 'pink' were available, but a colour for boys and girls was not prescribed in the catalogues.⁸⁷ Nor was the notion of 'baby colours' featured in catalogues. One of the few references to 'baby' was used when describing ribbon. When girls' ready-made clothing was more available in the 1920s, more colours appeared, and there were often many choices. The most common colour was navy blue, and an assortment of blue shades were the most common colours available. One difference between Eaton's and the Hudson's Bay Company catalogues that the latter commonly described garments as being 'butcher' blue while the former advertised 'Copenhagen' blue. The real diversity and

⁸⁷ T. Eaton Company, "Children's Dresses," *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1894, 31-32.

'explosion' of colours for ready-made garments began in the 1930s. In the 1932 edition of the Eaton's catalogue, descriptions for about one hundred and forty new colours appeared. For example, Bon-Bon Pink was described as a pastel pink shade, while 'dream pink' was flesh pink shade; Mother Goose was 'a medium tan, slightly greyed' while yacht blue was 'light blue' but darker than sky blue.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ T. Eaton Company (Winnipeg), "Descriptions of the Newer Colours," *Spring and Summer Catalogue* 1932, 123.

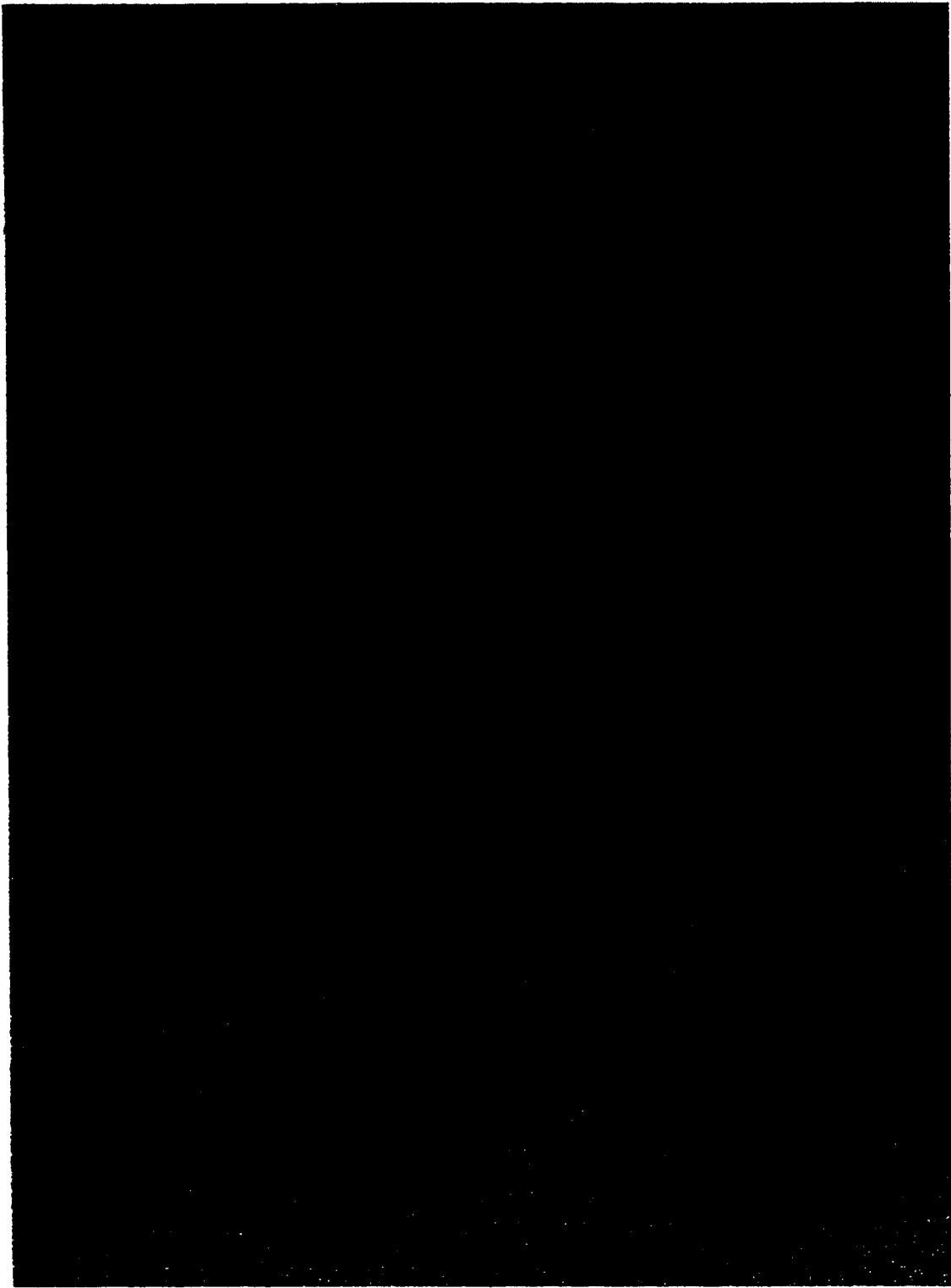


Figure 4.14: T. Eaton Company (Winnipeg), *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1932.

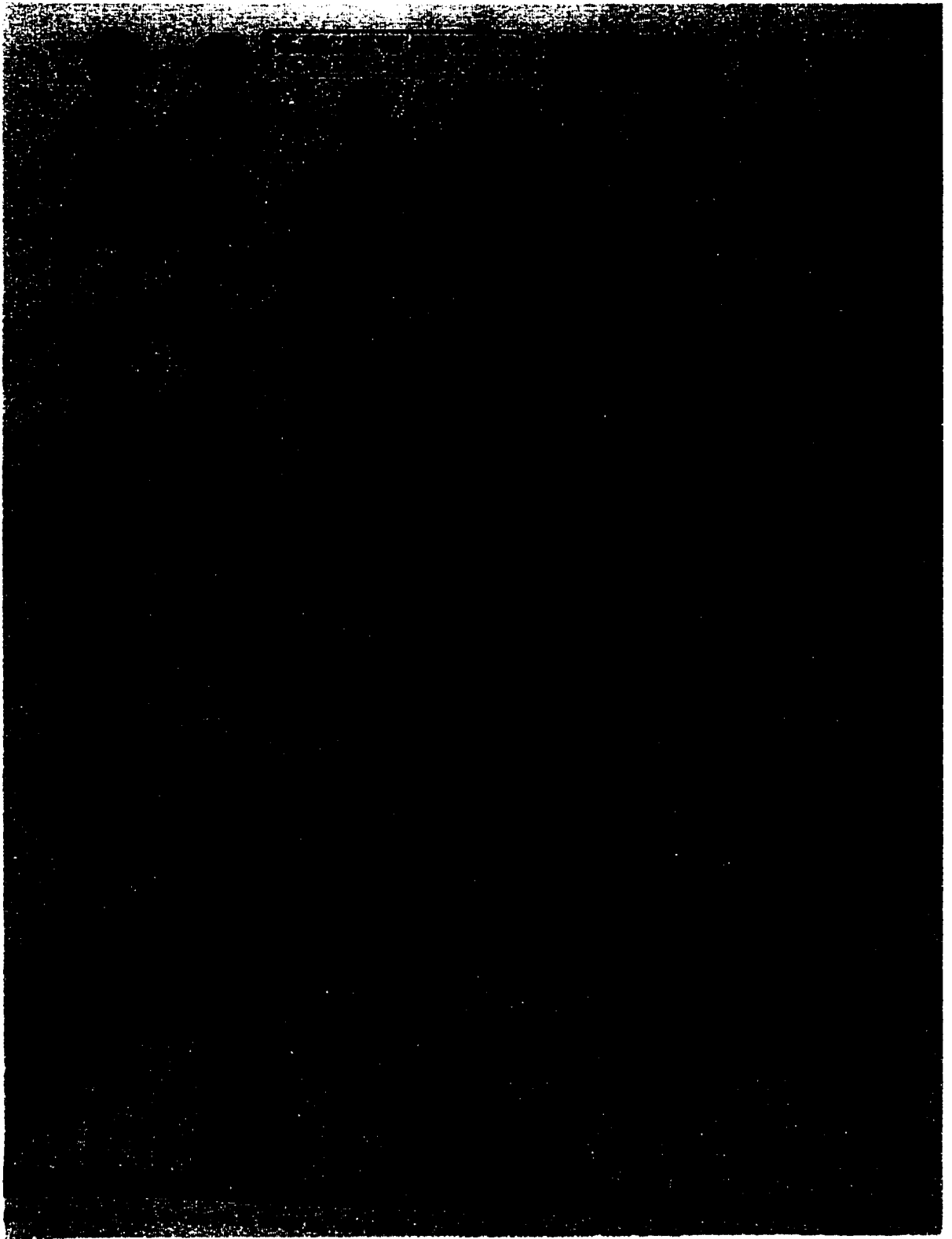


Figure 4.15: T. Eaton Company (Winnipeg), *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1932.

In order to analyze the advertising language of the catalogues a list of key words was compiled from the descriptions in the catalogues. Table 4.12 provides these words according to the categories material, construction function, provenance, meaning and value. To begin this analysis, a brief outline of the transition in the nature and composition of the first catalogues to the twentieth-century catalogues will set out the context of changes to images and representations of children's ready-made clothing. In the first catalogues published by the T. Eaton Company, simple, sparse text described the kinds of goods available in the store and the departments one could visit. In its very first catalogue, a description of garments for misses' and children's appeared, with general information about a price range, some information about construction and notes regarding the material used. The size, age or gender of the child being targeted was not noted, nor was any other information other than an indication of coloured material and the price range.⁸⁹

A few years later, according to the *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, for 1887-1888, there was a department for boys' ready-made clothing, as seen in Figure 4.2 which depicts the breakdown of Eaton's departments. Located between the outerwear or Mantle Department and Millinery Department on the second floor, it was easily accessible to women who might wish to venture there when shopping for themselves. Figure 4.16, which appeared in 1896, depicts a 'Men's and Boys' Hats Caps and Clothing Department,' with two women looking on as a boy is trying on a sailor suit.

⁸⁹ See the T. Eaton Company, *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1884.



Figure 4.16: T. Eaton Company, "Leaves from an Artist's Sketch Book," *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1896.

Revealingly, there was no comparable department for girls' ready-made garments. In the nineteenth century, girls' and children's ready-made dresses were located in the same department and described as 'children's styles'.⁹⁰ The information on girls' clothing tended to be sparse and factual, whereas detailed descriptions of boys' clothing took up many pages. One might conclude that the extensive dress goods sections, which sold trimmings, buttons, silks, dress goods, ribbons, laces and embroidery and collars, attracted young girls and their mothers, who were still home sewing most of their attire.

Few representations of children and clothing appeared in the nineteenth-century editions of mail-order catalogues. Eaton's catalogue first published images or drawings of children in 1890.⁹¹ A rare photograph, depicting youths' overcoats, appeared in the Eaton's *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1892-1893.⁹² An interesting illustration of how the advertising of boys' clothing was still in its infancy in this period appeared in the Spring and Summer 1893 catalogue: an image of a 'boy' wearing a sailor suit advertised boy's and children's blouse suits. In the Eaton's *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1893-1894, the same image advertised dressed dolls. (Figure 4.17 and Figure 4.18).

⁹⁰ T. Eaton Company, "Children's Dresses," *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1890, 15. Sizes 1 to 15 to fit children 2 to 17.

⁹¹ During the 1890s, the way children's clothing was advertised varied greatly from practices from the outset of the decade up to the turn of the century. In 1890, a roughly drawn image of a boy wearing a sailor suit appeared on page 12. In 1892-1893, Youths' and Boys' Suits were advertised with engravings of boys wearing long and short trousers respectively.

⁹² T. Eaton Company, *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1892-1893, 39.



Boys' and children's blouse suits—



Dressed Dolls—

Figure 4.17 : T. Eaton Company, "Boys' and children's blouse suits" *Spring and Summer Catalogue, 1893, 31.*

Figure 4.18: T. Eaton Company, "Dressed Dolls," *Fall and Winter Catalogue, 1893-1894, 11.*

Department stores, especially the T. Eaton Company, recognised early on the importance of convincing women about the value of ready-made boys' clothing:

Boys' clothing can be beautiful as well as strong. It hadn't used to be that way. Just the opposite. Stuffs and workmanship are not one bit too good for the youths of this generation. Fashion fusses as much with them as with their mothers, and bright boys look nattier by reason of their change. Merchandize knows no price distinction here. No bigger profit margin on boys' clothing than on dry goods. Women know what that means. Stacks and stacks of just such suits as you want your son to wear. The handsomest you ever laid eyes on ...⁹³

Six years later, another description outlined the importance of mothers, and started to acknowledge boys' roles in selling clothing:

Everyone is reminded of our ability to supply their clothing wants satisfactorily. No need to patronize a merchant tailor at any time. We have all sizes and styles ready for boys, youths, young men, middle-aged men and elderly men... We began with right values in boys' suits and pants. We succeeded in pleasing the little tots and their big brothers, and were soon assured of their mothers' good-will. With mother's approbation the head of the house soon fell into line.⁹⁴

Catalogues were often supplemented by newspaper advertisements directly targeting mothers and boys like Figure 4.19, which appeared in the *Winnipeg Free Press* in 1911.



Figure 4.19: "Three Day Sale of Boys' Clothing will Meet with Many Mothers' Approval." *Winnipeg Free Press* , 29 April 1911, 12.

⁹³ T. Eaton Company, "Boys' Clothing," *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1890, 12.

⁹⁴ T. Eaton Company, "Ready-made Clothing," *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1896, 89.

After the turn of the century, the descriptions and images vastly improved, in the increasingly popular mail-order catalogues which now offered readers vivid descriptions of what they could buy and even why they should make these purchases.

Table 4.12 provides a list of the words, in descending order of frequency, used throughout the period to describe children's garments. The information was gathered by breaking down descriptions of clothing into the categories of material, construction, function, provenance, meaning and value as frameworks. For example, the boys' two-piece suit advertised in the *Free Press* provides information that can be captured for each category. The material was 'a medium weight' tweed (material), while the pants were lined and 'tailored' in a bloomer style (construction), informing consumers about how a garment was made. The two-piece suit (function) was sold as a 'Spring' suit, made by 'Eastern' tailors (provenance), and were 'smartly' tailored with 'nobby' tweeds (meaning and value).⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Advertisement, "Three Day Sale of Boys' Clothing will Meet with Many Mothers' Approval," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 29 April 1911, 12. 'Nobby' comes from the word noble and was used to describe boys' clothing.

Table 4.12: Qualitative words describing ready-made boys', girls', and children's garments in mail order catalogues, 1890 to 1929

	Construction		Fabrication		Material				
Buttons	285	Trim	370	Serviceable	161	Eatonia	181	Smart	138
Belt	282	Pocket	364	Little	98	English	130	Quality	128
Good	268	Lining	323	Youths'	56	Italian	54	Value	111
Neat	213	Cuffs	236	Small	47	Imported	70	Popular	88
Fine	169	Pleats	208	Warm	46	Canadian	30	Special	56
Fancy	136	Tailor	148	Practical	29	Scotch/ish	23	Attractive	51
Strong	131	Double	125	School	27	Irish	10	Splendid	44
Braid	131	Embroidery	107	First	27	American	5	Pretty	40
Weight	64	Yoke	106	Sport(y)	23	Paris	4	Dressy	40
Sturdy	63	Edging	75	Young	21	New York	3	Choice	39
Lace	60	Elastic	74	Launder	21	China	1	Stylish	36
Soft	52	'Effect'	74	Play	17	Dutch	1	Dainty	24
Hard	42	Tucks	73	Wash	16			Pleasing	24
Heavy	40	Shirred	66	Summer	11			Moderate	22
Best	40	Insertion	52	Cool	10			Satisfaction	21
Ribbon	38	Russian	43	Party	7			Favorite	17
Frill	34	Middy	40	Miss	6			Inexpensive	16
Piping	25	Careful	32	Wee	6			Charming	15
Lanyard	20	Gathered	25	Active	6			Money	15
Whistle	18	Hemstitching	24	Work	4			Jaunty	14
Anchor	10	Riveted	14	Shortening	4			Low Priced/economy	14
Thick	9	Workmanship	13	Rugby	4			Nobby	11
Homespun	5	Novelty	13	Comfy	3			Simple	11
Beading	4	Fly	12	Outing	3			Natty	10
Ruffles	3	Bar tacked	12	Tuxedo	3			Youthful	10
Rich	2	Pantie	12	Confirmation	2			Mannish	9
Peggy (cloth)	2	Padded	10	College	1			Handsome	9
High grade	1	Worked	9					Reasonable	6
		Hand	9					Chic	5
		Solid	6					Tomboy	5
		Smocking	3					Girlie	4

Over time, the catalogues provided customers increasingly detailed descriptions about ready-made clothing. Descriptions that noted garments had buttons or belts helped persuade customers about the value of ready-made clothing, because these materials added to the cost of making garments at home. The two most common adjectives used were 'good' and 'neat'. More specific terms also appeared, like 'fancy,' referring specifically to the type of cloth. Information about texture, weight and durability of material was important because consumers relied on these descriptions in lieu of testing its qualities inside the store.⁹⁶ Two words exclusively used to describe boys' clothing were 'hard' and 'heavy'. The following description appeared for a boy's sailor suit: "Boys' Navy worsted novelty suit as cut, latest New York Style. It is made from a fine strongly twisted worsted that will stand hard wear, white detachable shield, anchor and lighthouse buttons. Pants bloomer style. This is a high grade suit in point of workmanship and material. Sizes 20-27."⁹⁷ Details about accessories were also provided to readers, again emphasizing the differences between clothing sewn at home and ready-made garments. In the description above, the term 'anchor' or 'lighthouse' buttons was used while in descriptions of other boys' ready-made suits, whistles and lanyards were part of the military costume.

Information about the construction of garments and their function was also noted and collected in the data. This information also informs us about the gendered nature of children's ready-made garments. Textual information from catalogues provided details regarding a number of techniques such as gathering or shirring, insertion, lining, pockets,

⁹⁶ The 1896 edition of the Hudson's Bay Company catalogue included a few samples of textiles, permitting shoppers to examine the quality of the fabric.

⁹⁷ Hudson's Bay Company, *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1910-1911, 110.

pleats, smocking, tucks or other sewing information. More information about children's clothing and gender differences was provided in 'decorative' details such as beading, belt, braid, buttons, edging, fabric trim, embroidery, hemstitching, lace, lanyard, piping, ribbon, and ruffles or frill. Information about the garments' construction and 'decorative' details was described to persuade customers about the practicality of a garment and its function. On the one hand, information about pockets, buttons, belts and lining can be practical, as pockets hold objects, buttons hold material closed, belts ensure garments stay in place and lining can protect skin from a coarse material. On the other hand, for example, some pockets did not serve a purpose other than as adornment.

These sewing techniques, whether useful or decorative, played an important role in distinguishing between boys' and girls' garments. A total of 364 garments from the catalogues of a total of 1,163 had pockets, and seventy-one percent of those garments were for boys. Whether or not a pair of suit pants were lined was another important detail for customers and this information appeared in 323 descriptions. Unlined pants would have been less expensive, if less comfortable to wear. Again, boys' garments were predominantly lined, and ninety-three percent of lined garments were for boys. Two construction techniques that were used predominantly for girls' clothing were tucks and insertions (lace or embroidery). No boys' garments were described as being 'tucked' or specifically shaped; only four boys' garments had insertions in the 1890s.

In the early twentieth-century, gender differences between boys' and girls' garments remained. Boys' suit jackets had padded shoulders, and 'fly' fronts were added to trousers: "This is one of the most desirable numbers of the season, mannish tailored suits for boys, made from imported tweeds, in pretty worsted effects in fashionable

colorings, made with padded shoulders, fronts are canvassed and hair clothed, extra quality of Italian knee pants.”⁹⁸ The addition of the fly to boys’ trousers appears to have been based upon age, adding yet another layer to the ritual of moving from boyhood to manhood with respect to clothing: “Grey tweed, 4-10 years. Boys’ knee pants in sturdy grey-mixture union tweed at a special low price a feature value. Strongly cotton lined and serviceable. Sizes 4 - 6 made opening at side and [without fly front] Eaton made.”⁹⁹ In the 1920s, did ‘fly’ fronts provide age distinctions formerly achieved through ‘breeching’ rituals? The few girls’ bloomers advertised did not have fly fronts, as this sewing construction was specifically ‘male’.

In addition to providing customers information about the actual construction of garments, catalogues also described the quality of sewing and workmanship. For example, in the 1920s, catalogues advertised ‘ready-made’ garments as ‘hand’ sewn, or having the appearance of hand knitting. The descriptions are particularly interesting because they highlight how ready-made garments lightened mothers’ burdens with regard to home sewing; it was very important to the consumer – mothers – to have the homemade quality and appearance. There appears to have been a new market for garments sewn by hand, hand knit or embroidered. Was time or skill a factor? An example of such a description appeared in in the 1920s: “Knit from all-wool yarns in link-and-link stitch giving the appearance of being hand knitted.”¹⁰⁰

The most common word to describe the function of garments was serviceable. Sixty-nine percent of the entries in the catalogues described boys’ ready-made clothing

⁹⁸ T. Eaton Company (Toronto), *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1909, 148.

⁹⁹ T. Eaton Company (Winnipeg), *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1928-1929, 239.

¹⁰⁰ T. Eaton Company (Winnipeg), *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1928-1929, 125.

this way. Words such as 'school,' 'sport,' 'play,' 'warm,' 'summer,' 'party,' 'work,' 'rugby,' 'outing,' 'Confirmation,' and 'College,' indicate the role that clothing played in childhood and the rituals of growing up. During the early twentieth century, the process of getting children dressed was seen to be decidedly more complex than earlier. Children's wardrobes became increasingly diverse, and directed toward a younger age. Catalogues sold clothing for informal and formal activities, garments for school and play, or outfits associated with rituals like Confirmation or a 'First' pair of long trousers. This trend applied to girls as well as boys. Changes in acceptable behaviour and girls' lifestyles were correlated with appropriate clothing. For example, bloomers for girls, previously worn only by boys and certain women appeared in the 1920s:

Bloomers. Color Navy. Sizes 8 to 14 years. Roomy-cut Bloomers for gymnasium or sports wear. They are cleverly cut from a good quality. All-wool serge, and made in the pleated style, with buttoned fastening at side elastic at knees. Very comfortable and an exceptional value.¹⁰¹

These garments were not for everyday wear. Instead, according to the catalogues, they were appropriate for athletic activity. Catalogues also targeted mothers when they advertised that garments washed or laundered well. Boys' wash suits were early examples of garments viewed as 'easy' to care for because they could be frequently washed and were durable. Later, girls dresses were sold using the same line of advertising: "A stylish good quality percale dress that will wear and launder well is a delight to the girl and a boon to her mother."¹⁰²

Key words related to function also provided clues about who could wear the garment and at what age. Terms like 'youth,' 'misses,' 'little,' (boys or girls), 'small,'

¹⁰¹ T. Eaton Company (Winnipeg), *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1928-1929, 106.

¹⁰² T. Eaton Company (Toronto), *Spring and Summer Catalogue*, 1919, 91.

'young,' 'wee,' and 'miss' provided distinctions among boys, girls and children.

'Youths'', for example, were always boys while 'misses' were, of course, girls. 'Small' often referred to small boys, as the following description attests:

Mannish style. Very popular for little lads. 4-10 years. A neat d-breasted coat, nicely fitting, with three buttons to a side, two to button, long trousers with belt loops and cuff bottoms, and an attractive, Lovat grey shade union tweed (wool and cotton yarns), made this a dandy suit for smaller boys. Carefully and strongly made, too, and priced at an attractive figure. Good value Eaton made.¹⁰³

By the 1920s, many departments and sections catered to a variety of needs, specifically for infants', children's, girls', misses', boys' and youths' ready-made clothing.

The Hudson's Bay Company and Simpson's did not have their own line of clothing, while Eaton's provided 'quality' in its 'Eatonia' line. The provenance of material, English or Canadian was clearly seen to be important information to impart to customers. In a few instances, companies cited a city of provenance, such as New York or Paris, to bolster perceptions of qualities such as style and value of material. The following quotation reveals this appeal to quality and 'fun' in the 'Eatonia' lines, relevant to both mothers and boys:

Our Boys' Clothing Offers Still Greater Values!! Our Values in boys' clothing have always been good but this year we believe that we are offering you still greater values. The materials have been selected with long, hard wear always in mind, and are tailored in smart styles in a way that defies the roughest kind of play. Parents demand, above all, long service, but the average boy doesn't care much about wear – he can't be bothered, his days are much too full of far more interesting things. He likes to be smartly dressed though – that is why we have combined appearance with lasting service and taken such painstaking care to give him clothing in which he feels free to run and play without a thought to rips or tears. On this, and other pages of this section, you will find clothing values that will satisfy both the boy and his elders.

¹⁰³ T. Eaton Company (Winnipeg), *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1928-1929, 234.

In the EATONIA and “Renown Junior” you are offered suits which we believe are the best values you can buy at the price. In these suits you will find the same quality that is the keynote of all the clothing we sell.¹⁰⁴

This clothing line, ‘Renown Junior’, was designed for ‘new boys’, or ‘the average boys’ who did not care much about wear, because “his days are much too full of far more interesting things.” According to the “Little Boys’ Wish,” and the description of the ‘new boy’ in the *Farmer’s Advocate*, he wanted to be outdoors, romping without worrying about his clothes.

Bob says he likes his new suit because he can have all kinds of fun without worrying about his clothes. He is quite right, too, for it is made from an all-wool blue serge that is known for its long-wearing qualities. Tailored on a favored style, with all-round button belt and three-pocket single-breasted front. The bloomer pants are full fashioned and finished with strap and buckle at knee.¹⁰⁵

The fact the ‘Bob likes his new suit’ further reveals that catalogues were increasingly appealing to both mothers and their boys.

An examination of the value as it relates to meanings, was captured in table of key words, Table 4:12, to reveal the nuances of an extensive ‘retailing’ vocabulary, directed at convincing customers to buy ready-made garments. Indeed, did Bob really feel this way about his trousers, or was this information targeting mothers? Key words used to describe why a garment should be purchased, reveal many constructions of gender and childhood. Meaning and value were found in the fact that boys appeared ‘mannish’, ‘nobby’, ‘natty’, or ‘handsome’ in ready-made garments advertised in mail-order catalogues: “A mannish style for 4 -10 years. A suit just like big brother’s for the little

¹⁰⁴ T. Eaton Company (Toronto) *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1927-1928, 229.

¹⁰⁵ T. Eaton Company (Winnipeg), *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1928-1929, 238. Boy’s suit for ages 6 to 10.

fellow who makes up in importance what he lacks in years.”¹⁰⁶ ‘Nobby,’ related to the word ‘noble,’ appeared in the 1890s. It appeared once in the Hudson’s Bay Company 1910-1911 catalogue. ‘Natty’ became a favoured term used to comment on the style of boys’ clothing, and even appeared in an advertisement for boys’ overalls: “Sizes for 3-8 years; Natty little play garments for hard wear. Extra service because of double fronts. Red trimmed, drop seat. In either ‘six-test’ a fine Canadian product or ‘multi-test’ an English khaki drill, the fastest color we have so far found. Both excellent values.”¹⁰⁷

Girls’ garments were exclusively dainty and even ‘girlie’:

Decidedly Low-Priced. For 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 years; Colors Maroon, Navy. This modestly priced but very smart dress of Cotton Serge will keep a girlie nice and warm for it has a soft, fleecy finish on the inside. An applique nursery figure, plaid collar and cuffs and tasseled cord at neck will delight a lassie.¹⁰⁸

These descriptions emphasized the difference between girls’ and boys’ clothing, and the appeal of each.

In the 1920s, descriptions for ready-made garments brimmed with messages about gender, age and economy. ‘Girlie’s’ dress was warm, soft on the inside and had a figure appropriate for her age on the front, and if it was not captured with the heading ‘decidedly low priced’, the ‘modest price’ was iterated. According to catalogue descriptions, it was important to transmit information about the expense of ready-made clothing, and, consequently, they noted the ‘value’, the ‘moderate’ pricing, their ‘inexpensive’ nature, and a ‘low price’ or a ‘reasonable’ price, and the fact that they could be viewed as ‘economical’. The sense that there was a demand for these styles was created by claiming garments were ‘popular’, ‘special’ ‘choice’, ‘stylish’, a ‘favorite’

¹⁰⁶ T. Eaton Company (Winnipeg), *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1928-1929, 238.

¹⁰⁷ T. Eaton Company (Winnipeg), *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1928-1929, 240.

'charming' 'jaunty', 'chic' and even 'fascinating'! Ready-made garments for children were 'splendid' and 'pleasing', and a guarantee of total 'satisfaction' suggested to customers that they would not regret their purchases. In each catalogue, Eaton's reminded customers of their money-back guarantee.

By the 1920s, Eaton's dominated both the mail-order and the department store business in Canada as Table 5.13 and 5.14 reveal.¹⁰⁹ The Robert Simpson Company was unable to compete with the T. Eaton Company in this period. In the 1930s, statistics demonstrate that they never had more than about 5 percent of the total sales for the three companies. Comparing only mail-order sales in Winnipeg and Toronto with all Robert Simpson Company mail order sales, the Robert Simpson Company mail order department only captured 22 percent of the mail-order market in 1930, and 16 percent in 1934.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ T. Eaton Company (Toronto), *Fall and Winter Catalogue*, 1927-1928, 104.

¹⁰⁹ In 1934 the T. Eaton Company had a total of 147 outlets, 13 large department stores, 32 small department stores, 40 grocerias, 5 mail-order distributing offices and 40 mail order offices. It had captured 68.8 percent of the retail market when compared with Robert Simpson's Company and Hudson's Bay Company. In 1933 it reported employing 25,736 people across the country. Robert Simpson's Company had 53 outlets, 4 of which were retail stores, 12 mail order offices, 34 merchant agents and 3 mail order depots. The Hudson's Bay Company, with its Canadian head office in Winnipeg had 11 retail stores and 225 fur trade posts. Its top six retail outlets were all in Western Canada with Winnipeg leading, followed successively by Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Victoria and Saskatoon. "Department Store Figures Compared," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 July 1934, 18. Other stores compared in this article based upon the Royal Commission hearings on Mass Buying and Price Spread Probe included James A. Ogilvy's Ltd., Woodward Stores Ltd., A.J. Frieman Ltd., and Dupuis Freres. Other information in this issue was provided about the American industry.

¹¹⁰ In a comparison with the American department store and catalogue institution, Sears Roebuck noted that Eaton's sales were \$ 22.50 per capita, while Sears Roebuck were \$ 3.60 in the United States. "Eaton's Sales Were \$ 22.50 per Capita As Compared with \$ 3.60 by Sears Roebuck in U.S.," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 July 1934.

Table 4.13: Comparative Department Store Sales – T. Eaton Company, Robert Simpson Company and Hudson's Bay Company.

Company	T. Eaton Company In Millions		Robert Simpson Company In Sales		Hudson's Bay Company
	Stores	Mail-order	Stores	Mail-order	Stores
1934	96.985	35.515	30.43	7.095	22.115
1933	67.8*	28.5 ^{III}	28.44	6.27	22.540
1932	74.9	28.4	35.63	9.32	25.496
1931	90.0	33.2	35.84	11.06	30.761
1930	104.6	43.6	35.56	12.63	35.810
1929	111.3	53.6	n/a	n/a	n/a

Table 4.14: Total Sales of Companies as a Percentage.

Year	Total Sales	T. Eaton Company		Robert Simpson Company		Hudson's Bay Company
		Stores	M-O	Stores	M-O	Stores
1930	232.2	45 %	18.8 %	15.3 %	5.4%	15.4%
1931	200.861	44.8 %	16.5 %	17.8 %	5.5 %	15.3 %
1932	173.746	43.1 %	16.3 %	20.5 %	5.3 %	14.7 %
1933	153.55	44.2 %	18.6 %	18.5 %	4.1 %	14.7 %
1934	192.14	50.5 %	18.3 %	15.8 %	3.7 %	11.5 %

^{III} This breakdown was provided by looking at sales in Toronto and Winnipeg. Winnipeg mail-order sales were consistently greater, making up 17.1, 16.6, 17.4, 22.0 and 29.3 million sales from 1929 to 1933.

The mail-order catalogues emphasize the differences between boys' and girls' clothing. The most common boys' ready-made garment was a woollen suit while all the girls' garments were dresses. Not until the 1920s was there a noticeable diversity available for girls and an increased representation of garments for infants. Very young boys wore military outfits up until the 1910s. In the 1920s, girls' styles also reflected military influences. These styles were much less popular for older boys during this time. A close reading of the catalogues also provided information about rites of passage, primarily for boys. A boy's first 'longers' or 'fly fronts' revealed that this rite was more complex and increasingly discussed in public. The rite also appeared to be linked to a boy's decision to wear 'longers' rather than a decision by mothers to 'breech' their sons. Catalogue descriptions appealed to mothers who needed to be assured about the quality of ready-made garments for their sons, as well as feel secure in the notion that buying ready-made garments meant 'value' for 'money'. Indeed, mothers were reminded that they would not be able to make garments at home for the same low price for which they could be purchased ready-made. 'New boys,' depicted as romping, stomping boys' were more interested in clothing that provided 'freedom' from worrying about wear and tear.

Conclusion

Commenting on Karin Calvert's study of the material culture of childhood from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, Hugh Cunningham predicted in 1998 that scholars would increasingly use the holdings of museums to study the changing character of growing up:

This renewal of use of non-written evidence, in particular of what comes under the term 'material culture,' is opening up many new possibilities for the study of the history of childhood. Curators of museums of childhood across the world, who must have been baffled at the failure of professional historians to give serious attention to their collections, may begin to expect a change.¹

In keeping with Cunningham's predictions, this thesis illustrates the value of studying the material history of clothing. At the same time, the preceding chapters also suggest why other sources must be examined to understand the larger contexts within which those garments have been preserved were situated historically. Indeed, each of the diverse sources examined in this thesis offer by themselves only a very partial view of the complex changes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The paintings and posed photographs reveal the idealized images of children's clothing during this period while the actual artifacts of the museum collections include disproportionate numbers of garments for females and for infants. However, taken together with the general descriptions of a major news, the *Farmer's Advocate*, the industry priorities as articulated in the *Dry Goods Review* and the marketing efforts of the mail-order catalogues, these sources suggest three major conclusions about children's clothing during Canada's transformative decades.

¹ Hugh Cunningham. "Review Essay: Histories of Childhood." *American Historical Review*, (October 1998), 1200.

First the evidence presented in this thesis consistently points to the ways in which clothing was used to specify the gender identity of children throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From their earliest days, boys were dressed as boys and girls were dressed as girls. Although the ways in which these objectives were achieved changed significantly as has been examined in the previous chapters, the evidence does support a view of gender as a personal identity that only emerged over time.

Secondly, the sources on clothing indicate that the successful construction of modern Canada was considered to depend upon a new and special relationship between mothers and sons. In the context of debates about 'new women,' mothers were increasingly seen as playing new roles in the formation of the men of the future. In the descriptions of children's clothing, much less attention was paid to the relationship of mothers to daughters, and this relationship was not characteristically described as 'special' as it was in the case of 'mother's special term of power' when her sons were still young. Similarly, only in the 1920s do fathers begin to be characterized as playing a noteworthy role in the clothing of children. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is mothers alone who are seen to bear the burden of clothing their children, especially their sons.

The third and most original conclusion of this thesis concerns the appearance of the 'new boy' during the making of modern Canada. 'New boys' were clearly differentiated from girls, and they sought to have their clothes 'pasted' on their backs so that they could run, play, get dirty, and prepare to be a man. Representations of 'new boys' at the turn of the century contrast to the family paintings and photographs showing boys with long curls and frilly dresses. Moreover, these boys are seen as active

participants in the selection of their clothing. Although it is assumed that mothers are the main consumers of children's clothing, the periodicals and department store catalogues perceived boys as influencing consumer decisions and as deserving recognition for their future purchasing power as adults. Interestingly, the characterization of the 'new boy' appears to have been extended by the 1930s to include another stage of growing up on the way to manhood. In 1933, the *Dry Goods Review* described a new in-between period of clothing that harkened back to earlier times as well as reflected a new mentality:

A few years ago when youth was still in shorts until he reach the physical proportions of man the problems of dress were not so great as today. Time changes and with the change comes a revival of ideas of the boy of 'teen age' as to what his clothes should be. Today, before he reaches his full growth, he must put on "longers" like his dad. He apes his elders as nearly as he can, but unfortunately manufacturers of boys' apparel has overlooked this youthful man with the result that he looks like neither a well-dressed boy nor man. Herbert Hosiery Mills of Canada Limited, 2 River Street, Toronto are coming to the young man's aid with real "he man" half hose which have all the characteristics of men's socks. In fact they are extending their men's ranges to cover the 'teen age sizes of 8 1/2 to 10. This is the first move to bring pleasure to the boy who would be dressed like dad or his big brother.²

From the evidence examined for this thesis, rites of passage for girls remained subtle and private in comparison to the male experience during the turn of the century. Boys were breeched, their first hair cut was an occasion in some families and their first long trousers or suit was an opportunity to acknowledge a boy's maturity. For girls, from birth to the age of seventeen and later fourteen, there were no rites of passage related to hair or clothing. At the age of seventeen a young girl could lower her skirt and wear her hair 'up' which meant adopting the fashions of adult women. The age of seventeen, in

² "Children's Wear: For the Awkward Age Between Boy and Manhood," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 September 1933, 28.

the nineteenth and early twentieth century was consistently the turning point for girls in the advice literature.³

This thesis has also revealed the specific focus of ready-made clothing on boys during the initial years of production and marketing. Buster Brown, *Oliver Twist*, *Little Lord Fauntleroy* were among the characters associated with boys clothing. It was not until the 1920s and 1930s that a more pronounced association with characters was found in advertisement and advice about the sale of girls' ready-made clothing. It was reported in the *Review* in 1934 that the T. Eaton Company was displaying girls styles found in two movies, *Alice in Wonderland* and Louisa May Alcott's, *Little Women*. It was noted that even though the child actress Charlotte Henry wore only two dresses throughout the feature film, "...she may set a new style trend for young girls."⁴

By the 1930s, the ready-made clothing industry for children had an increasingly feminine voice and focus on girls. This change was accomplished by the separation of sales information. In the beginning the *Dry Goods Review* provided advice for all aspects of the retailing industry. In the 1930s, the owner of the *Dry Goods Review* began treating men's wear in a separate publication, *Men's Wear Merchandising*. Similarly, *Chatelaine*

³ "Minnie May's Department: Answer to Inquiries," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 May 1884, 146-147; "Minnie May's Department," *Farmer's Advocate*, 1 January 1887, 25; "Answers to Correspondents," *The Delineator: A Journal of Fashion, Culture and Fine Arts*, 1 September 1, 1896) ii; 'Blue Eyes', "Ingle Nook Chat," *Farmer's Advocate*, 27 April 1911, 756. In each instance, the question posed was related to proper dress and hair for young girls.

⁴ "Alice in Wonderland," *Dry Goods Review*, 1 January 1934, 26. Later, girls fashions were promoted by child stars like "Shirley Temple" and "Carol Ann Beery." See "Infants' and Children's Wear: Children's Wear Fashions Shows Marked Individuality." *Dry Goods Review*, 15 April 1935, 21. The title and content appear to be a contradiction. Is individuality possible when you are basing a fashion line of the images of popular child stars? It was once again noted in this article that, "Children are reported as becoming more "style conscious" than ever before.

was created for female readers as explained in an advertisement for it in the *Dry Goods*

Review:

First in the home comes the health, comfort and happiness of the children. There is nothing in the world like the care and affection mother lavishes on them. Modern young mothers are the best mothers the world has yet seen. They are guided by knowledge as well as instinct...If your merchandise contributes to the welfare of children, you will find *Chatelaine* a very valuable medium for you-and many products have been started out on a lifetime of service for the whole family through being brought first for the children, thereby opening the door to a "long time" market... *Chatelaine* is an exclusively feminine and distinctively Canadian magazine edited for younger married women. It is modern in style and viewpoint and has a responsive audience consisting of nearly a quarter of all the English speaking homes in Canada.⁵

The creation of new publications aimed specifically at male and female readers was undoubtedly associated with a new period in the history of children's clothing in Canada. However, it remains to be emphasized that a great deal has yet to be learned about the changing ways in which clothing was used to construct identity for children at the turn of the century. In focussing on the dominant images, museum collections, periodicals and industry publications, this thesis represents only a first step toward an understanding of the range of diversity associated with the clothing worn during growing up in Canada. The next steps will include studies of French-language sources, as well as those representing minority ethnic and social groups in different regions of Canada. Only at that point will we be able to fully interpret the 'second skin' of Canada's great transformation.

⁵ Advertisement, "Chatelaine," *Dry Goods Review* 1 April 1934, 44.

**Appendix I:
Material History Research:
FileMaker Database
Clothing Children and the Construction of Gender**

Museum Inventory Number
Storage Location

Museum:

Value List

Canadian Museum of Costume
Canadian Museum of Civilization
Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature
McCord Museum of Canadian History

Artifact Date (circa)

Museum Image Format:

Value List

no image available
photograph (contemporary)
water colour

Card Catalogue:

Value List

integrated
not available
not consulted

Museum Gender Code:

Value List

boy
child
girl
unknown

Material

1. Materials used to produce and complete appearance:

cloth:

closures:

2. Primary colour of the garment:

3. Secondary colours or patterns:

4. Quality and Texture: effect upon the garment's form:

quality:

Value List
 fine
 medium
 poor
 home spun
 other

texture:

Value List
 coarse
 soft
 smooth
 thick
 twill
 other

5. Do the materials provide clues about sewing?

Value List
 no
 unknown
 yes

home sewing:

dress making:

6. What care did the material require?¹

Value List
 bleaching
 could not be washed
 dry clean
 hand wash
 ironed
 machine wash
 to be determined

Comparative Question:

Are these materials found in similar artifacts?

Value List
 no
 unknown
 yes

cross reference:

¹ Christina Walkley and Vanda Foster *Crinoline and Crimping Irons Victorian Clothes: How they were cleaned and cared for* (Peter Owen, 1981).

Supplementary Question:

Where were the materials available?

Value List
 Advertisement
 Department Store
 Dry Goods
 Mail-order
 Other source
 Pattern Book

Retailer's or company's name:

Construction

1. How was the garment constructed?

front:

back:

measurements:

number of pieces:

position of closures:

Value List

front left

front right

back centre

back left

back right

2. Hand sewing:

3. Machine sewing:

4. Ready-made sewing:

5. Are there any labels or markings?

Value List

no

yes

label or marking:

6. What is the quality of the construction?

Value List

fair

good

poor

excellent

7. What skill level did the construction require?

Value List

advanced

basic

experienced

professional

8. How is its appearance affected by the construction?

9. Are there any forms of ornamentation used?

Value List

no

yes

description:

ornamentation:

Value List

childhood

class

ethnicity

gender

place

10. Are there any signs of wear or repair?

Value List

no

yes

wear:

repair:

11. Has the garment been altered or remade from another? *Value List*

no

yes

alterations:

Comparative

1. Compare construction techniques with other artifacts:

Value List

similar

unique

artifact reference:

2. Is the overall design a set style?

Value List

no

pattern

unsure

yes

3. Does the design help to date the artifact?

Value List

no

unknown

yes

date:

4. Identify influences on the method of construction:
- Value List*
 American
 British
 French
 European
 provincial
 sophisticated
-

Function

1. Common name of this garment?
2. Gender:
- Value List*
 androgynous
 boy
 child
 girl
3. Is an occasion or ritual associated with the garment?
- Value List*
 no
 unknown
 yes
- occasion:
 ritual:
4. Age range based on size, style and function:
- Value List*
 under 2 years
 2-4 years
 3-5 years
 4-6 years
 5-7 years
 6-8 years
 6-12 years
 8-10 years
 10-12 years
 12-14 years
 14+ years
5. Is the garment an example of everyday wear?
- Value List*
 no
 unknown
 yes

6. Childhood needs and function:

Value List
accessibility
comfort
durability
play

7. Adult views and function:

Value List
appearance
durability
expense
ideal

8. Accessibility:

Value List
help
self sufficient
not determined

9. Functional performance: enhanced or inhibited by m/c?

Value List
enhanced
inhibited

explanation:

10. Is its function associated with class?

Value List
no
unknown
yes

class:

11. Is its function associated with ethnicity?

Value List
no
unknown
yes

ethnicity:

12. Is its function associated with gender?

Value List
no
unknown
yes

Comparative:

Has the garment's function changed?
change:

Supplementary:

1. How was the garment worn?
2. Were accessories or other garments worn?

Value List
no
unknown
yes

accessories:
other garments:

Provenance

1. Determine provenance based upon materials:
2. Determine provenance based upon construction:
3. Determine provenance based upon function:

Comparative

1. Were similar garments worn in Canada?

Value List
no
unknown
yes

place:
time:
research reference:

Supplementary

1. When was the garment worn?

Value List
 before 1850s
 1850s
 1860s
 1870s
 1880s
 1890s
 1900s
 1910s
 1920s
 1930s
 after 1940

2. Who wore the garment?

Value List
 known
 unknown

name:

sex:

Value List
 female
 male

class:

ethnic identity:

3. Where was the garment worn?

Value List
 known
 unknown

where:

Value List
 America
 Britain
 Canada
 other

urban/rural:

region:

Value List
 BC
 Maritimes
 North
 Ontario
 Quebec
 Prairies

4. Did others wear the garment?

Value List
 no
 unknown
 yes

who:

5. Are there contemporary photographs of the garment?

Value List
 no
 yes

reference:

6. Is there documentation about the family's history?

Value List
 no
 yes

documentation:

occupation:

notables:

Meanings, Representations and Value

1. Does this garment have sentimental meaning?

Value List
 no
 unknown
 yes

meanings:

2. Does this garment represent social or economic status?

Value List
 no
 unknown
 yes

representations:

3. Does this garment represent part of the life cycle?

Value List

no
unknown
yes

life cycle:

Value List
infancy
childhood
school

4. Class representations:

5. Ethnic representations:

6. Representations of time:

7. Representations of place:

8. Representations of gender:

Comparative: How have representations or meanings changed?

Supplementary:

Costs to make or purchase this garment:

Value List
advertisement
catalogue
newspaper column
not determined
pattern book
trade journal

material costs:

fasteners:

ornamentation costs:

ready-made price:

Comments

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