“MAX AND HER ‘PARD”:
THE *ROCKING P GAZETTE* (1923-5) AND THE CULTURAL PRODUCTION OF SETTLER GIRLHOOD IN SOUTHERN ALBERTA

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ABSTRACT

Published between 1923-25 by teenage sisters Dorothy and Maxine Macleay, the *Rocking P Gazette* is a unique example of girl-made media. Comprising seventeen issues averaging eighty pages each, the *Gazette* documented daily life on the Macleay's ranches, the Rocking P and Bar S. Its imaginative fiction and artwork draw inspiration from the girls' interpersonal relationships and experiences growing up on a ranch, making it an invaluable source for the history of childhood and girlhood in early twentieth century western Canada. This thesis argues that (1) the Macleay girls engaged with, appropriated, and adapted adult-made media for their homemade magazine, which produced and reproduced settler-colonial silences and cowboy culture, and (2) that they challenged conventions of age and gender by expressing a class-based power over their audience of adult male ranch hands. Drawing examples from Dorothy and Maxine's written and artistic work, this thesis aims to demonstrate how girls in rural 1920s Alberta could be active cultural producers.

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INTRODUCTION

Between September 1923 and April 1925, sisters Dorothy Macleay and Gertrude Maxine "Max" Macleay created the *Rocking P Gazette*: a homemade magazine composed of artwork and creative text that recorded their interests, experiences and daily life as a part of a ranching family. In 1923, Maxine was twelve years old, and Dorothy was fourteen. Both girls lived and worked on their family's ranching operation near the southern Alberta town of Nanton, with their father Roderick, their mother Laura, their teacher Ethel Watts, and numerous ranch hands. The title of this thesis pays homage to the Macleay girls, using a phrase that frequently appears in the *Gazette* and alludes towards the girls' closeness. Throughout this period of their youth, "Max and her 'pard" Dorothy were active participants in daily labour, working together or independently to accomplish a variety of tasks around the ranches alongside their father's adult male staff. [1]

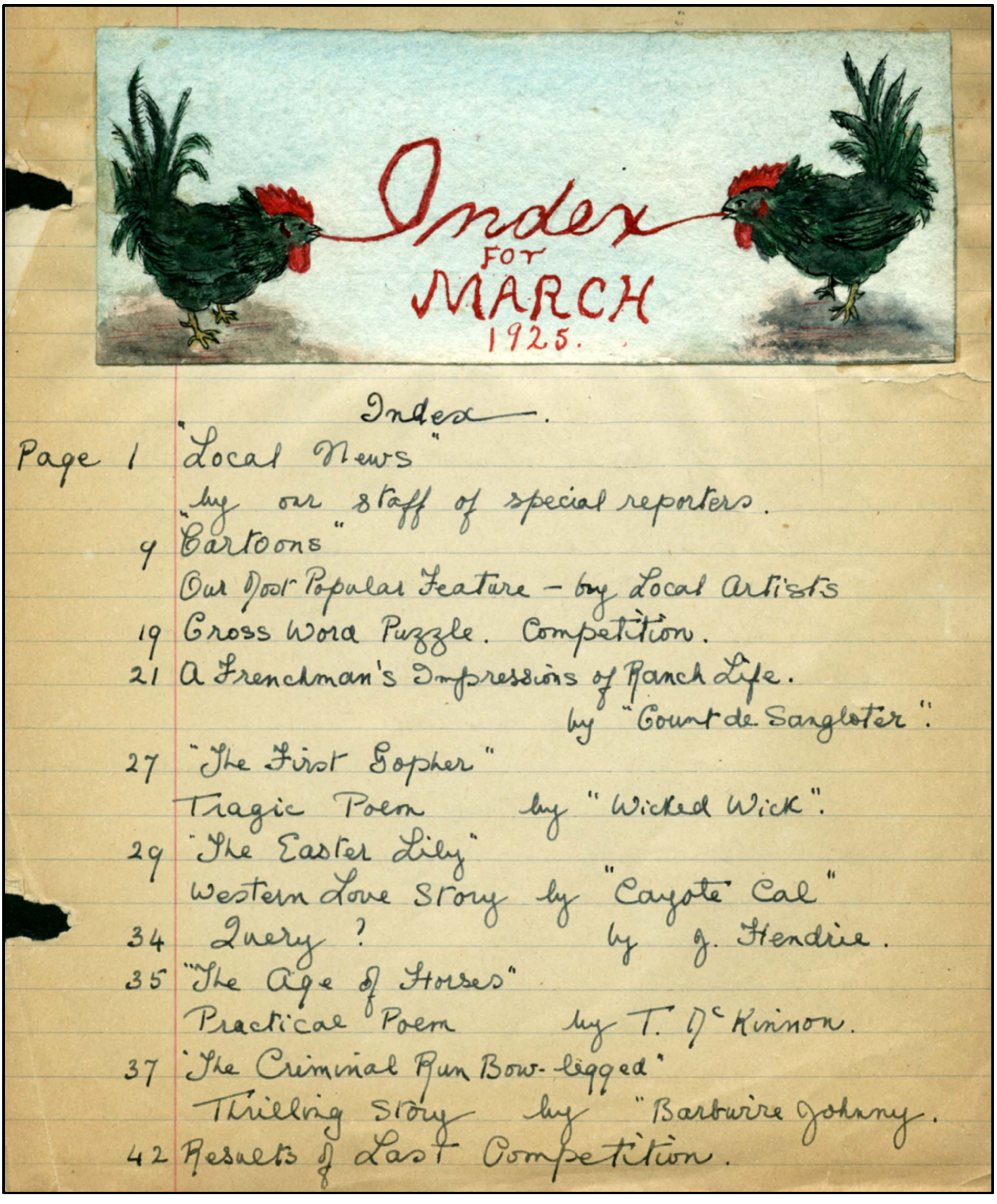
The Macleay girls' magazine is extremely rich with detail, providing an in-depth look at the daily lives of two girls growing up on a large-scale, family-owned ranch. The *Rocking P Gazette* was never professionally published, but it is, in its entirety, accessible to researchers in a digitized set online and physically in the University of Calgary Western Canadian archives.[2]

The *Gazette* described: authors, format, content, and audience

Entirely handwritten and illustrated, each issue of the magazine averages at eighty total pages, with the longest edition being one hundred pages long. Only a single copy of the magazine was created each month. Visually illuminated by hand drawn illustrations throughout, the *Gazette* contains a multitude of artwork completed in pen, coloured pencils, charcoal or paint

[1] Slang for "partner."
[2] Dorothy and Gertrude Maxine Macleay, *Rocking P Gazette,* University of Calgary Digital Collections, Calgary AB. https://digitalcollections.ucalgary.ca/archive/Rocking-P-Gazette-2R3BF1FS4XLF1.html.

mediums. The format adopted for the *Rocking P Gazette* mirrored that of popular 1920s magazines. Across all seventeen issues, the *Gazette* contains "Local News", cartoons, alternating illustrations and short written stories, competitions, assorted jokes, and hand drawn imaginative consumer advertisements. Much of the *Gazette's* content is based on the Macleay's two ranches, the Rocking P and the Bar S.



Index for MARCH 1925.

Index.

Page 1 "Local News"
by our staff of special reporters.
4 "Cartoons"
Our Most Popular Feature – by Local Artists
19 Cross Word Puzzle. Competition.
21 A Frenchman's Impressions of Ranch Life.
by "Count de Sanglotér".
27 "The First Gopher"
Tragic Poem by "Wicked Wick".
29 "The Easter Lily"
Western Love Story by "Cayote Cal"
34 Query ? by J. Hendrie.
35 "The Age of Horses"
Practical Poem by T. McKinnon.
37 "The Criminal Run Bow-legged"
Thrilling Story by "Barbwire Johnny".
42 Results of Last Competition.

Figure 0.1: An index showing some of that month's content, two ranch hands' contributions, and the girls' various pseudonyms. Ethel Watts, "Index", Mar. 1925, i.

Beginning in the 1870s, ranching practices in Alberta were marked by Indigenous land dispossession in favour of the economic and colonial interests of the Canadian government. After the negotiation of Treaty 7 in 1877 with the Blackfoot, historian Sheila McManus notes that federal land surveys of southern Alberta promoted the region's potential for agriculture, and specifically for ranching.[3] In the late nineteenth century, McManus explains that "ranching involved a small number of people taking up a large amount of space without farming the land, which was exactly what the [Canadian and American] governments were trying to stop when it came to native people."[4] However, McManus notes that ranching was encouraged, "not just [because] white men were taking up that space instead of native peoples, but [because] ranching was seen as economically productive and profitable for ranchers and governments alike."[5] Ranching, therefore, was an effective method of Indigenous land dispossession and settler naturalization in southern Alberta.

At the start of the twentieth century, ranching practices had shifted away from the "open range" method, but still involved the use of a considerable amount of land.[6] After emigrating from Quebec in 1900, Roderick Macleay steadily gained influence in the southern Alberta cattle industry.[7] By 1904, the Macleay family's property extended over a significant amount of Treaty 7 land, including "two major land holdings... one in the foothills which offered natural shelter for

---

[3] Sheila McManus, *The Line Which Separates*: *Race, Gender, and the Making of the Alberta-Montana Borderlands* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 34.
[4] McManus, *The Line Which Separates*, 47.
[5] McManus, *The Line Which Separates,* 47.
[6] As explained by historian Simon M. Evans, the "open range" system was characterized by "a bare minimum of inputs [by ranchers]. Semi-feral cattle were left alone to multiply and only came into contact with mounted men at the time of the yearly roundup. [...] Stock fended for themselves" (Simon Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004), 86). While popularly utilized, this system ultimately contributed to significant losses in livestock during the winters of 1886-1887 and 1906-1907, as livestock lacked supplementary feed, grazing management, and adequate winter shelter (Alex Johnston and Joan MacKinnon, "Alberta Range Cattle Industry 1881-1981: Alberta's Ranching Heritage," *Rangelands* vol. 4, no. 3 (1982): 101).
[7] Clay Chattaway, *Roderick R. Macleay: A Pioneer's Life* (Nanton: The Bar S Ranch, 2023), 34.

a cow-calf operation and the other in the open plains for grazing and fattening steers."[8] In the years that followed, the Macleays' land holdings continued to expand as Roderick purchased other surrounding ranches such as the TL Ranch south of Willow Creek and the Bar S. By 1919, the Macleays owned and rented "86,000 odd acres, or 135 sections, or 3.75 townships" extending over the prairies southwest of the town of Cayley and into the foothills.[9] The Macleay family lived on the Rocking P – the 'home ranch'— which they purchased in 1914 from rancher George Emerson.[10] The Bar S ranch (purchased by the Macleays in 1919 from Pat Burns + Co.) is directly adjacent to the Rocking P, which explains its prominence in the *Rocking P Gazette*.[11]

Between 1923 and 1925, Dorothy and Maxine produced the *Gazette* on the Rocking P under the supervision of their live-in schoolteacher, Ethel Watts. In addition to being a source of recreation and creative expression, the *Gazette* was designed to complement the sisters' education.[12] In a poem titled ""Scene— [Rocking P] Kitchen." Any Evening," Watts described the labour-intensive creative work put by the sisters into writing the *Gazette*, as well as some of the content its audience of ranch hands could expect to find in the magazine:

> See them, far into the night,
> Under a dim, religious light,
> Tax their brains and rack their heads
> Till it's time to seek their bed,
> For the sake of our Gazette!
>
> See their worried, anxious looks
> Pond'ring deep o'er many books!

---

[8] Henry C. Klassen, "A Century of Ranching at the Rocking P and Bar S," in *Cowboys, Ranchers and the Cattle Business: Cross-Border Perspectives on Ranching History*, eds. Simon M. Evans, Sarah Carter and Bill Yeo (Calgary: University of Calgary Press; Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2000), 104, 105-6.

[9] Chattaway, *Roderick R. Macleay,* 180. Chattaway notes that out of this total, they owned over 21,920 acres in 1919.

[10] Chattaway, *Roderick R. Macleay,* 122.

[11] "Map #52 — Township 15 & 16 – Range 1, 2, & 3 (W. of 5th M.) – Muirhead," 1918 Alberta Homestead Maps, accessed March 6, 2025, https://www.ulethbridge.ca/lib/digitized_collections/ourheritage/maps/south_ab_ca1918_21.html.

[12] Clay Chattaway and Warren Elofson, *Rocking P Ranch and the Second Cattle Frontier in Western Canada* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2019), 89.

Page after page of penciled treasure
They have with for public pleasure,
For our "Rocking P Gazette".

Hush! hats off to these great minds!
Walk on tiptoe—draw the blinds!
Honour to each lofty brain—
Hard the labour, great the strain,
Producing our Gazette.

One creates deep themes of love;
One portrays the skies above;
One our hearts, with danger, thrills,
One our own eyes, with teardrops fills,
By tales in the Gazette.

Tales of knightly deeds out West,
Filled with song and timely jest;
Lays of Ranch and cowboy-life,
Poems of love, and mortal strife
You'll find in our Gazette.

Have you aught to advertise?
Down our columns cast your eyes.
Perchance, your needs you'll recognize.
And, please, don't harshly criticize
Your "Rocking P Gazette".

When you're far from friends and home,
When in city haunts you roam,
Turn your lonely heart,— peruse.
With home-sick tears, the "local news"
In your [Rocking P] Gazette.

Then give Three Cheers for the writers two,
Working by night and all for you!
May success their labours crown!
May Suns of Glory ne'er go down
On the name "Macleay", of wide renown,
The Authors of our Gazette![13]

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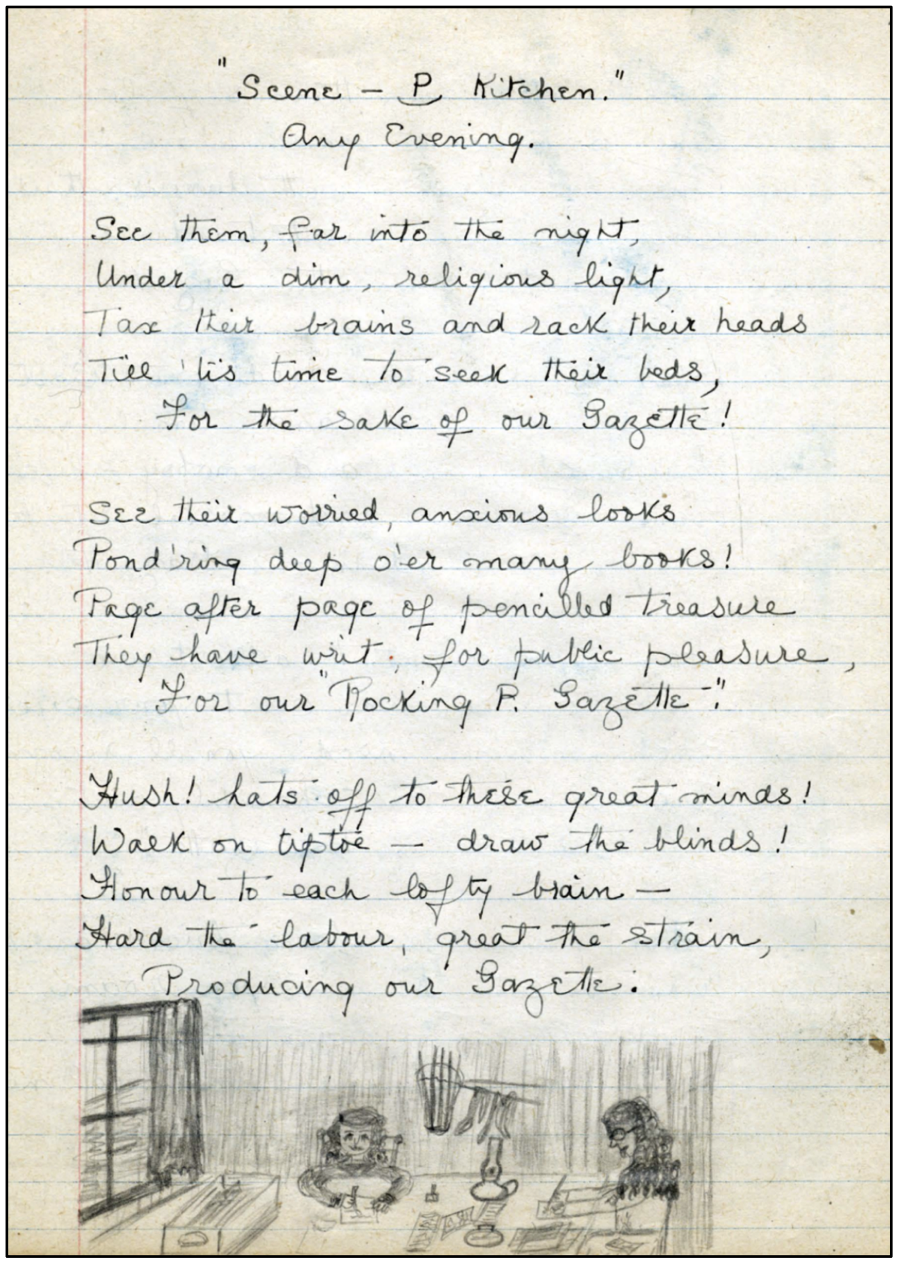
[13] Ethel Watts, ""Scene— [Rocking P] Kitchen." Any Evening," Nov. 1923, 27-9. All written excerpts from the *Gazette* that appear throughout this thesis are transcribed as they appear, including spelling errors.



"Scene — P Kitchen."
Any Evening.

See them, far into the night,
Under a dim, religious light,
Tax their brains and rack their heads
Till 'tis time to seek their beds,
For the sake of our Gazette!

See their worried, anxious looks
Pond'ring deep o'er many books!
Page after page of pencilled treasure
They have writ, for public pleasure,
For our "Rocking P. Gazette".

Hush! hats off to these great minds!
Walk on tiptoe — draw the blinds!
Honour to each lofty brain —
Hard the labour, great the strain,
Producing our Gazette.

Figure 0.2: Dorothy and Maxine, hard at work on the Gazette. Watts, "Scene—[Rocking P] Kitchen," Nov. 1923, 27.

Approximately 1,055 out of the total 1,320 pages of the varied and rich contents of the *Gazette* — poems, local news, advertisements, art, and narrative stories — can be attributed to Dorothy and Maxine. As the magazine's editor and occasional co-contributor, Watts made approximately 186 pages of content in the *Gazette*, including indexes. A large part of what made the *Gazette* possible was the Macleay girls' private education. Rather than sending their

daughters to the local school in Muirhead, Roderick and Laura Macleay hired live-in teachers. As Maxine's son, Clay Chattaway, writes in his biography of Roderick Macleay,

> A room on the second floor of the ranch house was set aside as a schoolroom. Two small school desks with inkwells set in the right-hand corner and a slate for each, along with an essential blackboard on the wall, transformed the room into a school. Subjects taught were the basics: writing, reading, geography and arithmetic, especially the times tables. Celia Leeson was the first teacher and was paid a salary of $25 a month for two years.[14]

Upon beginning their education in 1916, the sisters were seven and five years old.[15] Between 1918 and 1921, the Macleays employed two other women teachers to privately educate the girls.[16] After spending two years in Calgary attending Earl Grey Elementary, Dorothy and Maxine moved back to the Rocking P ranch and Watts was hired to continue their education, staying with the family until the spring of 1925.[17]

Although the Muirhead schoolhouse was only five kilometers from the Rocking P, Clay Chattaway (Maxine's son) and historian Warren Elofson explain that the girls' parents "could not expect their children to begin school three miles away when too young to saddle their own horse, let alone open the many gates."[18] Furthermore, they emphasize that the quality of education in schoolhouses was poor due to unqualified teachers and a lack of financial support, also motivating the Macleay's to educate their children at home.[19] However, this analysis downplays the influence of class and status; in the Macleays' case, hiring private teachers was

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[14] Chattaway, *Roderick R. Macleay,* 172.
[15] Chattaway, *Roderick R. Macleay,* 171. Opened in 1915, the Muirhead schoolhouse was in the southwest corner of 18-16-1 W5, approximately five kilometers away from the home ranch, which was located at 32-16-1 W5 (*Mosquito Creek Roundup: Nanton-Parkland* (Nanton: Nanton and District Historical Society, 1975), 342-3).
[16] Chattaway, *Roderick R. Macleay*, 172-3.
[17] Chattaway, *Roderick R. Macleay*, 174, 245. Chattaway explains that the girls were moved to school in Calgary due to their parent's recognition of the importance of socialization; however, he credits the girls' return to private education on the Rocking P in 1923 to their family's fear of illness.
[18] Chattaway and Elofson, *The Rocking P Ranch*, 91.
[19] Chattaway and Elofson, *The Rocking P Ranch*, 91.

more a matter of financial ability than a consequence of distance.[20]

Considering that the *Gazette* was initially conceived by Watts as a school project, the Macleay sisters likely received a different education than they would have at the local schoolhouse in Muirhead. On the history of Canadian education, Amy Von Heyking writes that teachers at Alberta community schools "relied on textbooks and memorization" to educate their students.[21] Students therefore copied "the notes the teacher wrote on the blackboard and then [repeated] them verbatim on the examination."[22] The *Gazette* is an example of an assignment that does not use this technique; instead, Watts innovatively encouraged the girls to create their own written and artistic content.

The *Gazette* was much more than simply a school assignment, however; using their rural location and lack of peer network to their advantage, Dorothy and Maxine made their father's employees — the adult ranch hands of the Rocking P and Bar S — their audience and occasional co-contributors. A small portion of each month's *Gazette* was devoted to written submissions by the men who worked in a variety of roles in and around the Macleay's ranches.[23] The *Rocking P Gazette*'s cartoons and "Local News" reports provide a considerable amount of information on work performed by ranch hands, which included tending to and sorting cattle, seasonal cattle

---

[20] I was curious about how long it would take to ride five kilometers, then realized I could test it out myself! Riding a 15.1 hand Canadian/Missouri Fox Trotter cross (aka. Mister Texas) at an easy walk (4.3 km/h) on flat ground, it took me a little over an hour (68 minutes) to travel five kilometers. The app 'Strava' was used to track distance, time and speed. Moving at a faster pace would have greatly shortened the overall time, which was additionally prolonged by Tex taking several snack and bathroom breaks.

[21] Amy Von Heyking, *Creating Citizens: History and Identity in Alberta's Schools, 1905-1980* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006), 12.

[22] Von Heyking, *Creating Citizens,* 12.

[23] A variety of tasks were required to keep a ranching operation running smoothly, forcing new ranch hands to quickly learn and gain competency at their jobs. Newly hired or inexperienced cowpunchers (also called "greenhorn" or "tenderfoot" cowboys) would be trained through experience, "learn[ing] on the job, by observation, discussion, and by being 'cussed out' when they made mistakes." In doing so, most cowpunchers were able to quickly attain sufficient skills and hold their own on a cattle drive (Simon M. Evans, "Tenderfoot to Rider: Learning 'Cowboying' on the Canadian Ranching Frontier during the 1800s," in *Cowboys, Ranchers, and the Cattle Business: Cross-border Perspectives on Ranching History,* eds. Simon Evans, Sarah Carter and Bill Yeo (Calgary: University of Calgary Press; Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2000), 72).

drives, harvesting crops, and repairing infrastructure such as buildings or fences. This also makes the *Gazette* a detailed record of daily life on a 1920s Alberta cattle ranch.

Purpose and Research Questions

This thesis will analyze the *Gazette* as a unique girl-made source, placing it within the context of settler colonialism and youth publishing, and asking how these 1920s middle-class rural girls expressed their power and status relative to their family's employees within their magazine.[24] Throughout this thesis, I will ask how the *Rocking P Gazette* can be interpreted as a source that communicates the lived experiences of rural white settler girls, using various lenses to illuminate complex, intersectional topics within the sociocultural context and history of a southern Alberta family ranch. How does Dorothy and Maxine Macleay's self-published magazine, the *Rocking P Gazette* (1923-5), fit within the histories of childhood, girlhood, and youth publishing, and what do the many issues of the magazine tell us about how these two individuals experienced and viewed conventions of gender, age, and class?

I argue that the *Gazette* demonstrates the sisters' understanding of social dynamics associated with gender and age; Dorothy and Maxine's class status relative to their family's employed ranch hands made it possible for them to subvert gender and age-based conventions in illustrations and stories. Additionally, I argue that conceptualizing the *Gazette* as a part of the longer tradition of

[24] Throughout this thesis, I refer to the Macleay family as "middle-class". My conceptualization of social class draws from E.P. Thompson, who explains that class is "something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships. [The] notion of class entails the notion of historical relationship" (E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (England: Penguin Books, 1968), 9). Therefore, the relationship between the Macleay family (as employers) and their ranch hands (as employees) is the key element defining their class status. Also contributing to my decision was the fact that the Macleay family leased significantly more land than they owned, and struggled with debt. In his biographical text on his grandfather Roderick Macleay, Clay Chattaway emphasizes that Roderick owed the bank a considerable amount of money and was not always consistent at paying it off. In 1925, Chattaway writes that Roderick's "liability stood at $397,597, including advances of $33,276 for the current year. After years of sporadic payments, a schedule of regular payments was set at $17,500 per annum" (Chattaway, *Roderick R. Macleay*, 233).

youth publishing and as a product of settler colonialism shows us that the Macleay girls were active cultural producers who engaged with adult-made media to create their own representation of southern Alberta cowboy culture.

In each chapter of this thesis, I will consider and apply analytic categories of age, class, and gender within a settler colonial society; this intersectional approach will contextualize my local history of the Macleay family and their ranch holdings, as well as emphasize the unique circumstances under which Dorothy and Maxine lived. I will reinforce my exploration of this history by using text and images from the *Rocking P Gazette.* Images, imaginative written expression, and artwork are powerful communicators, and this is especially true within this source collection. By applying an intersectional lens to existing scholarship on the Canadian West, I hope to contribute a fresh perspective on the history of early twentieth century Alberta family ranches and rural teenage Canadian girls in the 1920s.

Methodology

A close observation and analysis of the *Gazette* will help to illuminate the power dynamics at play on the Rocking P and Bar S ranches between the Macleay sisters and their audience of ranch hands. Examining this source collection with various theoretical lenses has provided further dimension to my research. There are numerous themes that are central to this thesis. The influences of settler colonialism, heteropatriarchy, and place allow me to situate the subjects of my thesis, Dorothy and Maxine Macleay, within their environment of a male-dominated labour marketplace and the agricultural industries of settler colonial southern Alberta.

My analytic methodology includes an in-depth consideration of specific written and visual examples from select issues to explore overarching themes evoked by the authors through

their deployment of wit and humour, specifically directed towards the Macleay family's employees. I examine the stories, art, and advertisements of the *Gazette* to determine its aims and purpose, asking how they can be interpreted as expressions of power or status.

The *Rocking P Gazette* is a valuable source of youthful imaginative and lived experiences in a large-scale ranching setting, as the serial edition provides a detailed and unique snapshot into the minds and experiences of two rural settler girls, and their intimate relationships with their family and those employed by on the ranch. As this thesis aspires to contribute to the history of childhood, among other categories of analysis, I use age to deepen insight into the relationships between the teenage Macleay sisters and their family's employees, several of whom were ten years or more years their senior.[25] Finally, this thesis emphasizes the importance of place in understanding the experiences of rural youth in Alberta during these decades. The narratives and messaging conveyed by the *Rocking P Gazette* are grounded in the region, therefore the influence of geographic location and Canadian settler colonialism can be observed in most stories, poetry, and illustrations created by Dorothy, Maxine, and their contributing authors. Consequently, the *Gazette*'s numerous themes are all intertwined with the broader context of place, space, and settler colonialism.

I hope that a thorough consideration of my questions will provide further understanding towards the purposes the authors understood the *Gazette* to serve versus those of the readership. This research, centering a youth produced serial, adds to the scholarship on youth writing and

[25] Labourers Tom McKinnon and Earl Stingel have the smallest age gap compared to the Macleay sisters – in 1921, both men were twenty years old, making them eight years older than Dorothy and ten years older than Maxine. Library and Archives Canada, *Form 1. Sixth Census of Canada, 1921. Alberta District No. 8. Enumeration Sub-District No. 27 in Loc. Imp. Dist. #160. Page 6,* 1921 Canadian Census, accessed March 6, 2025, http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.redirect?app=census&id=62803793&lang=eng&ecopy=e002861901.

publishing, as well as reflects on the unique circumstances experienced by female youth in early twentieth century rural Canadian agricultural enterprises.

Literature Review

This thesis interacts with and adds to several bodies of scholarship. I prioritize age, class and gender as categories of analysis; in doing so, I will contribute to scholarship on the history of Canadian childhood. By analyzing the *Rocking P Gazette* and the Macleay sisters as young writers and publishers, this thesis aims to contribute to the body of scholarship on the history of girlhood and girls' culture. One of the analytical foundations of this thesis is women and gender studies, particularly scholarship that discusses gendered power, labour, and social hierarchies. Further shaping this thesis is scholarship on the history of cattle ranching in the Canadian West; I will add to this literature by providing a new perspective on the culture of early twentieth century Alberta family ranches.

Underlying the scholarship in the field of childhood and youth studies is the question of how to define and study childhood, and how to conceptualize and represent children's agency in historical work.[26] Mona Gleason warns historians who focus on children's voices and resistance of the "agency trap," which, she argues, simplifies the concept of agency by "treating it as an

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[26] Stephanie Olsen, Kristine Alexander, Susan Miller, Ville Vuolanto, Simon Sleight, Mischa Honeck, Sarah Emily Duff, and Karen Vallgårda, "A Critical Conversation on Agency," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 17, no. 2 (2024): 169-187; Mona Gleason, ""Children Obviously Don't Make History": Historical Significance and Children's Modalities of Power," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 16, no. 3 (2023): 343-360; Mahshid Mayar, ""Playes Print the Letter": American Child(hoods) as Archival Present/ce," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 16, no. 3 (2023): 361-383; Corinne T. Field, Nicholas L. Syrett, "AHR Roundtable, Chronological Age: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis, Introduction," *American Historical Review* 125, no. 2 (2020): 371-384; Sarah Maza, "The Kids Aren't All Right: Historians and the Problem of Childhood," *The American Historical Review* 125, no. 4 (2020): 1261-1285; Ishita Pande, "Is the History of Childhood Ready for the World? A Response to "The Kids Aren't All Right," *The American Historical Review* 125, no. 4 (2020): 1300-1305; Lois Burke, "Case Studies of the Child's Perspective," *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures* 12, no. 2 (2020): 154-159; Mona Gleason and Tamara Myers, eds., *Bringing Children & Youth into Canadian History: The Difference Kids Make* (Oxford University Press, 2017); Mona Gleason, "Avoiding the agency trap: caveats for historians of children, youth, and education," *History of Education* 45, no. 4 (2016): 446-459; Kristine Alexander, "Agency and Emotion Work," *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures* 7, no. 2 (2015): 120-128.

undifferentiated, monolithic and easily knowable phenomenon."[27] Gleason explains that conceptualizing agency in this way "risks confining historical analysis to a binaried interpretive framework, perhaps too simplistically juxtaposing adult actions and perspectives against those of children and youth."[28] Using age as a category of historical analysis, Gleason argues, provides historians of children and youth with a deeper understanding of how young people responded to and shaped power relations in their lives.[29] This thesis aims to follow Gleason's recommendations, "engaging with empathetic inference and shifting the interpretive emphasis to age" to study the voices and power dynamics represented in Dorothy and Maxine Macleay's magazine.[30]

As a field that is inherently intersectional, histories of childhood, youth, and girlhood often appear within scholarship on gender or labour. Several studies of working-class urban families, for example, also include an examination of children and youth's roles in their analyses of nineteenth or early-twentieth century capitalist economies.[31] A significant amount of this scholarship focuses on the histories of urban European, American, and Canadian youth, particularly Victorian working-class or middle-class children.[32] Histories of rural youth in the nineteenth to early twentieth centuries are similarly focused upon labour.[33] The history of

[27] Gleason, "Avoiding the Agency Trap," 449.
[28] Gleason, "Avoiding the Agency Trap," 448.
[29] Gleason, "Avoiding the Agency Trap," 458.
[30] Gleason, "Avoiding the Agency Trap," 458.
[31] Susan Porter Benson, *Household Accounts: Working-Class Family Economies in the Interwar United States* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2007); Selina Todd, *Young Women, Work, and Family in England, 1918-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Bettina Bradbury, *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1993).
[32] Miriam Forman-Brunell, *Babysitter: An American History* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2009); Robert McIntosh, *Boys in the Pits: Child Labour in Coal Mines* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000); Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).
[33] Molly P. Rozum, *Grasslands Grown: Creating Place on the U.S. Northern Plains and Canadian Prairies* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2021); Gabriel R. Rosenberg, *The 4-H Harvest: Sexuality and the State in Rural America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Sandra Rollings-Magnusson, *Heavy Burdens*

childhood also contains a growing body of scholarship on Indigenous youth and settler colonialism.[34] Finally, this thesis engages with historical studies of urban European and American youth publishing between the eighteenth to twenty-first centuries to place the Macleay girls within the tradition of youth media creation.[35] While this thesis draws considerably from scholarship on urban childhood(s), it will build upon scholarship on early twentieth century rural Canadian youth.

This thesis also engages with girls' history and girlhood studies, fields which seek to define 'girlhood', 'girls', and girls' cultures.[36] Girlhood, historian Miriam Forman-Brunnell

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on Small Shoulders: The Labour of Pioneer Children on the Canadian Prairies (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2009); Glen H. Elder Jr. and Rand D. Conger, *Children of the Land: Adversity and Success in Rural America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

[34] Alexandra Giancarlo, "Indigenous Student Labour and Settler Colonialism at Brandon Residential School," *The Canadian Geographer* 64, 3 (Fall 2020): 461-474; Kristine Alexander, "Childhood and Colonialism in Canadian History," *History Compass* 14, no. 9 (2016): 397-406; Mary Jane Logan McCallum, "'I Would Like the Girls At Home': Domestic Labour and the Age of Discharge at Canadian Indian Residential Schools," in *Colonization and Domestic Service: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives,* Victoria Haskins and Claire Lowry (eds.) (New York: Routledge, 2014); Mary Jane Logan McCallum, *Indigenous Women, Work, and History, 1940-1980* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014).

[35] Emily Gallagher, "Hidden in Plain Sight: Child-authored Material in Australian Museums and Archives," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 16, no. 3 (2023): 384-419; Lois Burke, "Nineteenth-Century Girls and Authorship: Adolescent Writing, Appropriation, and their Representation in Literature, c. 1860-1900," Ph.D. diss., (Edinburgh Napier University, 2019); Lois Burke, ""Meantime, it is quite well to write": Adolescent Writing and Victorian Literary Culture in Girls' Manuscript Magazines," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 52, no. 4 (2019): 719-748; Anna Gilderdale, "Where 'Taniwha' Met 'Colonial Girl': The Social Uses of the *Nom de Plume* in New Zealand Youth Correspondence Pages, 1880-1920," in *Children's Voices from the Past. Palgrave Studies in the History of Childhood,* eds. Kristine Moruzi, Neil Musgrove & Carla Pascoe Leahy (Cham: International Publishing AG, 2019); Kathryn Gleadle, "Magazine Culture, Girlhood Communities, and Educational Reform in Late Victorian Britain," *English Historical Review* CXXXIV, no. 570 (2019): 1169-1195; Jessica Isaac, "Graphing the Archives of Nineteenth-Century Amateur Newspapers," *Book History* 19 (2016): 317-348; Jessica Isaac, "Compliant Circulation: Children's Writing, American Periodicals, and Public Culture, 1839-1882," Ph.D. diss., (University of Pittsburgh, 2015); Jessica Isaac, "Youthful Enterprises: Amateur Newspaper and the Pre-History of Adolescence, 1867-1883," *American Periodicals* 22 no. 2 (2012): 158-177; Christine Alexander, "Playing the Author: Children's Creative Writing, Paracosms and the Construction of Family Magazines," in *Children, Childhood and Cultural Heritage*, eds. Kate Darian-Smith & Carla Pascoe (London: Routledge, 2012); Mary Celeste Kearney, *Girls Make Media* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

[36] Miriam Forman-Brunell, "The History of Girlhoods and the Girling of Work, Play, and Performance," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 12, no. 3 (2019): 331-340; Kathryn Gleadle, "Magazine Culture, Girlhood Communities, and Educational Reform in Late Victorian Britain," *English Historical Review* CXXXIV, no. 570 (2019): 1169-1195; Alexis Easley, Clare Gill, and Beth Rodgers, eds., *Women, Periodicals, and Print Culture in Britain, 1830s-1900s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019); Kristine Alexander, *Guiding Modern Girls: Girlhood, Empire, and Internationalism in the 1920s and 1930s* (Vancouver & Toronto: UBC Press, 2017); Kristine Moruzi and Michelle J. Smith., eds. *Colonial Girlhood in Literature, Culture and History, 1840–1950* (United

explains, is "heterogeneous, inclusive, intersectional, discursive, contested, contingent, and very fluid."[37] This thesis draws primarily upon Canadian girlhood studies, which examines histories of girlhood primarily between the early to mid-twentieth century.[38] While there are several texts that focus on girlhood as it appeared or formed from the nineteenth century onwards, recent scholarly works by girlhood studies scholars (as opposed to scholarship by historians) consider how girls and girlhood are shaped by modern technology.[39] These works have been especially influential on my analysis of how the Macleay sisters created their own culture with their magazine, the *Rocking P Gazette*.

Scholarship in the field of women and gender studies has been instrumental in shaping my study of the *Gazette* and the Macleay sisters, which also uses gender as a main category of analysis.[40] Texts on the gendered power imbalances of labour often center their analysis on urban working- and middle-class women; in doing so, these texts provide a wealth of information on work, life, and social norms in nineteenth and twentieth century North America and Britain.[41]

Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Kristine Moruzi, *Constructing Girlhood through the Periodical Press, 1850-1915* (Farnham & Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2012); Catherine Driscoll, *Girls: Feminine Adolescence in Popular Culture and Cultural Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

[37] Forman-Brunell, "The History of Girlhoods," 331.

[38] Cynthia Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*: *Adolescence and the Making of Modern Canada, 1920 to 1950* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006); Veronica Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939* (Penguin Books Canada Ltd.: 1988).

[39] Kristine Alexander and Simon Sleight, eds., *A Cultural History of Youth in the Modern Age* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023); Natalie Coulter and Kristine Moruzi, "Woke Girls: From *The Girl's Realm* to *Teen Vogue*," *Feminist Media studies* 22, no. 4 (2020): 765-779; Morgan Genevieve Blue and Mary Celeste Kearney, eds., *Mediated Girlhoods: New Explorations of Girls' Media Culture, Volume 2* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2018); David Buckingham, Sara Bragg and Mary Jane Kehily, eds., *Youth Cultures in the Age of Global Media* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2014).

[40] Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1053-1075.

[41] Emma Griffin, *Bread Winner: An Intimate History of the Victorian Economy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020); Julie-Marie Strange, *Fatherhood and the British Working Class, 1865-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Working Class 1780-1850, Revised Edition* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002); Ellen Ross, *Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Joy Parr, *The Genders of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns 1880-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York 1789-1860* (Urbana and

This thesis engages with and seeks to contribute to work on rural women's history, which challenges the perception and historiographical representation of the Canadian and American Wests as masculine realms by focusing upon the experiences of settler women.[42]

Finally, this thesis builds on historical scholarship on ranching in western Canada and Alberta. A considerable amount of foundational work in this field — dated by over a decade, in many cases — focuses on large-scale ranching operations and the economics of cattle and horse ranching throughout the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries.[43] This body of work is also notable for its histories of significant Alberta ranches and the men who founded and worked them; while they provide a considerable amount of information on ranching men, women and

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Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Beth Light and Joy Parr, eds., *Canadian Women on the Move 1867-1920* (Toronto: News Hogstown Press and The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1983).

[42] Sarah Carter, *Imperial Plots: Women, Land, and the Spadework of British Colonialism on the Canadian Prairies* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2016); Sheila McManus and Elizabeth Jameson, eds., *One Step Over the Line: Towards a History of Women in the North American Wests* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2008); Sheila McManus, *The Line Which Separates*: *Race, Gender, and the Making of the Alberta-Montana Borderlands* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 2005); Brenda K. Jackson, *Domesticating the West: The Re-creation of the Nineteenth Century American Middle Class* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005); Kenneth Michael Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism: Family, Culture, and Markets in Montcalm, Manitoba, 1870-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Sarah Carter, "Postscript: 'He Country in Pants' No Longer Diversifying Ranching History," in *Cowboys, Ranchers and the Cattle Business: Cross-Border Perspectives on Ranching History*, eds. Simon M. Evans, Sarah Carter and Bill Yeo (Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press; Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2000); Catherine A. Cavanaugh and Randi Warne, eds., *Telling Tales: Essays in Western Women's History* (Toronto: UBC Press, 2000); Sheila McManus, ""Their Own Country": Race, Gender, Landscape, and Colonization around the 49th Parallel, 1862-1900," *Agricultural History* 73, no. 2 (1999): 168-182; Dee Garceau, *The Important Things of Life: Women, Work, and Family in Sweetwater County, Wyoming, 1880-1929* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997); Catherine A. Cavanaugh, "No Place for a Woman": Engendering Western Canadian Settlement," *The Western Historical Quarterly,* 28, no. 4 (1997): 493-518; Eliane Leslau Silverman, *The Last Best West: Women on the Alberta Frontier, 1880-1930* (Montreal & London: Eden Press, 1984); Linda Rasmussen, Lorna Rasmussen, Candace Savage, and Anne Wheeler, *A Harvest Yet to Reap: A History of Prairie Women* (Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1976).

[43] Edward Brado, *Cattle Kingdom: Early Ranching in Alberta* (Surrey: Heritage House Publishing Ltd., 2004); Max Foran, *Trails and Trials: Markets and Land Use in Alberta Beef Cattle Industry, 1881-1948* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2003); Warren Elofson, *Cowboys, Gentlemen and Cattle Thieves* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 2000); Cecilia Danysk, *Hired Hands: Labour and the Development of Prairie Agriculture, 1880-1930* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1995); Simon M. Evans, "Some Observations on the Labour Force of the Canadian Ranching Frontier During Its Golden Age, 1882-1901," *Great Plains Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (1995): 3-17; David H. Breen, *The Canadian Prairie West and the Ranching Frontier, 1874–1924* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983); Alex Johnston and M. Joan MacKinnon, "Alberta Range Cattle Industry 1881-1981: Alberta's Ranching Heritage," *Rangelands* 4, no. 3 (1982): 99-102.

children are secondary to their narratives.[44] Studies of ranching culture in the American and Canadian Wests are similarly focused on settler men, as they seek to describe and define the 'cowboy' as he appears historically and in popular culture.[45] However, more recent scholarship has sought to address silences in the historiography of ranching by reassessing the mythology of the West to include Indigenous and women's histories.[46] Existing scholarship on the Macleay family and their ranches appears in academic and local history texts; while most of these texts are primarily focused on the life and legacy of Roderick Macleay, publications by local historical societies contain Dorothy and Maxine's own accounts of their childhoods and family history.[47] This thesis therefore draws upon and moves beyond these works with the goal of bringing to light the imaginations and lived experiences of two settler ranching girls in 1920s southern Alberta.

Thesis Structure

Chapter 1 examines Dorothy and Maxine Macleay's artwork and narrative stories to

[44] D. Larraine Andrews, *Ranching Under the Arch: Stories from the Southern Alberta Rangelands* (Victoria; Vancouver; Calgary: Heritage House Publishing Company Ltd., 2019); Warren Elofson, *Somebody Else's Money: The Walrond Ranch Story, 1883- 1907* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2009); Simon Evans, *The Bar U & Canadian Ranching History* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004); Simon M. Evans, *Prince Charming Goes West: The Story of the E.P. Ranch* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1993); Henry C. Klassen, "The Conrads in the Alberta Cattle Business, 1875-1911," *Agricultural History* 64, no. 3 (1990): 31-59; Lillian Knupp, *Leaves from the Medicine Tree: A history of the area influenced by the tree, and biographies of pioneers and oldtimers who came under its spell prior to 1900* (Lethbridge: High River Pioneers and Old Timers Association, 1960).

[45] Max Foran, ed., *Icon, Brand, Myth: The Calgary Stampede* (Athabasca University: AU Press, 2008); Richard W. Slatta, *Comparing Cowboys and Frontiers: New Perspectives on the History of the Americas* (Norman & London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997); Lee Clark Mitchell, *Westerns: Making the Man in Fiction and Film* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[46] Robert Kossuth, "Busting Broncos and Breaking New Ground: Reassessing the Legacies of Canadian Cowboys John Ware and Tom Three Persons," *Great Plains Quarterly* 37 (2018): 53-76; Mary-Ellen Kelm, *A Wilder West: Rodeo in Western Canada* (Vancouver & Toronto: UBC Press, 2011); Sheila J. Bannerman, "'Cowboys' of the Canadian West: Re-orienting a Disoriented Mythology," *English Quarterly* 40, no. ½ (2008): 51-57.

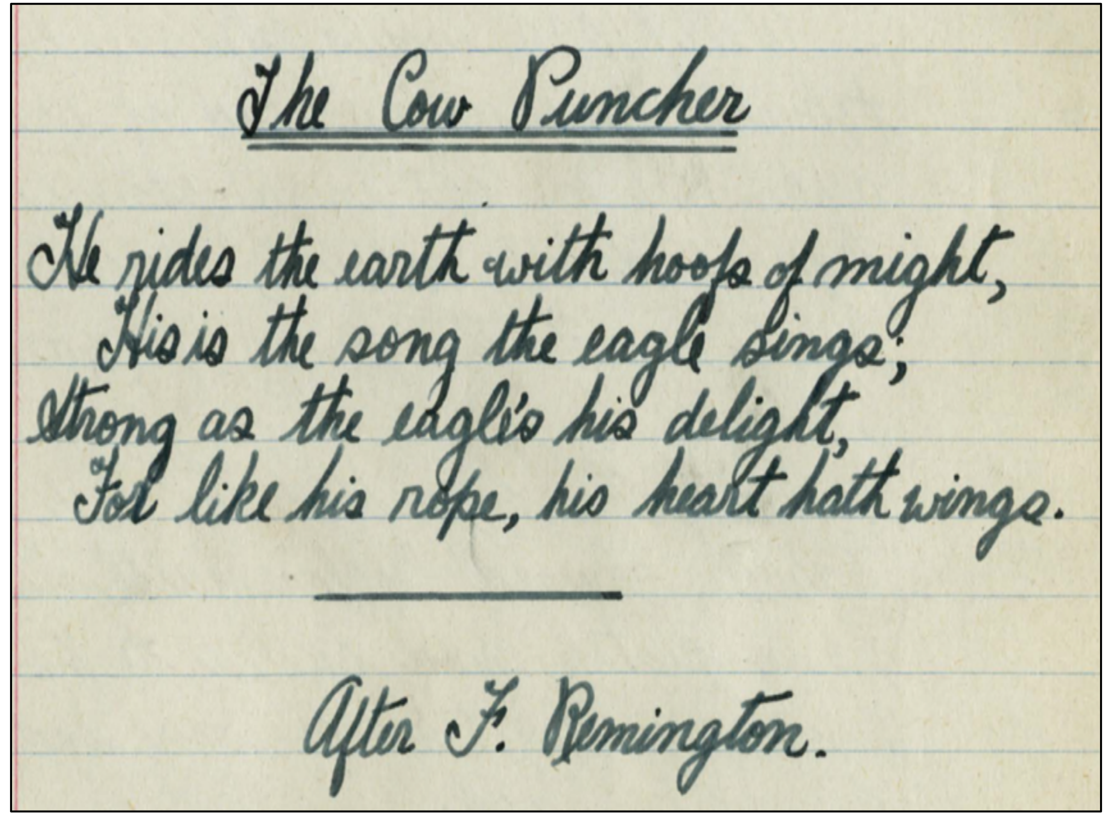
[47] *Friends & Neighbours of the Bar U: Pioneer Family Histories as Presented at the Stockmen's Dinners 2002-2020* (Friends of the Bar U Historic Ranch Association, 2020); Chattaway, *Roderick R. Macleay;* Chattaway and Elofson, *Rocking P Ranch;* Rachel Herbert, *Ranching Women in Southern Alberta* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2017); *Mosquito Creek Roundup: Nanton-Parkland* (Nanton: Nanton and District Historical Society, 2008); Klassen, "A Century of Ranching"; *Mosquito Creek Roundup* (1975).

challenge the popular perception of girls as passive consumers of media. Instead, I argue that their appropriation, reproduction, and adaptations of adult-made media show that Dorothy and Maxine were active cultural producers. This, I argue, not only demonstrates the intersections between age and gender, but also shows that the Macleay sisters exercised power not typically associated with Canadian girls in the 1920s. Analyzing the cover art of the *Rocking P Gazette*, this chapter argues that Dorothy and Maxine's imitation of famous artists and western cowboy culture must be understood as products and producers of settler colonialism.

Chapter 2 focuses on how the Macleay family's employees were represented, addressed, and sometimes mocked in the *Gazette* by Dorothy and Maxine. A number of the Macleay's ranch hands (or 'cowpunchers') were consistent readers and contributors to the *Gazette*, and examining their lifestyle provides insight on their community and their ideals of desirable masculinity. Drawing examples from Dorothy and Maxine's "Local News" section, fictional romances, advertisements, and cartoons, this chapter will argue that the *Gazette* is a unique example of girls holding class-based power over adult men. The ranch hands were the subjects of their magazine's content as well as its intended audience; the Macleay sisters therefore used their class-based power to observe, judge, subvert, and represent the personalities and bodies of their father's employees however they wished. In doing so, they subverted the male gaze and instead created media with the 'gaze of teenage girls'.

In addition to summarizing the main findings of this thesis, the conclusion will include a reflection on the role of humour in the magazine, and compare the *Rocking P Gazette* and the Macleay sisters as media producers to the late twentieth and early twenty-first century tradition of zine-making.

CHAPTER 1
GIRLS MAKING MEDIA:
COWBOY CULTURE AND THE SETTLER-COLONIAL IMAGINARY IN 1920s SOUTHERN ALBERTA



The Cow Puncher

He rides the earth with hoofs of might,
His is the song the eagle sings;
Strong as the eagle's his delight,
For like his rope, his heart hath wings.

After F. Remington.

Figure 1.1: Dorothy's reproduction of a poem inspired by Frederic Remington's art, originally authored by Owen Wister. Dorothy Macleay, April 1925, 66.

Figure 1.2: Maxine's version of *The Cow Puncher* (left), compared to *The Cow Puncher* by Frederic Remington, c. 1901 (right). Maxine Macleay, April 1925, 67.

Originally created in 1901 by American artist Frederic Remington, the painting *The Cow Puncher* (reproduced above right) and the poem it inspired by novelist Owen Wister embody the ethos of western cowboy culture.[1] Remington's illustrations, paintings, and bronze casts inspired

[1] The Sid Richardson Museum describes Remington's *The Cow Puncher* and Wister's original poem as follows: "By 1900 Remington was given to mourning the passing of his West and, in this mood, he painted his stirring black-and-white study, *The Cow Puncher*. Horse and rider make a blatant bid for the viewer's attention as they come to a skidding halt in a cloud of dust. When *Collier's Weekly* reproduced the painting on its September 14, 1901 cover, it was accompanied by an Owen Wister eulogistic verse which was later modified, as follows, to become a tribute to the cowboy's enduring appeal: He rides the earth with hoofs of might, His is the song the eagle sings; Strong as the

by his experience working on sheep and cattle ranches in Montana and Kansas, elaborated, as Margaretta M. Lovell writes, “on the mythic figure of the cowboy, [and] on his counterpart, the mythic Native American.”[2] The cowboys depicted by Remington were heroic and masculine individuals who demonstrated mastery of weapons, horses and nature. Conversely, Lovell notes that Remington tended to portray Indigenous people “by turns [as] noble savage[s] (wise about nature, stoic about pain, honorable), [members] of a poignantly mourned “dying race,” or, as [...] primitive[s] bent on mayhem or destruction.”[3] Remington's art, like the work of other well-known “cowboy artists” like Charles Marion Russell, was – and still is – a form of visual myth making. It promotes a simplistic narrative that naturalizes settlers’ presence and dominance in the West.[4]

As visual artists, writers, and editors, the Macleay sisters constantly engaged with, appropriated, and adapted adult-made media in their own work. After discussing the *Gazette* as part of a longer tradition of child-produced media, this chapter will focus particularly on the girls’ engagement with media produced by adults: western dime novels, periodicals, and paintings by artists like Remington and Russell. The artistic and written aspects of the *Gazette* also need to be understood as products of settler colonialism.

The History of Girls Making Media

The *Rocking P Gazette*, including its emphasis on cowboy culture, needs to be understood as a part of a longer Anglo-American tradition of girls’ writing and publishing. From

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eagle’s, his delight, For like his rope, his heart hath wings.” (“The Cow Puncher,” Sid Richardson Museum, accessed March 6, 2025, https://sidrichardsonmuseum.org/collection/the-cow-puncher/)

[2] Margaretta M. Lovell, “Dashing for America: Frederic Remington, National Myths, and Art Historical Narratives,” *Panorama: Journal of the Association of Historians of American Art* 1, no. 2 (2015): 3.

[3] Lovell, “Dashing for America,” 7, 10.

[4] Lovell, “Dashing for America,” 21.

as early as the eighteenth century, girls' writing for entertainment and recreation was perceived by American parents, adult guardians, and educators as a socially acceptable activity that did not threaten to estrange young women and girls from contemporary ideals of femininity.[5] Many adults, in other words, perceived writing as a practice that would help girls and young women to develop conventional gendered behaviour and desirable moral characteristics. In a nineteenth century middle-class American context, for example, adults encouraged girls to use diaries as a form of written expression that they hoped would "contain their daughters' selfish desires, nurture their good character, teach regular habits of order, and promote conformity to social expectations (e.g., improvement and refinement)."[6]

Despite these restrictions, media scholar Mary Celeste Kearney argues that even in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the practice of writing provided the opportunity for upper and middle class "female youth to transcend, at least temporarily, their familial roles, spaces, and responsibilities [creating] a liberating effect."[7] While it is only a small piece of the puzzle,

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[5] Mary Celeste Kearney, *Girls Make Media* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 30.
[6] Jane Greer, "Diaries," in *Girlhood in America: An Encyclopedia* ed. Miriam Forman-Brunnell (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Inc., 2001), 207.
Diary writing was perceived by adults as an activity that indirectly encouraged girls' development of conventionally feminine characteristics such as passivity and a lack of self-interest and self-expression. While this form of writing allowed Victorian girls some personal communication, Kearney argues that it "also served as muzzles, keeping their voices safely out of the public realm" (Kearney, *Girls Make Media,* 32). During the eighteenth century, Anglo-American girls were encouraged to use diary writing for religious reflection and character building; however, increased secularism beginning in the nineteenth century shifted this practice towards publicly read documentation and observation and eventually, private introspection (Kearney, *Girls Make Media*, 32). Parental monitoring and engagement made the writing of diaries a combination of private and social activity. Girls' diary writing was also influenced by magazines which "urged [girls] to record the weather, correspondence, any exchange of money, visits made, and books read but not to indulge in fantasy" (Greer, "Diaries," 208). Similar practices were prescribed for girls in manuals and magazines that instructed girls how to write letters and diaries, using specific methods designed to teach them traits considered to be essential to their futures. Kristine McCusker explains that manuals for letter writing provided instructions designed to develop and enforce Anglo-American girls' self-control and improve their formal communication, all while providing entertainment to the reader. In addition to these perceived benefits, middle-class girls were encouraged to correspond with one another and with family members, creating a network of regular communication (Kristine McCusker, "Communication," in *Girlhood in America: An Encyclopedia* ed. Miriam Forman-Brunnell (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Inc., 2001), 147). It was not until the early twentieth century when the content of diaries shifted from impersonal to personal, as this time was characterized by the popularization of feminist ideologies and increased heterosexual interaction between youth (Kearney, *Girls Make Media*, 33).
[7] Kearney, *Girls Make Media,* 30-1.

recognizing that girls' writing practices throughout history were shaped by adult concerns of ideal femininity, and that some girls achieved liberation through writing is essential to understanding how and why girls and young women including the Macleay sisters created, wrote, and published their own works.[8]

Girls' media making was not just an individual practice, however. The *Rocking P Gazette* featured contributions from ranch hands and the sisters' schoolteacher Ethel Watts, and some cooperative efforts by nineteenth century girl publishers resulted in reciprocal and social peer cultures. In a case study of a British Victorian girl-made magazine, the *Evergreen Chain* (consisting of six volumes published between 1892 and 1899), historian Lois Burke highlights the importance of girls' peer networks and social hierarchies in the production of the magazine.[9] By both writing and sharing periodicals such as the *Evergreen Chain*, Victorian middle- and upper-class girls created an urban network of readers and authors, characterized by "a rich awareness of print culture through their textual appropriation and responses to conflicting messages about originality and imitative work."[10] Creating and maintaining a functioning reciprocal peer network was a complicated process. Burke explains that for the upper and middle-class Scottish teenage girls who created the *Evergreen Chain*, the periodical's success relied on the cooperation of their peers:

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[8] It is essential to recognize that the tradition of girls' writing and publishing would not have been possible without educational reforms and formalized schooling that made literacy more widespread and accessible. Jane Greer writes that generally, Anglo-American girls' education at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century was shaped by the politicization of women's societal roles (as tied to first-wave feminism), and to European educational reforms that reconceptualized the concept of childhood (Jane Greer, "Literacy," in *Girlhood in America: An Encyclopedia* ed. Miriam Forman-Brunnell (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Inc., 2001), 426). In a British context, Kristine Moruzi explains that although it was oriented around girls' potential to become wives and mothers, formalized and compulsory schooling increased literacy, which in turn contributed to the development of the varied culture of British girlhood (Moruzi, *Constructing Girlhood,* 4).

[9] Lois Burke, "Nineteenth-Century Girls and Authorship: Adolescent Writing, Appropriation, and their Representation in Literature, c. 1860-1900," Ph.D. diss., (Edinburgh Napier University, 2019), 176.

[10] Lois Burke, ""Meantime, it is quite well to write": Adolescent Writing and Victorian Literary Culture in Girls' Manuscript Magazines," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 52, no. 4 (2019): 719, 741.

> Each magazine issue contained short stories, longer stories in serial format, poems, riddles, drawings and paintings. Members of the *Chain* would send their creative work to the editor every month who then copied out the writing in her own hand and stuck the pictures into the bound volume. The editor then sent the completed volume, with notes, and criticism in later volumes, back around the *Chain* members. They were under strict instruction to send it on to the next member at the provided address, and to not keep the volume for longer than two days.[11]

The *Evergreen Chain* shows that girls' reciprocal peer culture was nuanced by social relationships that necessitated cooperation from its members for their publication to function. Periodicals therefore did not only exist as entertainment for girl writers and publishers; they also created a community of young people who read and wrote for each other.

Across the Anglo-American world, reciprocity of youth publishing networks made them sites of social interaction between young people. As explained by Anna Gilderdale in her work on children's correspondence pages in late nineteenth and early twentieth century New Zealand magazines, "[p]eriodicals were not only places where adults wrote fiction for children, but also where children wrote fiction for other children and, crucially, where children shared their experiences with each other."[12] This made published correspondence pages a place where young people regularly engaged with each other's work and literary personas, distinguishing themselves from others with recognizable pseudonyms. Gilderdale emphasizes that child authors and readers used pseudonyms for more reasons than anonymity; pseudonymity also contributed towards a sense of collective identity and exclusivity among a periodical's peer network.[13] The reciprocal and social practices of historical youth publishing peer networks discussed by scholars like Gilderdale and Burke, and like the *Rocking P Gazette*, prove that young people were not simply

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[11] Burke, "Nineteenth-Century Girls and Authorship," 177, 178.
[12] Anna Gilderdale, "Where 'Taniwha' Met 'Colonial Girl': The Social Uses of the *Nom de Plume* in New Zealand Youth Correspondence Pages, 1880-1920," in *Children's Voices from the Past. Palgrave Studies in the History of Childhood,* eds. Kristine Moruzi, Neil Musgrove & Carla Pascoe Leahy (Cham: International Publishing AG, 2019), 57.
[13] Gilderdale, "Where 'Taniwha' Met 'Colonial Girl'," 59-60.

consumers of adult-made media; instead, these young people actively engaged with and contributed to their own print culture.

Sociologist William Corsaro provides yet more insight on child and youth-created media, defining the work of these young producers as acts of "interpretive reproduction" in which children receive and appropriate media and culture from both adults and their peers.[14] Corsaro emphasizes that although "children create and participate in their own unique peer cultures by creatively taking or appropriating information from the adult world to address their own peer concerns," it is important to recognize that "children are not simply internalizing society and culture but are actively contributing to cultural production and change."[15] When considered alongside Burke's case studies of youth-made periodicals, interpretive reproduction is a useful way to understand how and why girls replicated adult print culture. As Burke writes, girls' "appropriation of periodical genres was indicative of broader cultural shifts affecting the boundaries of girlhood in the late-nineteenth century, as the recognition of girlhood in print culture promoted greater liberty to engage in creativity."[16]

Historically perceived as a non-threatening practice, Anglo-American girls' writing transformed between the eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, leading to the creation of multiple reciprocal and social peer publishing cultures. The liberating effects of writing on girls as described by Kearney is central to my analysis, much of which will focus on how Dorothy and

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[14] William A. Corsaro, *The Sociology of Childhood: Fourth Edition* (SAGE Publications Inc: 2015), 18.
[15] Corsaro, *The Sociology of Childhood,* 18.
As discussed in the Introduction, the *Gazette* is an example of a unique school assignment that goes against education conventions in early twentieth century Alberta. Unlike teaching practices leading up to and during the 1920s, the *Gazette* is not an assignment based on the memorization and repetition of facts (Amy Von Heyking, *Creating Citizens: History and Identity in Alberta's Schools, 1905-1980* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006), 12). Instead, the *Gazette* appears to have been designed by Ethel Watts to reinforce Dorothy and Maxine's lessons (such as grammar, language, spelling, history, etc.) by having them create unique written and artistic pieces that revolved around their personal interests.
[16] Burke, "Meantime, it is quite well to write"," 741.

Maxine Macleay used the *Rocking P Gazette* to express themselves without the constraints of contemporary gender conventions. As they lived and wrote on their family's ranch, the Rocking P, Macleay girls did not have access to the urban peer networks described by Burke and Gilderdale. Despite this, they used their circumstances to their advantage, becoming artists, writers, and editors, and making their father's employees their main correspondents and audience. The Macleay girls were not just consumers of adult-made media—they also appropriated, played with, and adapted it to create their own cultural contribution.

The *Rocking P Gazette*: A Case Study of Girls' Publishing and the "Settler-Colonial Imaginary"

As a case study of girls making media, the *Rocking P Gazette* shows many parallels to the English and American youth publishing tradition, yet it is most significant for its unique interpretation of 1920s southern Alberta ranching culture. When the Macleay sisters began work on the magazine's first issue in 1923, Dorothy was fourteen years old, and Maxine was twelve. Consisting of seventeen total issues between 1923 and 1925, and approximately 1,320 pages of hand-written and illustrated content, the *Gazette* focused on the Macleay's Rocking P and Bar S ranches and featured popular symbols of ranching and cowboy culture in the American and Canadian Wests, including cowpunchers, guns, bucking bulls, broncos and land dotted with cattle.

The following section will first identify the *Gazette* as a product of settler colonialism, arguing that it should be viewed as a part of settler mythmaking and ranching mythology. Using the *Gazette*'s cover art as examples, I argue that the Macleay girls reproduced adult-made western artworks to create their own version of cowboy culture and ranching mythology. Finally, this chapter will examine how Dorothy and Maxine engaged with, adapted, and appropriated

literary conventions from western fiction, arguing that the sisters exercised a power and authority not typically associated with 1920s Canadian girls in the process of synthesizing their own culture.

Examining Dorothy and Maxine's written and artistic media within the context of Canadian settler colonialism further helps to conceptualize historical southern Alberta ranches as ideological as well as physical spaces. Patrick Wolfe argues that land and its acquisition is a central tenet of settler colonialism, and the nature of western agriculture "is inherently sedentary and therefore, permanent."[17] Consequently, "[i]n addition to its objective economic centrality to the project, agriculture, with its life-sustaining connectedness to land, is a potent symbol of settler-colonial identity."[18] Cultural and historical geography scholar Paul F. Starrs explains that "belonging to ranching is [a] supremely ideological landscape, formed by aspiration and the desire to own and control."[19] Ranching, in other words, naturalizes settler occupation and power.

It is significant that the *Gazette* was created by the daughters of ranchers, on their family ranch — the girls drew from ranching's existing mythos in the process of making their own mythology for the Rocking P and Bar S ranches. The existence of a shared and enduring mythos proves that ranching involves much more than just land and cattle. Starrs explains:

> The ranch is a slice of promise, an evocative way of life, a body of practice; it is an economy (if a poor one) and a community (a powerful one). Verifiably genuine, ranch landscapes are also a territory of the imagination. The ranch is defined by a number of features, but especially by the marginality of its site and situation; by the over-whelming mythos, which even ranchers themselves buy into with cheerful glee; by the manipulation of image—especially, these days, by nonranchers.[20]

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[17] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8 no. 4 (2006): 395.
[18] Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism," 396.
[19] Paul F. Starrs, "An Inescapable Range, or the Ranch as Everywhere," in *Western Places, American Myths: How We Think About the West* by Gary J. Hausladen (Reno & Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2003), 64.
[20] Starrs, "An Inescapable Range," 66.

Furthermore, Starrs argues that "[p]eople and place make the ranch, and with it a landscape both speculative and real."[21] The *Rocking P Gazette*, therefore, is a representation of the Rocking P and Bar S ranches as they existed both as a physical and an imagined settler-dominated place and space.

Conceptualizing the Macleay family's ranches as places and spaces influenced by the mythology of ranching allows us to better understand the connection of the *Gazette* to settler colonialism. Tom Lynch explains that the mythology of the West is a part of what he calls the "settler-colonial imaginary": "a sort of settler unconscious that both crafts and constrains their relationship to the lands they now inhabit."[22] Using the concept of the settler-colonial imaginary, this chapter will also seek to explain how Dorothy and Maxine's representation of their family's ranches contributed to the unique mythology of the Rocking P and Bar S. As a source that was shaped by and reproduced settler colonialism, the *Rocking P Gazette* can be used to help understand ranching as a colonial practice, community, and ideology. Furthermore, examining Dorothy and Maxine's work with this lens provides insight into how and why they exercised their authority and bucked gender conventions as young writers and publishers, adapting, appropriating and reproducing adult-made media in their own work.

Indigenous Representation, Misrepresentation and Erasure in the *Gazette*

As a practice, ideology, community and economy, ranching strengthens the Canadian settler-colonial project by crafting a romanticized, settler-centric mythology of the West.[23] As a structure and ongoing process, settler colonialism and the settler-colonial imaginary are based on

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[21] Starrs, "An Inescapable Range," 64.
[22] Tom Lynch, *Outback & Out West: The Settler-Colonial Environmental Imaginary* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022), 8.
[23] Starrs, "An Inescapable Range," 66.

the misrepresentation and erasure of Indigenous presence. Considering the *Rocking P Gazette* as a product and a producer of settler colonialism in 1920s southern Alberta illuminates silences within the girls' magazine.

Dorothy and Maxine often appropriated artwork of white cowboys for the covers and the pages of their magazine, yet Indigenous peoples are rarely represented in the *Gazette*'s fiction or artwork. Three of the seventeen covers of the *Gazette* depict Indigenous people, with one of these representations reproducing Remington's 1900 painting, *The Buffalo Signal*, and the other reproducing Arthur Henry Hider's 1921 *Fort Prince of Wales, 1734*. The third cover also appears to be a reproduction of famous western artwork, although its source has proved difficult to find.

Figure 1.3: Cover of the April 1925 *Gazette* by Dorothy, compared to F. Remington's *The Buffalo Signal*, c. 1900. Image of *The Buffalo Signal* (1900) sourced from Christie's, "Live Auction 19499 The Legend of the West."

Figure 1.4: Cover of the January 1924 *Gazette* by Dorothy, compared to *Fort Prince of Wales, 1734* by Arthur Henry Hider, c. 1921. Image of *Fort Prince of Wales, 1734* (1921) sourced from Pyszczyk, "A Short History of Our Canadian Dogs."

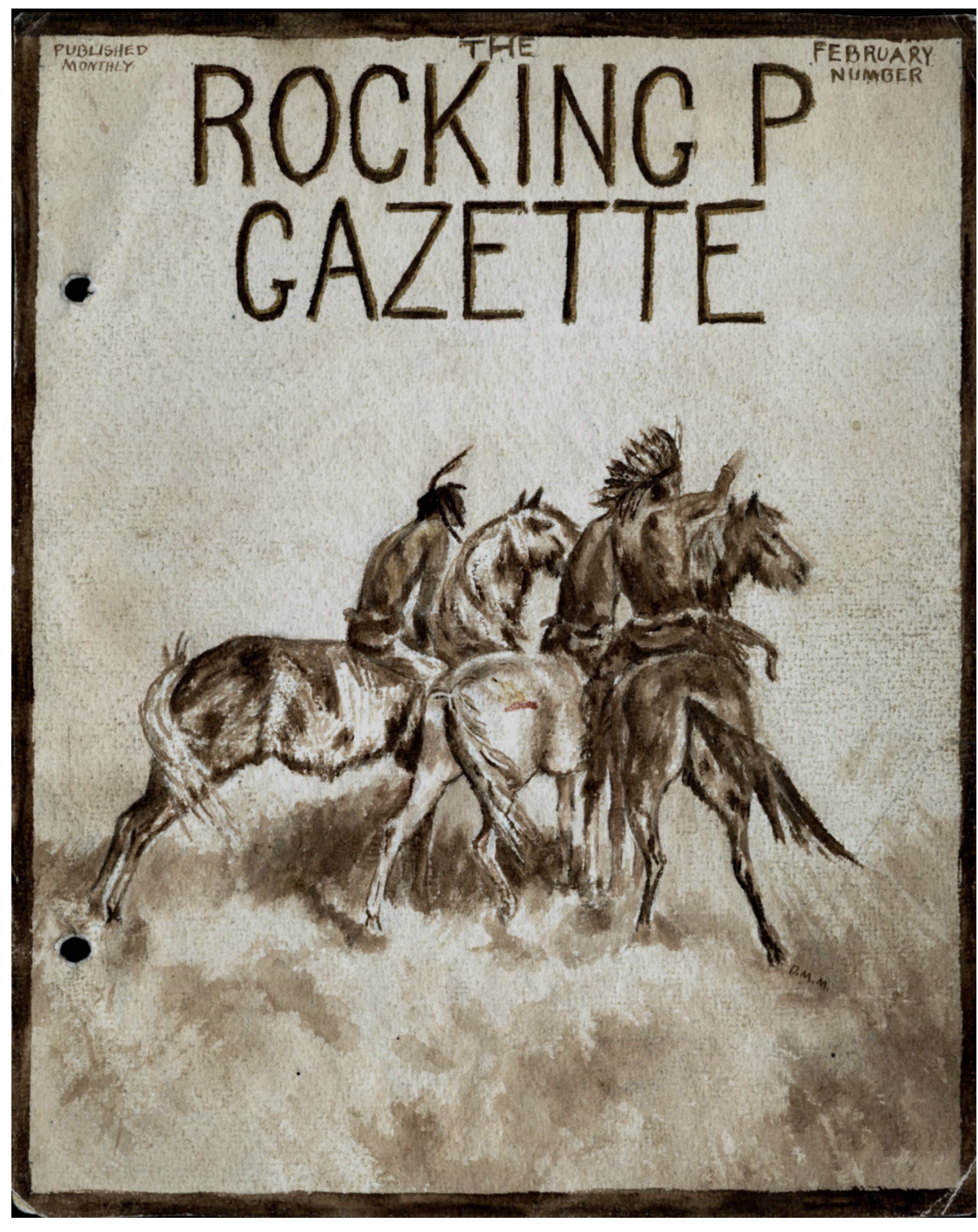

Figure 1.5: Cover of the Feb. 1925 *Gazette* by Dorothy, possibly a reproduction of adult-made western artwork.

All three examples were produced by Dorothy. Interestingly, her reproduction of Remington's *The Buffalo Signal* is not exact: there are some colour differences seen between the shoes, the saddle blanket, and the horse's markings, the man's shirt is open over the chest, and most significantly, the horse is wearing a war bridle instead of a European metal bit and headstall.[24] While small, the details seen in Dorothy's adaptation of Remington's art suggests the possibility that these changes were made to more closely represent Blackfoot Indigenous peoples.[25]

While his work primarily focused on the American West, Remington's art was significantly influenced by his visits to Canada in the late 1880s and 1890; he viewed the Canadian West as an extension of the American frontier, and he was especially interested in the Blackfoot peoples and the North-West Mounted Police.[26] Remington's portrayal of the Blackfoot peoples was "a selective vision," Peter Hassrick explains, as "Remington did not record the transformation that was being wrought on [the Blackfoot] people. He chose instead to portray them as warriors and nomadic hunters."[27] In doing so, Remington's art consciously ignored the "painful realities of the reservation acculturation process that were everywhere in evidence."[28]

Notably, this was not an uncommon trend for artists of the American and Canadian Wests. Daniel Francis writes that mid-to-late nineteenth century Canadian artists who portrayed Indigenous peoples were driven by a belief that "they were saving an entire people from extinction [...] in the sense that they were preserving on canvas, and later on film, a record of a

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[24] A war bridle is a loop of leather or rope that is tied around the horse's lower jaw.

[25] For more information on the connections between Blackfoot culture and the use of war bridles, see S. J. Lycett and James D. Keyser, "Changing Patterns of Stylistic Diversity in Blackfoot Biographic Art Across the Nineteenth Century," *Plains Anthropologist* 66, no. 259 (2021): 242-266, and John C. Ewers, *The Horse in Blackfoot Indian Culture: With Comparative Material from Other Western Tribes* (University Press of the Pacific, 2001).

[26] Peter H. Hassrick, '"They Are a Fine Outfit Those Blackfeet": Frederic Remington in Western Canada," *Alberta History* 52, no. 2 (2004): 27.

[27] Hassrick, '"They Are a Fine Outfit Those Blackfeet"," 30.

[28] Hassrick, '"They Are a Fine Outfit Those Blackfeet"," 30.

dying culture before it expired forever."[29] As a result, the manipulation of images created by settler artists and photographers leads to an inaccurate and fantasized representation of Indigenous peoples that has been appropriated and perpetuated in popular media.[30]

Importantly, the so-called preservation of Indigenous cultures by western artists occurred simultaneously with actions of the Canadian and American governments that sought to assimilate Indigenous peoples and or destroy their cultures and ways of life. Katherine Pettipas writes that beginning in 1895, the Department of Indian Affairs intensified efforts to ban Indigenous religious ceremonies (such as the Sun Dance) in the Canadian prairies.[31] This, Pettipas emphasizes, was motivated by the Canadian government's aspiration to acquire and control land and resources in the prairies.[32] Patrick Wolfe explains that, as a process shaped by racialized rhetoric, settler colonialism is motivated by settlers' ownership and access to land.[33] As Indigenous presence "obstructed settlers' access to land, [...] their increase was counterproductive" to the settler colonial project, and consequently motivated assimilationist and genocidal policies.[34] This is echoed by Kristine Alexander, who argues that alongside assimilation and displacement, "settler colonialism also sought—and still seeks—to erase [Indigenous] groups and their histories in cultural and representational terms."[35] Even though it claimed to preserve Indigenous culture, nineteenth and early twentieth century western art contributed to cultural erasure by representing Indigenous peoples as inaccurate and romanticized versions of themselves.

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[29] Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2004), 23-4.
[30] Francis, *The Imaginary Indian*, 43.
[31] Katherine Pettipas, *Severing the Ties That Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1994), 107-8.
[32] Pettipas, *Severing the Ties That Bind*, 87.
[33] Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism," 388.
[34] Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism," 388.
[35] Kristine Alexander, "Childhood and Colonialism in Canadian History," *History Compass* 14, no. 9 (2016): 398.

Western artwork is not the only element that might have shaped the Macleay sisters' portrayal of Indigenous peoples. It is safe to assume that as a part of their education, Dorothy and Maxine would have read textbooks on Canadian and British imperial history. In an article examining Indigenous representation in early to mid-twentieth century Canadian textbooks, Sean Carleton emphasizes that textbooks shared the narrative of British imperialism as a benevolent process, therefore providing justification for Canadian settler colonialism.[36] As a result, Carleton explains that "whether included in a brief introduction, described as animals, or transformed into part of the landscape, indigenous peoples are used to establish the setting for the more important story of British imperialism."[37] Supporting Carleton's observations, critical race scholar Sherene Razack notes that the Canadian national mythology is based on European claims to 'empty' land, or *terra nullius*.[38] Indigenous erasure via *terra nullius*, Razack explains, naturalizes white settler society and "produces European settlers as the bearers of civilization while simultaneously trapping [Indigenous] people in the pre-modern."[39] In addition to the work of western artists like Remington, the silences and misrepresentations of Indigenous peoples and cultures in Canadian history textbooks might have contributed to why they are rarely represented in the pages of the *Gazette.*

Reproducing Silences and Romanticization from Western Art

As a part of their consumption and reproduction of adult-made media, Dorothy and Maxine produced and reproduced settler silences and romanticized portrayals of Indigenous peoples in

[36] Sean Carleton, "Colonizing Minds: Public Education, the "Textbook Indian," and Settler Colonialism in British Columbia, 1920-1970," *BC Studies* no.169 (2011): 110.
[37] Carleton, "Colonizing Minds," 111.
[38] Sherene Razack, "Introduction: When Place Becomes Race," in *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society*, ed. Sherene Razack (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002), 3.
[39] Razack, "Introduction," 2.

the *Gazette.* While they are prominently shown in cover art, there is a notable absence of Indigenous people in the pages of the magazine — when considered alongside the Macleay family's documented interactions with Indigenous peoples, this silence is especially noticeable. Clay Chattaway, Maxine's son, writes that Roderick Macleay employed numerous individuals and families of the Stoney First Nation, beginning at least by 1916.[40] During the publication of the *Gazette*, the Macleays employed Ezra Lefthand and his family, members of the Bearspaw Band of Stoney First Nation, on seasonal contract work.[41] Interestingly, *Mosquito Creek Roundup: Nanton-Parkland,* a local history book published by the Nanton and District Historical Society, states that the close relationship between the Macleay family and the Bearspaw Band led to the establishment of a dispensary on the Rocking P ranch "under Mrs. [Laura] Macleay's direction," although no specific information is provided on when and for how long this dispensary operated.[42]

Dorothy and Maxine's reproductions of famous western art also replicated the original artists' romanticization and inaccurate portrayals of Indigenous peoples and cultures. In doing so, it supported the settler colonial project by reproducing and perpetuating historical silences.[43] Silences and deliberate inaccuracies about Indigenous culture was not limited to artwork, however; Francis argues that in Canadian settler children's media,

> the Indians of fiction, of the Wild West Show, of school books and summer camps — were imaginary. [...] White kids were exposed to images of the Indian created by various White writers and educators. These images were not all negative. On the contrary, many were very positive. But they were not authentic: they represented the concerns and prejudices of White adult society instead of actual Native Canadians.[44]

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[40] Clay Chattaway, *Roderick R. Macleay: A Pioneer's Life* (Nanton: The Bar S Ranch, 2023), 145.
[41] *Mosquito Creek Roundup: Nanton-Parkland* (Nanton: Nanton and District Historical Society, 1975), 60.
[42] *Mosquito Creek Roundup* (1975), 60. No further information is provided in this source regarding what the dispensary provided, or Laura Macleay's qualifications for operating it.
[43] Stephanie Olsen, Kristine Alexander, Susan Miller, Ville Vuolanto, Simon Sleight, Mischa Honeck, Sarah Emily Duff, and Karen Vallgårda, "A Critical Conversation on Agency," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 17, no. 2 (2024): 172-3.
[44] Francis, *The Imaginary Indian,* 145.

The overall absence of Indigenous peoples in the *Gazette* can be in part explained by the concept of silences as described by Laura Ishiguro in her study of British family correspondence in late nineteenth and early twentieth century British Columbia. Ishiguro observes that the lack of documentation or discussion of Indigenous peoples in letters by British settlers was an implicit part of the settler colonial project: "the epistolary power [of settlers] to claim boredom was also the power to look away from the possibility of racialized violence, settler anxiety, or colonial vulnerability."[45] Ishiguro argues that boredom (which can both result in and produce silence and silences) is often experienced by those possessing social security or power; the Macleay girls' status as middle-class white settlers likely afforded them the same privilege.[46]

Ishiguro's observations of settler silence on Indigenous peoples in their letters home resounds with Michel-Rolph Trouillot's argument that silences are actively created, inherent parts of history rooted in historical and current power imbalances.[47] Silences, Trouillot explains, are made throughout each stage of history's creation, beginning in the creation of sources.[48] This extends to legal documents and national mythologies. As explained by Sherene Razack, legal concepts like *terra nullius* support the "idea of white settler innocence (the notion that European settlers merely settled and developed the land)," while simultaneously silencing Indigenous dispossession and naturalizing settler presence in Canada.[49] This helps to understand how the Macleay girls represented (or failed to represent) Indigenous peoples in the *Rocking P Gazette*. By replicating adult-made western art and its intentional misrepresentations of Indigenous

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[45] Laura Ishiguro, *Nothing to Write Home About: British Family Correspondence and the Settler Colonial Everyday in British Columbia* (Vancouver & Toronto: UBC Press, 2019), 96.
[46] Ishiguro, *Nothing to Write Home About,* 112.
[47] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015), 41-2.
[48] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 23.
[49] Razack, "Introduction," 5.

peoples, and by excluding them from their version of the West as portrayed in the *Gazette*, the Macleay sisters created their own silences, and perpetuated existing silences on Indigenous presence and dispossession inherent to settler colonialism.

Cowboy Culture on the *Gazette*'s Covers

The artwork produced by the sisters in the pages and on the cover of the *Gazette* needs to be understood as part of the western Canadian settler-colonial imaginary.[50] By reproducing and creating their own visual images of cowboy culture and the southern Alberta landscape, the Macleay girls added to their mythology of the Rocking P and Bar S ranches, naturalizing and normalizing settler presence on Blackfoot territory. In the process of doing so, Dorothy and Maxine reproduced silences and misrepresentations of Indigenous peoples popularized by the work of nineteenth and early twentieth century western artists. Correspondingly, the subjects of the covers of the *Gazette* are most often related to white settlers and settler ranchers. Maintaining a focus on the *Gazette*'s cover artwork, this section examines how the Macleay sisters' replication of cowboy art presented a specific version of the West, which contributed towards their own representation of 1920s Alberta cowboy culture.

Similarly to how Dorothy and Maxine's reproduced western Indigenous art, the Macleay sisters engaged with western cowboy culture by directly reproducing (and occasionally altering) famous artwork. Using tools like Google Image Search, it is easy to identify when the Macleay sisters appropriated artwork despite them often not providing credit to the original artist.

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[50] Lynch, *Outback & Out West,* 24.

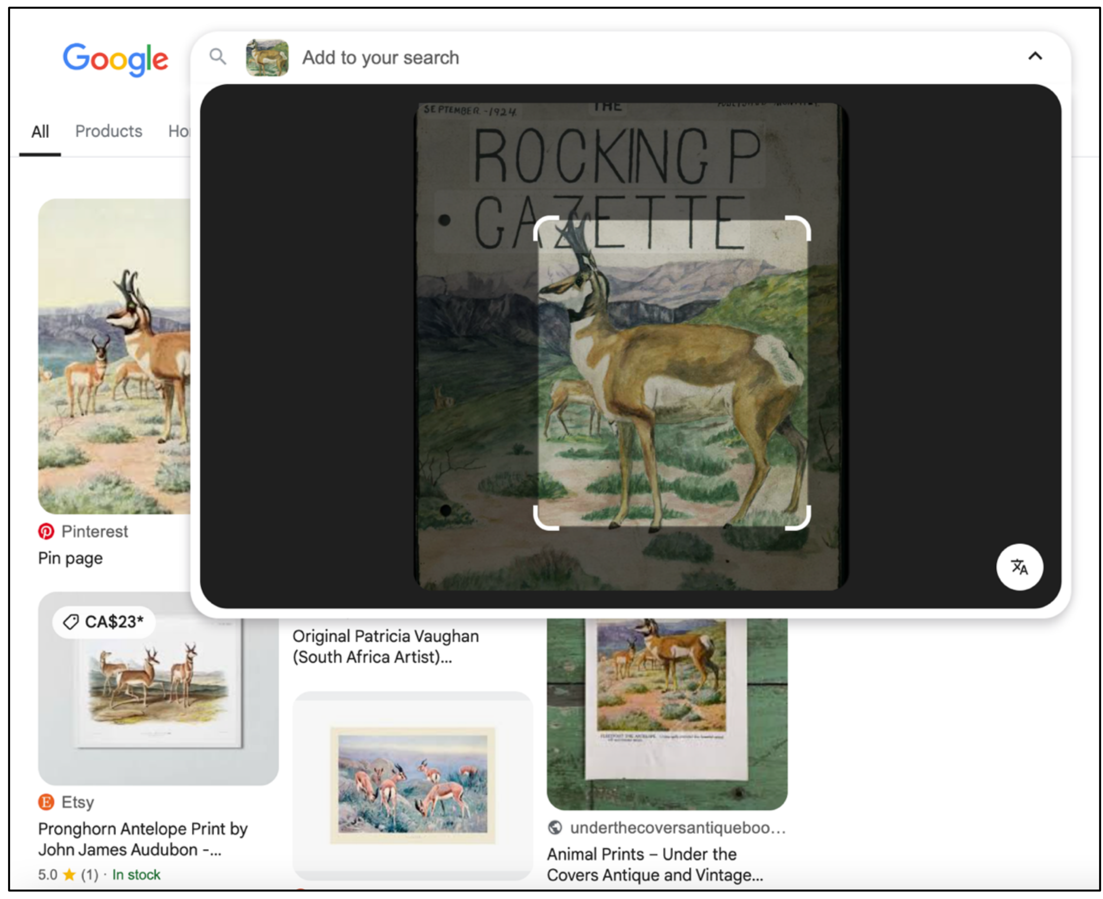

Figure 1.6: Google Image Search shows that the cover of the Sept. 1924 *Gazette* is a reproduction of an illustration by Louis Agassiz Fuertes, originally appearing in Thornton W. Burgess's 1920 text, *The Burgess Animal Book for Children.* Dorothy and Maxine reproduced several images from this book throughout the *Gazette.*

Drawing again from William Corsaro's explanation of interpretive reproduction, Dorothy and Maxine's appropriation of popular cowboy artwork on the covers of the *Rocking P Gazette* should be viewed as a part of their creation of a unique peer culture. Notably, Corsaro argues, children and young people appropriate media to directly contribute to the formation of their own, age-based culture.[51] The same is being done by the Macleay girls in their art that takes the cowboy as its subject, directly reproducing or imitating the work of famous artists of the West.

Two issues of the *Gazette* feature reproductions of cowboy art by Charles Marion Russell. Considered alongside Frederic Remington's cowboy art (exemplified in *The Cow*

[51] Corsaro, *The Sociology of Childhood,* 40.

Puncher, seen at the onset of the chapter), these examples tell us much about the mythological West and the people who were a part of this mythology. Designed to appeal to the social concerns of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century North American urban audiences, Russell and Remington's art (and by extension, the girls' recreations of it) presented the West as a hypermasculine space. The association of the West(s) with masculinity is a part of the settler-colonial imaginary as described by Lynch, who writes that since early American colonization, the West has been "culturally coded" as "a place where men can be men."[52] Russell and Remington's art therefore communicates a narrative of "wide expanses of unowned and unfenced nature [...] where they enjoyed (or appeared to enjoy) extraordinary freedoms and powers."[53]

The Macleay sisters' painstaking reproductions of Russell and Remington's work communicate similar ideas; they portray the West as a romanticized space lacking modernization, with masculine cowboys and their horses appearing almost as though they are a part of the landscape. Russell's 1905 painting *Hunter Hunting the Butte*, for example, was reproduced by Maxine on the cover of the November 1924 *Gazette*, and Dorothy's version of Russell's 1912 *A Bad One* appeared on the October 1924 issue.

[52] Lynch, *Outback & Out West,* 14.
[53] Lovell, "Dashing for America," 12.

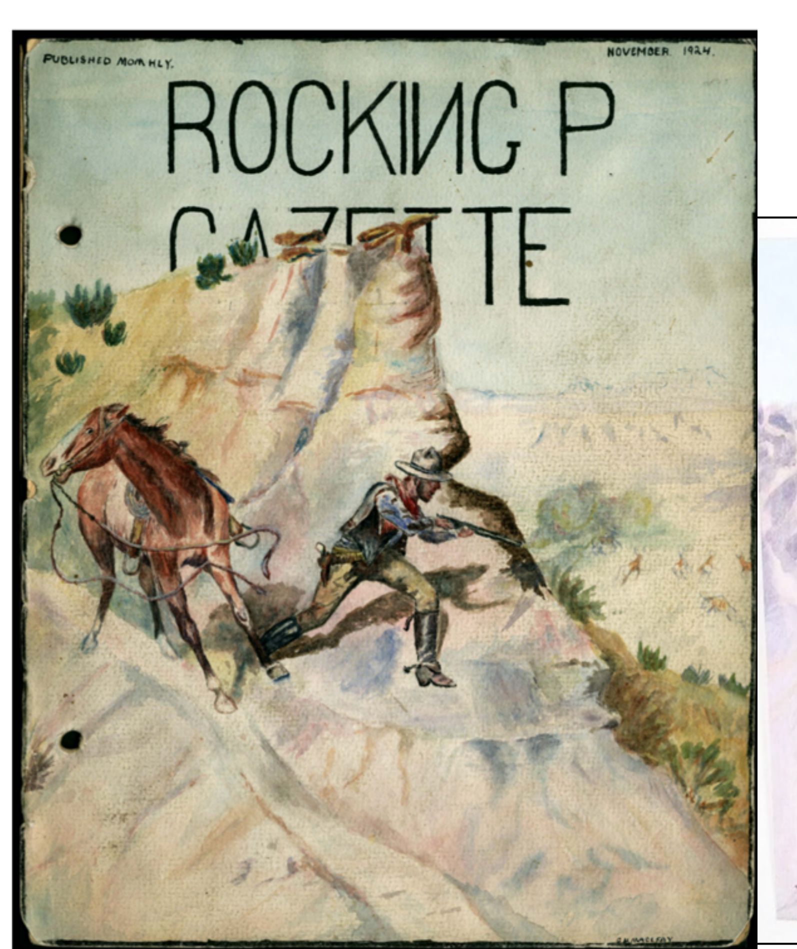

Figure 1.7: Cover art of the November 1924 *Gazette* by Maxine, reproducing C. M. Russell's *Hunter Hunting the Butte*, c. 1905. Image of *Hunter Hunting the Butte* (1905) sourced from Mutual Art, "Charles Marion Russell."

Figure 1.8: Cover of the October 1924 *Gazette* by Dorothy and *A Bad One* by C. M. Russell, c. 1912. Image of *A Bad One* (1912) sourced from Sid Richardson Museum, "A Bad One."

These artworks show few differences from their inspirations, and effectively maintain their original messaging of the West as a masculine space. Despite their lack of differences, William Corsaro explains that exact reproductions should still be considered as significant cultural contributions. This is because interpretive reproduction "enables cultural production, which contributes to reproduction and change" in adult and children's peer cultures.[54] Within the framework of interpretive reproduction, Dorothy and Maxine's appropriation and repurposing of

[54] Corsaro, *The Sociology of Childhood,* 41.

Charles M. Russell and Frederic Remington's art for the *Gazette* is demonstrative of the girls participating the creation of a unique visual culture and contributing to their own version of cowboy culture. Corsaro elaborates that interpretive reproduction, as a key process of young people's peer cultures, is a process of three interrelated actions:

(a) children's creative appropriation of information and knowledge from the adult world;
(b) children's production and participation in a series of peer cultures; and
(c) children's contribution to the reproduction and extension of the adult culture.[55]

The Macleay girls participate in all three of these actions: they consumed adult-made print media and western artwork, collaboratively created the *Rocking P Gazette*, and in the process of doing so, reproduced, appropriated and adapted images and themes from the media they consumed to create their own unique written and artistic work. Furthermore, most of the artwork appropriated by Dorothy and Maxine are not credited to the original artist. It is possible that, as a part of the process of interpretive reproduction, the Macleay sisters viewed their reproductions of western artwork as their own work, regardless of if it was an exact replica or an altered version of the original work.

It is essential to emphasize that children's reproduction of adult-made art is not simply 'copying', rather, it is a part of a complex process of cultural and identity formation. With a focus on girls in the early 2000s, art historian Olga Ivashkevich argues that "children's self-initiated image making [is] a sociocultural practice interwoven with social and cultural discourses of childhood and gender, and embedded in children's peer interactions, daily activities, and participation in popular culture."[56] Ivashkevich explains that the act of drawing is important, and should be viewed as a process of "culturally and socially bound *meaning*

[55] Corsaro, *The Sociology of Childhood,* 41.
[56] Olga Ivashkevich, "Children's Drawing as a Sociocultural Practice: Remaking Gender and Popular Culture," *Studies in Art Education: A Journal of Issues and Research* 51, no. 1 (2009): 51.

making."[57] Emphasizing how culture is shaped by power and its gendered, racial and class-based imbalances, Ivashkevich argues that these dynamics are reflected in girls' artwork; by simply creating art, girls are navigating (and sometimes challenging) these structures.[58]

For the Macleay sisters, reproducing adult-made art can be interpreted as another way that they used the *Gazette* to express themselves independent of gender and age-based conventions they might have experienced as 1920s teenage girls. Just as Mary Celeste Kearney argued that writing was a liberating practice for American girls, reproducing and appropriating western artwork therefore can also be interpreted as another way in which 1920s girls separated themselves from social expectations and constraints associated with girlhood and femininity.[59] Ivashkevich's arguments make it clear that Dorothy and Maxine's artistic reproductions of Russell and Remington's work should not be misunderstood as simply the replication of adult-made media, as appropriating artwork is also a part of how young people synthesize their own culture.

Responding to Gender and Age Conventions with Western-Themed Pseudonyms

Just as gender and age influenced Dorothy and Maxine's visual representation of cowboy culture, these factors also shaped the girls' written work. As the only two adolescent girls living on the Rocking P ranch, the Macleay sisters used their magazine to define themselves as girl publishers in a space dominated by adult men. Without the support of a network of peers, Dorothy and Maxine used the *Gazette* to exercise an authority and power not typically associated with 1920s Canadian girls over the magazine's main audience, their father's employees. One of the ways that they expressed themselves throughout the *Gazette* was through pseudonyms;

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[57] Ivashkevich, "Children's Drawing as a Sociocultural Practice," 52.
[58] Ivashkevich, "Children's Drawing as a Sociocultural Practice," 60.
[59] Kearney, *Girls Make Media,* 30-1.

pseudonymity was one of the ways in which the Macleay sisters emulated adult-made media, but adopting this writing convention also gave them a way to subvert the power dynamics associated with their young age and femininity.

Understanding the broader social context of 1920s Canada helps to explain the trends in the Macleay girls' various pen names. In a study of English Canadian women and girls in the early to mid-twentieth century, Veronica Strong-Boag emphasizes that the 1920s were marked by social stratification demarcated by both class and patriarchal gender hierarchy.[60] Strong-Boag emphasizes that girls "were expected to be mothers in the making," and that since their "destiny was generally conceded to be in marriage, their training was often directed more or less explicitly to this end."[61]

The domestic focus of girls' upbringing was exacerbated by what Cynthia Comacchio describes as a "new or intensifying socio-economic developments [that] consolidated [an] emerging pattern of youth dependency" in the years following World War I.[62] The concern about modern girls — embodied by the symbol of the flapper — held by Canadian families and cultural commentators further encouraged parents to keep their children in the home for as long as possible, or until marriage.[63] As a result of their restriction to the domestic realm, Comacchio argues that Canadian girls in the 1920s generally "had little beyond marriage and motherhood that might serve as capital to ensure their social status and economic well-being."[64]

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[60] Veronica Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939* (Penguin Books Canada Ltd.: 1988), 3.
[61] Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled* 12.
[62] Cynthia Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*: *Adolescence and the Making of Modern Canada, 1920 to 1950* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), 49. The main socio-economic changes noted by Comacchio are "the high cost of living, the low wages offered to untrained and inexperienced adolescents, the decline of apprenticeship and domestic service, the expansion in part-time and casual labour markets [...], and the growing social value placed on secondary schooling."
[63] Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 49-50.
[64] Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, 84.

Girls and young women who sought an escape from the social and economic limitations of patriarchal gender roles could find it by reading. Strong-Boag emphasizes that reading offered Canadian girls and young women a sense of liberation, even though girls sometimes did not find themselves represented by the characters they saw on the page.[65] Mary Celeste Kearney makes a similar argument, emphasizing that from the eighteen century on, reading and writing has given American girls at least a temporary reprieve from reality.[66] Although the activity of girls' writing is not discussed by Strong-Boag, a lack of representation could also have served as a motivation for early twentieth-century Canadian girls to make their own media. Furthermore, as an activity perceived to be non-threatening to conventional ideals of femininity, writing and producing visual media would have been a way for girls to explore dynamics of age, gender and class away from reality's societal conventions and restrictions.

The influence of gender on their lives is hinted at by the pseudonyms chosen by the Macleay sisters; significantly, most of the pen names the girls picked for themselves were masculine, apart from the occasional use of feminine names like 'Florence Wintergreen' and 'Arabella Trunk'. The use of male pronouns and pen names was also common in Victorian girls' writing, too; Burke argues that using male names allowed girls to escape the constraints associated with femininity — such as their limitation to the domestic realm — consequently "augment[ing] the creative license that girl writers had at their disposal."[67] Pseudonyms allowed the Macleay sisters to write under masculine and feminine pen names at will, giving them a freedom to express themselves independent from the gendered behaviour conventions they might have experienced as teenage girls in the 1920s.

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[65] Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*, 27.
[66] Kearney, *Girls Make Media,* 30-1.
[67] Burke, "Nineteenth-Century Girls and Authorship," 159.

The Many Purposes of Pseudonyms

While the anonymity of writing under masculine pen names gave nineteenth and early twentieth century girl writers a temporary escape from the social expectations of age and gender, this was not the only purpose served by pseudonyms. In several cases, child writers who contributed to periodicals did not only use pseudonyms to obscure their identity; pseudonyms provided a sense of exclusivity and community between young readers and gave the author control over how they and their work was represented and perceived by readers. In New Zealand's youth correspondence pages, Gilderdale argues that "young people simultaneously inhabited the roles of reader, writer, and protagonist of their autobiographical contributions to [periodicals]," consequently shaping their perception of themselves and of their peers.[68] Gilderdale emphasizes that this "blurred the distinction between real and imagined connection, between public and private, and between competing meanings of anonymity, pseudonymity, and celebrity."[69]

The same applies to the *Rocking P Gazette*, as Dorothy and Maxine assumed the roles of writers, editors, and publishers. As the *Gazette* was entirely handwritten, it is relatively easy to tell who wrote what no matter what pseudonym is used. However, this does not take away from the purpose of magazine's pseudonyms to express authority through professionalism. Throughout the seventeen issues of the *Gazette*, the sisters used the same pseudonyms ('Dynamite Dick', 'Dan Panhandle', 'Kane Green' and 'Carney Mulligan', to name a few) giving the reader the impression of multiple regular contributors to the magazine.

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[68] Gilderdale, "Where 'Taniwha' Met 'Colonial Girl'," 53.
[69] Gilderdale, "Where 'Taniwha' Met 'Colonial Girl'," 53.

Page		
2.	Introductory A.B.C. by	The Director of Education.
6.	Local News "	Our Local Reporter.
10.	Market Information	Gazette Stock Expert.
12.	"Mixed up".	M.T. Head.
18	"Out where the Lean Wolves Run!	Dan Panhandle.
20.	Review of Western Art.	Arabella Trunk.
22	"Smash'em, Smash!"	Kane Green.
28	"The P Round Up."	Anonymous.
30	"The Cowpuncher"	Antelope Al.
31.	"Canyon Cullum".	Carney Mulligan.
36	"The Old Saloon."	Buckskin Billy.
38	Historical Review	Florence Wintergreen.
40	"Action!"	Dynamite Dick.
46	Comic Section	Gazette Jester.
	Ads. Wants. etc.	

Figure 1.9: Index for the Sept. 1923 issue, showing pseudonyms used by Watts, Dorothy and Maxine.

While pseudonyms could be used to improve the audience of the *Gazette*'s perception of the magazine's quality, they also served the important purpose of self-expression. Gilderdale notes that pseudonyms provided an opportunity for young writers to create a personalized brand based on their interests, "which they could imbue with personality."[70] The Macleay girls did much the same, using pseudonyms to write themselves and their family's ranches into the mythology of ranching and the corpus of western fiction. Dorothy and Maxine's pseudonyms

[70] Gilderdale, "Where 'Taniwha' Met 'Colonial Girl'," 55.

were often alliterations, frequently containing an animal as a part of the pen name. ‘Coyote Cal’, ‘Antelope Al’, and ‘Buckskin Billy’ are some examples of this pattern.[71]

The names chosen by Dorothy and Maxine show a direct connection to western dime novels and their naming conventions. According to author J. Randolph Cox, the names of characters in western dime novels “were often alliterative”, with some examples including “Antelope Abe, [...] Dandy Dick, [...] Falcon Flynn, [and] Howling Hank.”[72] These alliterative names served the purpose of being both memorable and easy to read, adding to the marketability of the dime novel’s stories.[73] Their appropriation and adaptation of these naming conventions suggests that the Macleay girls would have been avid consumers of dime novels.

In addition to the benefits of anonymity, escapism, the authority of professionalism, and self-expression, some of Dorothy and Maxine’s pseudonyms communicate the power relations inherent to ranching mythology and ranchers’ identity. Paul F. Starrs emphasizes that in ranching’s mythology, ranchers are perceived to have an almost legendary expertise and knowledge of the land upon which they work.[74] Knowledge, therefore, is a key part of the power dynamics of settler colonialism and ranching culture; settler ranchers understood and represented themselves as authorities and masters. This is reflected in some of the satirical pseudonyms chosen by the Macleay girls for informative articles. Some examples include “M.T. Head” (empty head), author of “Mixed Up”, “Prof. I. Knoughitall” (I know it all), author of ““Do You

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[71] In contrast, none of the adult contributors to the *Rocking P Gazette* — except Watts — used pseudonyms to obscure their identity. Although their work is transcribed in Dorothy or Maxine’s handwriting, the ranch hands who wrote for the *Gazette* are always credited with their actual names. It is likely that this was a conscious choice that, in the eyes of the Macleay girls, gave more credibility to their magazine and helped their cowpuncher audience identify the authors of contributed work. The only adult who uses pseudonyms is the girls’ teacher, Watts. While she sometimes signed her work with her initials, E.B.W., Watts also used pseudonyms such as ‘the Printer’s Devil,’ ‘The Director of Education,’ and ‘schoolmarm.’

[72] J. Randolph Cox, "Dime Novel Days: An Introduction and History," in *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism*, vol. 160, eds. Jessica Bomarito and Russel Whitaker (Detroit, MI: Gale, 2006), 221.

[73] Cox, “Dime Novel Days,” 221.

[74] Starrs, “An Inescapable Range,” 72.

Know?" (Scientific Patterns Explained)", and "C.D. Farmer" (city farmer), author of "The Improvement of Animals (Nature Article)."[75] These pseudonyms and the irony of their article titles aligns with this aspect of the mythology of ranching; with clever wordplay, the Macleay girls are gently mocking the seriousness of ranchers' claims to authority and knowledge over animals and the land.

How Western Fiction and Cowboys Fit Within the "Settler-Colonial Imaginary"

Looking closely at how the sisters selectively appropriated and adapted elements of adult-made "western" media can help to understand ranching in general and the *Rocking P Gazette* in particular as products and producers of the settler-colonial imaginary. When discussing the power of the mythology of the West and its romantic representations, Lynch writes that,

> Viewed through the prism of the settler-colonial imaginary the forever-deferred [West] suffer[s] no dust bowls, no species extinctions, no overgrazing, no declining water tables, no climate chaos, no unjust displacement or mistreatment of Native peoples. Such Wests [...] persist forever as the never-never land lying tantalizingly out beyond such travails.[76]

The settler-colonial imaginary therefore provides a romantic and almost utopian image of the West. Popular symbols of the West — like the cowboy and his horse, or cattle, for example — therefore exist as enduring parts of ranching's mythology within the Alberta settler-colonial imaginary.

Throughout its seventeen issues, the *Gazette* contains countless illustrations of cowboys who are generally portrayed one of two ways: the idealized and tough, masculine figure shown on the *Gazette*'s cover artwork, and the awkward, clumsy, and incapable cowpunchers (their father's employees) Dorothy and Maxine depicted in many of the magazine's stories and

[75] See the indexes of Sept. 1923 and Feb. 1924.
[76] Lynch, *Outback & Out West,* 9.

cartoons. The complexity of the cowboy as a symbol can be partially explained by Robert and Tamara Seiler, who emphasize that "[t]he cowboy as we know him exists on three interrelated levels: the historical, the fictional and the mythological."[77] The *Gazette* contains examples of the cowboy on all three of these levels: fictional and historical cowboys appear in stories, "Local News," and cartoons, and the mythological cowboy is represented on the covers of the magazine. The prevalence of cowboys throughout the *Gazette* suggests that as a mythological, fictional, and historical figure, the cowboy is a key part of the settler-colonial imaginary and mythology of ranching in 1920s southern Alberta.

As previously established, a key part of ranching's mythology is the perception of control, knowledge and mastery over land and animals.[78] This is implied in much of Dorothy and Maxine's artwork, which often features cowboys astride horses in dangerous situations that demonstrate their skill and command over the animal. Margaretta M. Lovell emphasizes the centrality of horses to cowboy mythology and culture, writing that "[t]he horse is the cowboy's force magnifier... Without his mount, the cowpuncher is pedestrian.[79] The art appearing on several covers of the *Gazette* exemplifies this element of the mythology of the cowboy; for example, Dorothy's portrait of a cowboy leaping onto his horse appears on the May 1924 cover.

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[77] Robert M. Seiler and Tamara P. Seiler, "The Social Construction of the Canadian Cowboy: Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Posters, 1952-1972," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 33, no. 3 (1998): 51.
[78] Starrs, "An Inescapable Range," 64.
[79] Lovell, "Dashing for America," 7.

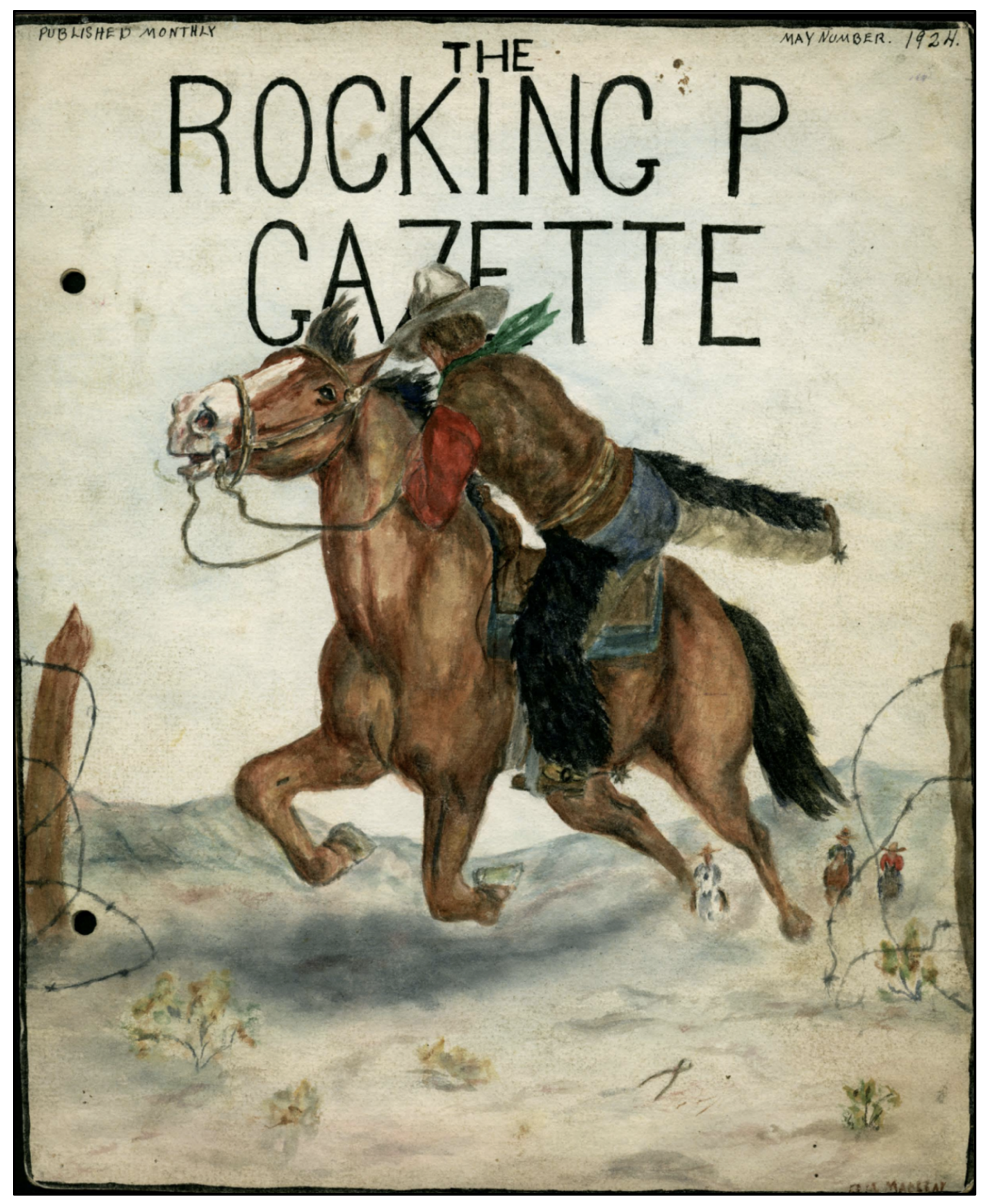

Figure 1.10: Cover of May 1924, by Dorothy. Potentially based on an adult-made western artwork.

Logically, the symbol of the cowboy is equally as connected to cattle as it is with horses. Tom Lynch emphasizes that cattle is a defining part of the settler-colonial imaginary in the North American West. As a practice and an economy, ranching normalizes the presence of cattle – a settler-imported animal – on a landscape where they would not otherwise appear, consequently

affirming settler belonging and the settler colonial agenda of possession and control of the land.[80] Cattle ranching, in other words, exemplifies Lynch's claim that place-specific belonging is brought into being not by the integration of the settler into the local ecology but rather by a wholesale replacement of that ecology.[81] Understanding the cowboy's mythological and symbolic associations to ranching adds further nuance to the image of the cowboy as an icon of settler dominance and naturalization.

Cowboys appear throughout the *Gazette* in Dorothy and Maxine's stories, which appropriate and adapt conventions from adult-made western media. Westerns, particularly dime novel stories, are a key cultural product of the settler-colonial imaginary and greatly contributed to the enduring cultural prominence of the mythological cowboy. Most of Dorothy and Maxine's storytelling fits within the category of westerns, containing cowboy characters (based on their father's employees) as their protagonists. The western genre was popularized in the United States during the late nineteenth century by dime novels containing stories of the American frontier.[82] The popularity of dime novels spread over the border, bringing with it the image of the American cowboy, which became a part of Canadian popular culture.[83]

As a genre, westerns naturalize the settler experience and affirm settler dominance and success over the land and peoples of the West. Focusing on American western children's literature, historian Brian Rouleau argues that adult and youth-made westerns played an essential role in "the rhetorical reaffirmation of U.S. settler colonialism."[84] The stories in nineteenth century adult-made periodicals "connected past deeds with present circumstance" in the hopes

[80] Lynch, *Outback & Out West*, 142-3.
[81] Lynch, *Outback & Out West*, 144.
[82] Cox, "Dime Novel Days," 220
[83] Seiler and Seiler, "The Social Construction of the Canadian Cowboy," 53.
[84] Brian Rouleau, "How the West Was Fun: Children's Literature and Frontier Mythmaking Toward the Turn of the Twentieth Century." *The Western Historical Quarterly* 51 (Spring 2020): 52.

that young "[r]eaders might import richer significance into their own lives were they linked, in some way, with the struggles and sacrifices of an original cohort of settler colonial strivers."[85] By introducing such narratives to a young audience, the authors of western fiction — such as James McCabe Jr.'s 1875 *Planting the Wilderness; or, The Pioneer Boys, a Story of Frontier Life* — aimed to encourage a sense of national identity among its settler consumers.[86] Consequently, Rouleau explains that child writers used the settler colonial vocabulary presented to them by adults to "articulate their own place in the world."[87] In essence, western stories became a way for young readers and writers to understand the world and their roles within it.

Despite their initial prolific success, the prevalence of dime novels in the United States was short-lived, and diminished with the popularization of motion pictures; most publications did not produce new content after 1920.[88] In his history of dime novels, J. Randolph Cox notes that most of these western stories were marketed to North American boys, emphasizing their violent contents and stating somewhat condescendingly: "[i]t is not known whether girls really read them — perhaps after their brothers had finished with them."[89] Dorothy and Maxine's appropriation of the stories, tropes and themes of western dime novels in the *Gazette*'s fiction appears to prove otherwise.

Writing the Ranches into Western Mythology and Cowboy Culture

While it is impossible to know exactly what print media Dorothy and Maxine consumed, their written work often parallels dime novels, suggesting that the girls appropriated and

[85] Rouleau, "How the West Was Fun," 53.
[86] Rouleau, "How the West Was Fun," 56-7.
[87] Rouleau, "How the West Was Fun," 69.
[88] Cox, "Dime Novel Days," 224.
[89] Cox, "Dime Novel Days," 224.

reimagined themes, character types and plotlines from these periodicals. Novelist John G. G. Cawelti explains that as a genre, “many westerns employ revenge stories, while others emphasize the action of chase and pursuit, or conflicts between groups such as pioneers vs. Indians, or ranchers vs. farmers.”[90] Several of the fictional stories seen in the *Gazette* follow these same tropes, featuring one or two cowboy protagonists based on the Macleay family’s ranch hands. “Thirsty for Blood,” authored by fifteen-year-old Dorothy in 1924, appropriates some of these dime novel conventions.[91] At twelve pages long, this story mirrors numerous elements that appear in what Cawelti calls the “western formula”— shoot-outs, outlaws, horseback chases, and frontier towns.[92] After entering a shooting contest in a nearby town, cowboy Val accidentally kills a man, sending him and his partner, Tex, fleeing from the law.

> “Shoot!”, hollered a puncher at the back.
>
> Then Val took a quick aim, and let fly at the picture.
>
> “Lordy, lordy, you’ve killed him!” shouted Tex jumping up and down.
>
> Val turned pale as he suddenly saw the man who had been nailing up the [sheriff’s picture], stagger backward, grab his back, then with a crash fall to the ground.
>
> “Run, Val, run! The sheriff will soon be after you!” shouted the boys.
>
> Val hesitated, then took to his heels, jumped on his horse, and was away with Tex close behind. On he rode, stopping for nothing, except to rest his horse and for sleep.
>
> [...]
>
> Tex jumped off his horse and led him into the brush, then he and Val climbed into a tree and waited for the sheriff, who soon came up, got off and entered the house. Val slipped down and ran to the window, where he saw the sheriff upset the chairs, look under the bed, behind the door and stove, then at last pick up his gun, pull a bullet out of his pocket and try to fit it into the gun.

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[90] John G. G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 193.
[91] Dorothy Macleay, “Thirsty for Blood,” May 1924, 21-33.
[92] Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance Formula* Stories, 6.

> Val knew that the bullet was the one he put into the man at Pine Gap but, the gun he had shot with was in his hand. Just then the sheriff stuck his head out of the door and saw Val.
>
> Then from the tree tops came a loud report and the sheriff grabbed his arm. Val saw that his left wrist was broken so, to put him out of his pain, he would try his luck at shooting him. So he pulled the trigger and at the same time Tex shot again and the two bullets entered the sheriff at once.
>
> Tex hurried down from the tree and rushed to Val who was standing over the sheriff. One bullet had gone through his heart and one through his head.
>
> "Well, I think it's about time we were leaving for the border," said Tex, "You've shot one and a half men, and I shot the other half so I think we've done pretty well."
>
> "You're right, Tex, and we will probably shoot more before we're finished," said Val laughing.[93]

After further encounters with the law and several more men shot, the cowboys Val and Tex leave the American West to retire on the Rocking P ranch. In the process of replicating dime novel conventions, this story exemplifies what education scholar Cassie J. Brownell calls "play(giarism)," meaning children's intertextual reinterpretation and appropriation of plots, settings, and characters from popular media.[94] Dorothy appropriated the setting of her story (a frontier town), the plot (sheriff versus outlaws) and character types from western fiction. This demonstrates her interest and engagement with this form of media; and her adaptation of it simultaneously demonstrates creative practice and adherence to writing conventions as modelled by dime novels.[95]

A 1925 story by fourteen-year-old Maxine called "Certain Death" also demonstrates Brownell's "play(giarism)" as it appropriates western and dime novel tropes, setting, and

[93] Dorothy Macleay, "Thirsty for Blood," May 1924, 24-28.
[94] Cassie J. Brownell, "Creative Language Play(giarism) in the Elementary English Language Arts Classroom," *Language Arts* 95, no. 4 (2018): 219.
[95] Brownell, "Creative Language Play(giarism)," 225.

character types. Just like in Dorothy's "Thirsty for Blood," Maxine's story draws its characters' names and personalities from the young male ranch hands employed by the Macleay family.

> Bang! Smoke curled over the head of the bad man. Frank Van Eden better known as Cyclone, had hit his mark with a dead aim, and had kept his title of the crack-shot of Mosquito Creek. He smiled a hard, cruel crooked, blood-thirsty smile. He had avenged himself on his deadly enemy, who now lay dead at his feet.
>
> "Wal, boys, so long, I reckon I'll be leavin," said Cyclone and began to back for the door, covering his enemies with two six-shooters as he went. Just as he about reached the door, he saw through the mirror at the end of the room, the door slowly open and the eagle eyes of Sheriff Frank Sharp peered around the crack.
>
> "Hands up. I've got you covered," croaked the Sheriff's razor-like voice.
>
> Quicker than Tex could chew a "plug of tobacc," Cyclone shot the lamps out and, as his guns roared he sprang like a mountain lion to one side and with one leap, had swung down behind the bar. Lead flew thick and fast. Blood ran. Men yelled and died. Sheriff Sharp fired his pistols eight ties at the bar and six times Cyclone lost some of his anatomy. Men fired blindly. Friends fought friends.
>
> "Get a light," yelled Tex, "I can't find my snoose [tobacco pouches] anywhere."
>
> Cyclone laughed loudly and nearly lost his scalp, as lead stung his hard, cruel face. By this time he had crawled on his hands and knees to the bar. He must make a get away soon or all would be lost.
>
> "Now, if Blake was only here to tell me what to do!" muttered the outlaw. Just by his side was a quarter empty rum barrel and as quietly as a panther he removed the lid and sprang in. The rum rose around his legs. It reminded him of an old experience. He smiled and wondered how many barrels he had made away with since that time.
>
> Just then a light was lit and everyone helped the wounded men, while Sheriff Sharp and his posse searched the old saloon.
>
> In a few minutes Blake walked in and sauntered over and sat down on the rum-keg while Tex told him the whole story. Shortly afterwards Tex walked away and Blake, picking up a glass, lifted the lid from the rum barrel and looked in, in the act of getting a glass full of his favourite beverage.
>
> "Well, by Gravy," he muttered under his breath, and winking his eye he put the cover back and sat down again.

Sharp paced over and said, “V. Blake, I need you to help me run down the worst criminal in Alberty, and I hereby pin this tin start on your chest as under deputy Sheriff of this Province.”

“Say, now, I don’t hanker to become no Sheriff,” said Blake.

Just then, Charlie Walters, Jesse, Ted and a few others sauntered in through the swinging doors. Ted had heard the news and had brought his rope with him, and, in preparation for what was to follow, swung it up over the beam and tied it securely, making a noose at the swinging end. The barrel shook and shivered. Cyclone was losing his iron nerve. Sheriff Sharp took a chair and stood up on it and said, “If any of you fellars know the where abouts of Cyclone alias Trouble, it is your duty as a law-abidin’ citizen to tell me his hidin’ place. The Province offers $1000. dead or alive for the feller, so he’s worth your chance.”

“Well, $1000. would help me buy “tobbacc” and a few head of broncs, and help me out in a poker game,” figured Blake out loud, “I reckon he ain’t worth the price so, good-bye, Cyclone.”

With this he lifted the lid off the barrel covered Cyclone with his famous horse-pistol and called to the Sheriff to come and get his prisoner and give him the cash. Cyclone decided to make a last desperate chance for his life when —

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“Hey, wake up, you big galoot,” yelled Blake, “you’ve been rarin’ around in that bed for the last half hour, making more noise than your friends in the pig-yard.”[96]

Maxine’s story “Certain Death” appropriates conventions seen in cowboy dime novels and western fiction: the setting of a saloon, conflict between outlaws and a sheriff, and cowboys being recruited to uphold the law.[97] As another example of “play(giarism)”, Maxine’s story shows the intertextuality of dime novels; furthermore, it affirms Brownell’s observation that the appropriation of popular media in children’s written work allows them to “draw on their lived histories and participations—whether real or imagined [as] another strategy toward developing as a writer.”[98]

[96] Maxine Macleay, “Certain Death,” Apr. 1925, 61-65. See also Dorothy Macleay, “Thirsty for Blood,” May 1924, 21-33. Both stories are based on ranch hands employed by the Macleays with the same names as their characters.
[97] Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance Formula Stories,* 6.
[98] Brownell, “Creative Language Play(giarism),” 225.

For Dorothy and Maxine, writing “Certain Death” and “Thirsty for Blood” also allowed them to write their family’s ranches into the mythology of the West by giving fictional backstories to their father’s employed cowpunchers. As a form of creative expression and mythmaking, these stories exemplify the main aspect of western stories that made them so popular among a young audience: escapism from the complexities of gender, age, and class-based power dynamics. Cawelti argues that “the western developed primarily as a form of adolescent escapism, complete with simple moral conflicts and stereotyped characters and situations.”[99] By engaging with the “mythical aura” of the West it appeared in media like dime novels, young people like Dorothy and Maxine made the “Wild West [...] the locus of an adolescent dream society without the complex institutions and restrictions on impulsive freedom.”[100] In this way, reading, engaging with and appropriating western stories could be an empowering practice for young writers. Contradicting Cox’s argument that nineteenth and early twentieth girls were uninterested by western cowboy stories, Dorothy and Maxine’s work proves that girls were, in fact, consumers and producers of this genre of print media.[101]

Conclusion

As a part of the longer tradition of girls’ media making and publishing, Dorothy and Maxine’s magazine gave them the opportunity to express themselves independent of gender and age-based behaviour conventions that they might have experienced as 1920s teenage Canadian girls. Conceptualizing the Macleay sisters’ artistic and written work within the framework of interpretive reproduction shows us that they appropriated, adapted, and engaged with adult-made

[99] Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance Formula Stories,* 211.
[100] Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance Formula Stories,* 21.
[101] Cox, “Dime Novel Days,” 224.

media in the process of creating their own unique culture and contribution to southern Alberta's ranching's mythology. The covers of the *Gazette* show that Dorothy and Maxine reproduced and produced stereotypical depictions and silences on Indigenous peoples and cultures; this demonstrates that the *Gazette* is a source that was both a product and a producer of early twentieth century Canadian settler colonialism. As a space and place shaped by mythology, Cawelti describes the West as a setting "in which transcendent heroes, disguises, and perilous scrapes could be more believably generated because it had the quality of romantic distance."[102] Exercising authority not often associated with 1920s Canadian girls, the Macleay sisters' imaginative appropriation and engagement with cowboy culture, western artwork, plotlines and symbols made their family's ranches and ranch hands into mythological figures and spaces that contributed to the naturalization of Canadian settlers and the southern Alberta settler-colonial imaginary.

As a mythological, historical, or cultural symbol, the cowboy was a central figure in the teenage Dorothy and Maxine's magazine and their representation of ranching. Lovell elaborates on the historical cowboy, writing that the "cowboy's identity was entwined in a world of peers in the bunkhouse and horses in the corral. Women (and the domesticity they represented) were irrelevant in the cowboy myth except, rarely, as the occasion for rescue and heroics."[103] The following chapter challenges this interpretation of the cowboy, examining how Dorothy and Maxine Macleay used their authority as young writers and publishers to subvert ideals of masculinity and power in their written work that focuses on their family's employed ranch hands.

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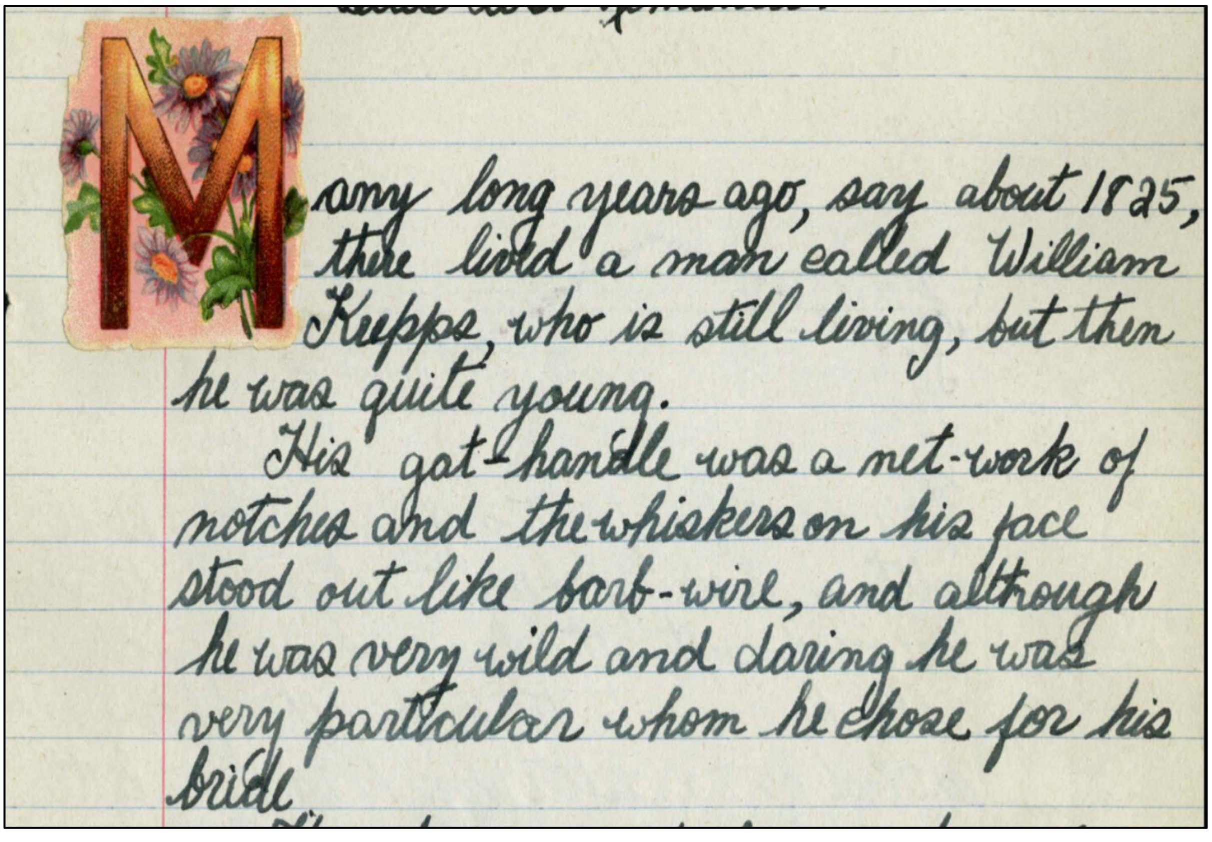
[102] Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance Formula Stories,* 213.
[103] Lovell, "Dashing for America," 5.

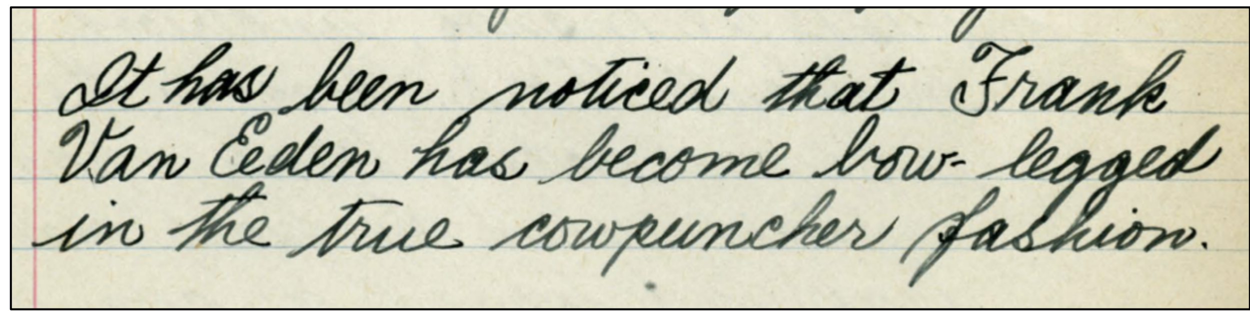
CHAPTER 2:
RANCH HANDS AND THE GAZE OF TEENAGE GIRLS



Many long years ago, say about 1825, there lived a man called William Krepps, who is still living, but then he was quite young.

His gat-handle was a net-work of notches and the whiskers on his face stood out like barb-wire, and although he was very wild and daring he was very particular whom he chose for his bride

Figure 2.1: Dorothy's description of employee Bill Krepps in her story, "Bill's Lost Romances". Dorothy Macleay. Jan. 1925, 49.



It has been noticed that Frank Van Eeden has become bow-legged in the true cowpuncher fashion.

Figure 2.2: Maxine points out employee Frank Van Eden's bowlegs. Maxine Macleay, Mar. 1925, 4.

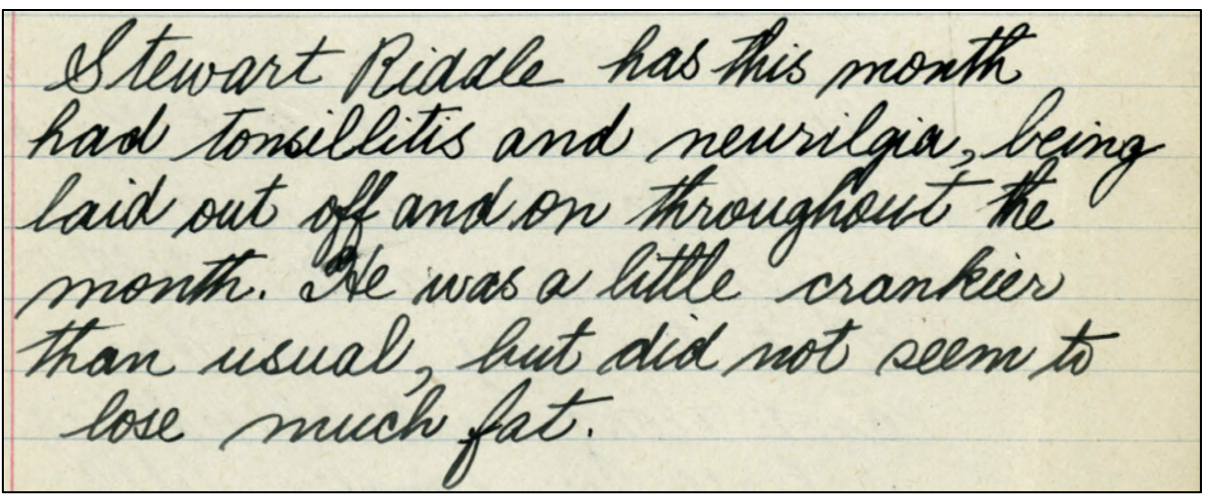

Stewart Riddle has this month had tonsillitis and neurilgia, being laid out off and on throughout the month. He was a little crankier than usual, but did not seem to lose much fat.

Figure 2.3: Maxine notes the Bar S foreman’s illness and recovery. Maxine Macleay, Mar. 1925, 2.

The examples above are just a few of Dorothy and Maxine Macleay’s observations of the ranch hands employed by their family in the “Local News” section and stories of the *Rocking P Gazette*. Each issue of the *Gazette* painted a vibrant picture of the men who lived and worked on the Rocking P and Bar S ranches, and this chapter therefore will examine (1) the Macleay family’s ranch hands and how these men wrote about each other, and (2) how the teenage Macleay sisters wrote about and for them. Dorothy and Maxine’s perspectives as adolescent girls — aged fourteen and twelve respectively in 1923 — permeate the magazine, demonstrating intense attention to detail through observation, vivid imagination, and their subversion of the male gaze. The portrayal of the ranch hands in the *Gazette* is a result of a class-based power dynamic that provided the Macleay girls authority to use the images of their father’s employees as they wished. In doing so, the sisters contradicted the men’s expressions of desirable masculinity by subverting popular media tropes and gendered advertising, demonstrating their knowledge and understanding of age, gender, and class-based power dynamics. Before

discussing Dorothy and Maxine's work in the *Gazette*, this chapter will begin with a brief analysis of how the Macleay's ranch hands lived, worked, and identified as cowpunchers.

Ranch Hands and the *Rocking P Gazette*

A significant amount of information on the ranch hands' lives can be gained through a close reading of Dorothy and Maxine's magazine. However, while the Macleay sisters controlled the content of the *Gazette*, they were not its sole authors. Over the seventeen issues the sisters produced between 1923-1925, ranch hands on the Rocking P and Bar S contributed twenty-nine written and artistic pieces to the magazine, amounting to sixty-seven pages — or approximately five percent — of the *Gazette*'s impressive total 1,320 pages. Ranch hands did not submit work to the *Gazette* until its third issue in November 1923, with submissions becoming more frequent and numerous from March 1924 to April 1925. Unlike the Macleay girls, the ranch hands did not use pseudonyms for their work, although their contributions are often transcribed by either Dorothy or Maxine.

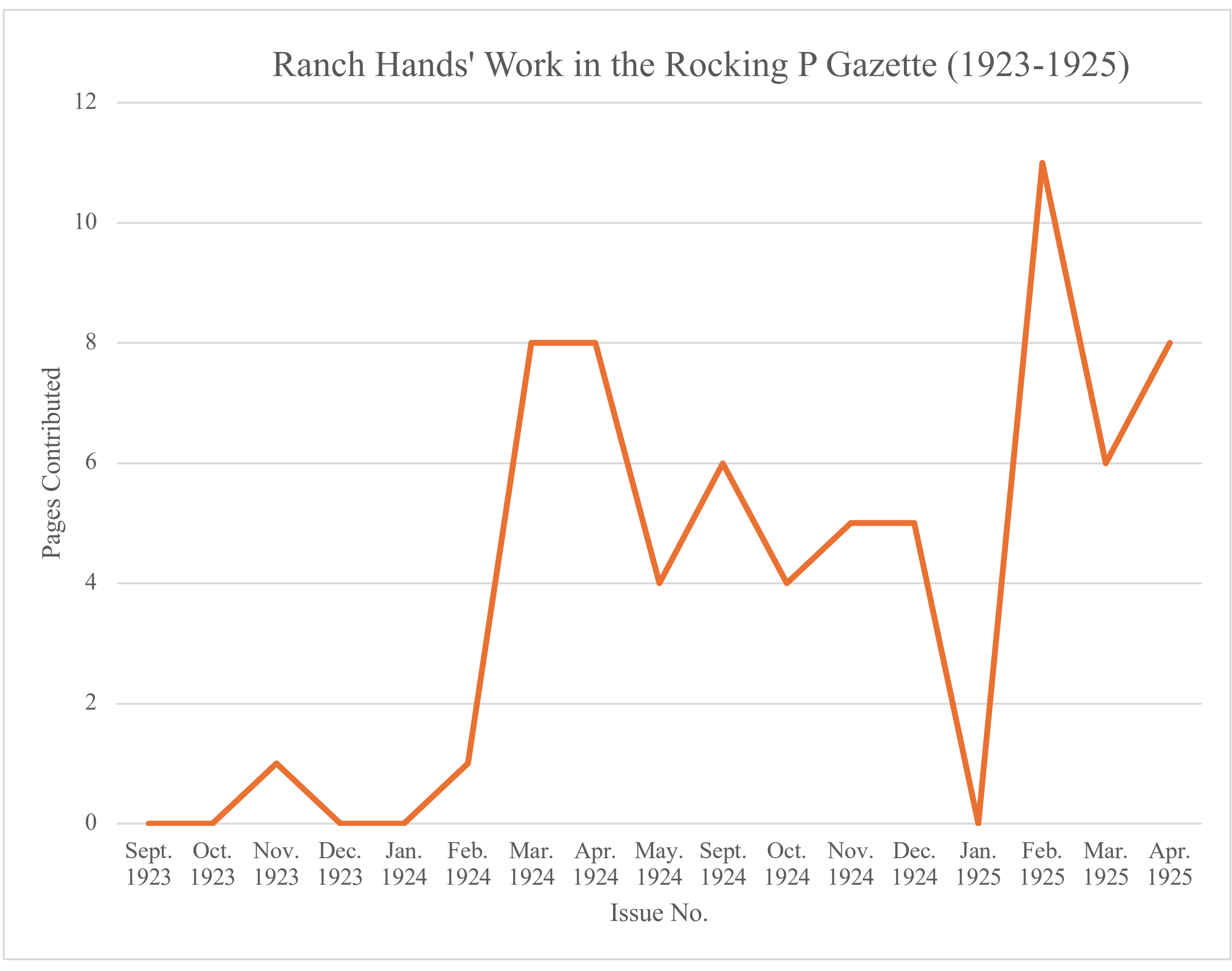


Figure 2.4: Ranch hands' contributions to the *Rocking P Gazette* between 1923-1925.

While contributing content to the *Gazette* was voluntary for ranch hands, the men do not seem to have had a choice about being represented in the magazine, and they were likely unable to control how they were depicted in the Macleay girls' own written and artistic work. It is possible to argue that, along with writing for recreation and humour, submitting their own writing to the *Gazette* was a way for the ranch hands to regain some control over their image. Even with the outside influence of the ranch hands and their unique culture, the perspectives of teenage girls permeate the *Gazette*, demonstrating the agency and power Dorothy and Maxine had over its creation and content.

As regular contributors to the magazine and its intended audience, ranch hands played an essential role in shaping the *Rocking P Gazette*. A significant portion of the workforce on the Macleay ranches consisted of young men, with several of them being only ten years older than the teenage Dorothy and Maxine Macleay. The 1921 census, for example, shows that Val Blake — a labourer — was twenty-three years old, making him twenty-five when the first issue of the *Rocking P Gazette* was published in 1923.[1] In 1921, the Macleays' youngest employees were Thomas "Tom" McKinnon, Earl Stingel, and Colin Jones at twenty years of age, and the oldest labourer at the time was William "Bill" Krepps, aged sixty-one.[2] On average, the other listed employees on this census were between twenty-seven to forty-four years old during the years the *Gazette* was produced. In many cases the Macleay girls were not much younger than their father's youngest employees, and this would likely have shaped how they viewed, interacted with, and represented them.

Bunkhouse Living and Ranch Work

The men employed by the Macleay family lived and worked in an environment that was considerably different from urban and industrial labour in 1920s Canada. A significant number of men were consistently employed by the Macleays; in 1920, seventy-three men were included on the regular payroll.[3] The relative isolation of the Rocking P and Bar S ranches required staff

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[1] Library and Archives Canada, *Form 1. Sixth Census of Canada, 1921. Alberta District No. 8. Enumeration Sub-District No. 22 in L I Dist no 130. Page 1*, 1921 Canadian Census, accessed March 6, 2025, http://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.redirect?app=census&id=62800671&lang=eng&ecopy=e002861826, line 43.
[2] Library and Archives Canada. *Form 1. Sixth Census of Canada, 1921. Alberta District No. 8. Enumeration Sub-District No. 27 in Loc. Imp. Dist. #160. Page 6,* lines 45-47.
[3] Clay Chattaway and Warren Elofson, *Rocking P Ranch and the Second Cattle Frontier in Western Canada* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2019), 63.
Clay Chattaway goes into more detail on the ranch hands in his biographical text on Roderick Macleay, writing that in 1924: "The Home Place [Rocking P] crew consisted of Rod [Macleay], Stewart [Riddle], Bill Krepps, Tex Smith, Clem Henson, Tom McKinnon and sometimes Bob [Robert] Raynor while Charlie Lung the cook, Ethel Watts the

to live on site in bunkhouses, as commuting from nearby towns or hamlets was impractical considering factors such as distance and seasonally poor weather conditions. These bunkhouses are portrayed in cartoons by Dorothy and Maxine as sparse living quarters with beds and limited room for recreation such as playing instruments or card games, and dancing.

Figure 2.5: Some cowpunchers playing music in a Bar S bunkhouse. Maxine Macleay, May 1924, 10.

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teacher, Laura [Macleay] and the girls completed the 12 person roster. The Bar S crew consisted of a married couple, Mr. & Mrs. Morris, Ed Volt, James [Jim] Hendrie, Herb Thurber, Dunc Comrie, Frank Van Eden and sometimes Hugh Jenkins and Bob Raynor. Ralph Robertson, Bill Young, Jimmy and Ralph MacDonald came in late April to join the farming crew... Later in the year Henry Hamilton, George Peddie, Jack Flowers, and Ed Orvis helped make up the Bar S harvest crew of seventeen. [...] Charlie and Lela Walters with their son Jessie Walters and his wife Ernestine were at the Calf Camp. Mr. & Mrs. Dick Calkins, Val Blake, Wick Le Master, Bill Livingston, Dan Drumheller and sometimes Shorty Ball were on the Willow Creek TL [ranch]. Some were permanent at one place or another, but some moved back and forth between places depending on what was happening and where they were most needed. There were nearly 40 people needed to run the foothills operations and that does not include Indians like Erza [Lefthand] and his family who cut 6,000 willow posts and fenced all summer and then stooked all fall, or the crew on the Red Deer [River] and the White Mud [River] that probably added another dozen men to the payroll. Neither does it count an occasional lawyer or the men on seasonal contract crews, such as those run by Howard McRae, the McCloskeys and Peter Comrie, haying and farming, which could easily double that number" (Clay Chattaway, *Roderick R. Macleay: A Pioneer's Life* (Nanton: The Bar S Ranch, 2023), 227).

Figure 2.6: Ranch hands playing poker in the bunkhouse. Dorothy Macleay, Feb. 1925, 12.

The *Gazette* does not provide an exact number of men residing in each bunkhouse, and it does not mention how many bunkhouses existed on the Rocking P and the Bar S ranches. Based on the sisters' cartoons, however, it is reasonable to infer that the bunkhouses lacked privacy, which resulted in frequent social interaction between the men especially after working hours. Dorothy and Maxine's portrayals of the bunkhouses also suggest the girls' familiarity with these spaces, which would have been relatively close to where they lived on the Rocking P. As demonstrated by cartoons and "Local News" reports in the *Gazette*, the sisters regularly worked

alongside their father's employees doing tasks such as moving and sorting cattle.[4] These conditions would have allowed the girls to form their own relationships with the ranch hands, which provided a foundation for the characters and illustrations in their magazine.

Seasonal patterns of land and cattle management resulted in ranch hands having to travel with the Macleay's livestock, spending long periods of time with their peers in an isolated environment as well as in close proximity while working on the home ranch. These extended periods of travel and cohabitation would have likely led to the development of strong interpersonal bonds between the men. For example, a reappearing trend in the *Gazette* is the close relationship between two specific cowpunchers: "Val Blake and his satellite Tex Smith."[5] The two men appear in Dorothy and Maxine's stories as (often literal) partners in crime, and are frequently pictured together in art.

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[4] Evidence of the sisters working alongside various employees can most often be found in the "Local News" section of the *Gazette.* The two following examples describe moving and weaning cattle: "Jan. 30th was a very hard day for Clem [Henson], Max and her "pard" [Dorothy]. They worked swift and fast at the Calf Camp, separating the fat calves from the beef calves" (Maxine Macleay, Jan. 1924, 5); "The calves from Section thirteen were weened on October 26th, by Roderick Macleay, Val Blake, Tex Smith, George Peddie, Max and her "pard" [Dorothy]. The Calves were put in the pen at the Calf Camp" (Maxine Macleay, Oct. 1924, 7).
[5] Dorothy Macleay, ""Blake and Smith" Life Portraits," March 1924, 32.

Figure 2.7: Cowpunchers Tex Smith and Val Blake. Dorothy Macleay, Mar. 1924, 32.

The *Gazette* represented these men as sharing a close friendship that had likely developed during their travel between cattle camps. In October 1924, Maxine announced the return of

Smith and Blake from the forestry reserve or the foothills that backed the Macleay's ranches, writing:

> Tex Smith has arrived back from the mountains, down to where it is civilized. He has got a wild look in his eyes and is getting pretty tough. He chews lots of tabacco and "smuss", and they say he was eating grass up in the mountains. We all know he was howling like a coyote when he came back.
>
> Val Blake has also got back from the mountains, and he has been doing great work since he arrived amongst the boys. He has been getting a little of his own back at the good-old game. You all know Blake left quite a wad behind him when he went away cow-punching. We heard it was something around a couple thousand.[6]

This excerpt hints at the isolation of work away from the home ranches "amongst the boys". Though the *Gazette* does not tell us about the material conditions in which the men lived in the mountains or the foothills, they would have likely stayed in close quarters like their residences on the Bar S and Rocking P.

The isolated geography and seasonal mobility of ranch work played a significant role in the formation of a masculine homosocial culture among the Macleay's employees. As defined by historian Adele Perry, homosocial culture can be described as the development and expression of relationships between individuals of the same gender. In the case of the Rocking P and Bar S ranches, this culture was shaped by implicit ideals of gender, heteronormativity, whiteness, and the assumption of male power in a colonial setting.[7] Writing about colonial British Columbia, Perry notes that rural locales demographically dominated by white settler men were more likely to see the formation of homosocial relationships, as convenience and necessity often made it more practical for multiple men to reside together.[8] Due to their proximity during and after working hours, the cowpunchers of the Rocking P and Bar S ranches formed a unique

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[6] Maxine Macleay, "Local News," Oct 1924, 8-9.
[7] Adele Perry, *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto, Buffalo & London ON: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 20.
[8] Perry, *Edge of Empire,* 30.

homosocial culture and community that extended beyond work hours into the bunkhouse and onto the pages of the *Rocking P Gazette*.

Bunkhouse Recreation and Culture

In their book about the Macleay family and the *Gazette*, Chattaway and Elofson note that "boredom among men confined to the same close quarters night after night [was] important in stimulating entertainment forms" such as singing, dancing, storytelling, and gambling.[9] Drinking was one of the most popular and accessible forms of entertainment available, and it accompanied many (if not all) of the above recreational activities. As Perry has written about the masculine settler culture of nineteenth-century British Columbia, drinking "was something of a colonial pastime... Drink, rather than the church or the domestic, seemed to sit at the centre of colonial society."[10]

References to home brewing and drinking frequently appear in the *Gazette*, both in "Local News" reports and in the ranch hands' submissions to the magazine. In one instance, Frank Van Eden describes how another labourer, Bill Kreps, was sent to Calgary by "the thirsty ones from the Bar S" to "investigate the delay in sending the hooch. [...] All hands waited anxiously for the return of the freighters hoping they would bring the whiskey."[11] On this topic, there appears to be little difference between Perry's case study of British Columbia and the Macleay's ranches; drinking was an important element of masculine homosocial culture and recreation in these two settler contexts. Ranch hand Clem Henson was notorious for his drinking practices: "[w]hen he couldn't get to town, Clem would settle for vanilla extract, linament [sic]

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[9] Chattaway and Elofson, *Rocking P Ranch*, 125.
[10] Perry, *On the Edge of Empire*, 40.
[11] Frank Van Eden, "Bar S Locals," Feb. 1925, 9.

or his own brand of home-brew made from grain or potatoes. When his employer noticed the chickens stepping high and travelling in circles, he would know that Clem had just drawn off a batch and had fed the evidence to the chickens!"[12] The documentation of drinking and home-brewing in the *Gazette* demonstrate that it was a prominent part of the ranch hands' lives and recreation.[13]

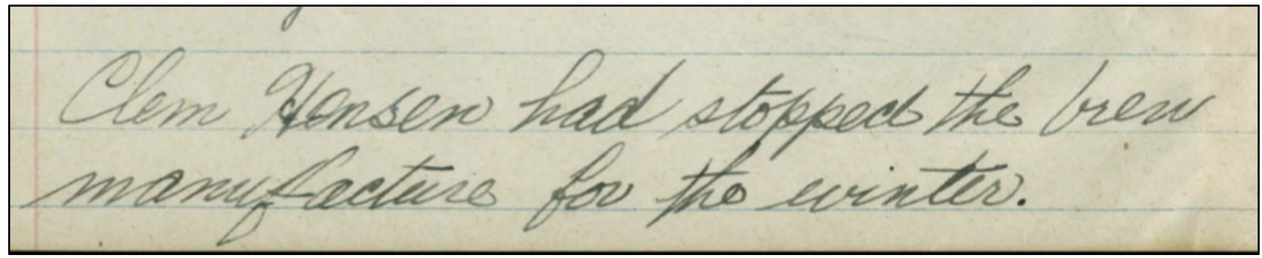
Clem Hensen had stopped the brew manufacture for the winter.

Figure 2.8: A "Local News" notice that Clem Henson had stopped brewing during the winter. Maxine Macleay, Oct. 1923, 4.

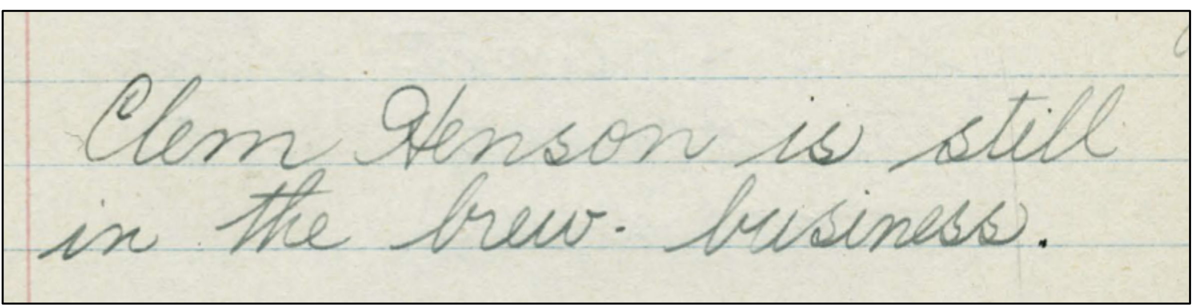
Clem Henson is still in the brew business.

Figure 2.9: In the spring, the "Local News" reports that Henson was once again home-brewing. Maxine Macleay, Mar. 1924, 4.

The writing submitted to the *Gazette* also shows that they formed close interpersonal bonds and enjoyed shared leisure activities that extended outside working hours. Ranch hand Frank Van Eden's poetic description of an evening in the Bar S bunkhouse, for example, details some

[12] *Mosquito Creek Roundup: Nanton-Parkland* (Nanton: Nanton and District Historical Society, 1975), 105.
[13] Based on Dorothy and Maxine's commentary in the *Gazette,* it is likely that they witnessed the ranch hands' drinking habits firsthand in addition to hearing about it from these adults. The ranch hands occasionally wrote about alcohol and drinking in their contributions to the *Gazette*; see for example Robert Raynor, "Selection from Mother Goose according to R.R.- J.P.," Mar. 1925, 59-60.

of his coworkers' quirks, mannerisms, and personalities as they entertained themselves with music and dancing.

When our daily toils are over
And our evening chores are done
We gather in the Bunk house
To have a little fun.

First we crave a little music
And Highland Jim is called upon
To give us a lively time
On his accordion.

Then no sooner has Jim started
Than Smokey [Val Blake's dog] enters in.
We know that he can howl,
But he thinks that he can sing.

But this gets Blake's Irish up,
For, picking up a boot,
"Shut up, you big galoot," he says,
"Or I'll slap your snout."

After listening to Jim's music,
For an hour or more,
We practice acrobatics
In the middle of the floor.

Blake stands on his hands and knees,
Tex upon his head,
While Ted turns somer saults
Over the old bedstead.

But when a poker game is started
Jim and I hit the hay instead
For we learnt through bitter experience
That we were safer when in bed.[14]

[14] Frank Van Eden, "Bar S Nights," Apr. 1925, 73-5.

Figure 2.10: From left to right: Jim Hendrie, Smokey the dog, Val Blake, and Frank Van Eden. Dorothy Macleay, Apr. 1925, 73.

In summary, the proximity of the ranch hands to one another contributed to a tight-knit masculine homosocial culture that was portrayed in the *Rocking P Gazette* by the ranch hands themselves and the Macleay sisters. Outside of working hours, the group of cowpunchers — whose ages typically ranged between mid-twenties and early forties — gambled, drank, and danced with each other in on-site bunkhouses. The relatively young age of the ranch hands and their frequent contact with their boss's teenage daughters contributed towards how they portrayed themselves in the *Gazette*, and how Dorothy and Maxine wrote about them. The shared

culture of the ranch hands is expressed in their written contributions, which contain themes intrinsically connected to their material living conditions and labour.

In humorous poems and fictional stories, the ranch hands of the Rocking P and Bar S ranches show that their sense of identity and belonging in their community was tied to their perception of ideal masculinity and their employment as cowpunchers.[15] Ranch hands' contributions to the *Gazette* demonstrate some key traits that they valued and identified with as a distinct social group: physical and psychological resilience and persistence against nature and weather, the ability to perform intense physical labour, and a sense of brotherhood with their fellow workers.[16] These traits and their connotations of masculinity can be understood as a part of the ideology, community, and mythology of ranching and the settler-colonial imaginary as discussed in the previous chapter; ideal masculinity placed ranch hands within the mythological West, which Tom Lynch identifies as a space that has been culturally-coded as masculine.[17] As both consumers and producers of the *Gazette*'s cowboy culture, the ranch hands played an

[15]A good example of this is "While There's Life There's Hope," authored by Frank Van Eden (Feb. 1925, 23-24). At eight pages long, this is the longest submission made by a ranch hand to an issue of the *Gazette*; the poem seems to describe Van Eden's search for identity and community, tying his expectations of social mobility, freedom, and violence to imagery of the Rocky Mountains and prairies. The poem emphasizes Van Eden's initial differences from his new coworkers, who are represented as being significantly more violent, brash, and conventionally masculine than he was as a newcomer to ranching. Despite these differences, the poem ends with Van Eden's hope that he will transform into a similar figure, consequently assimilating himself into their tight-knit community and masculine cowboy culture. As Van Eden *was* a ranch hand at the time of the poem's publication, he had evidently been successful at joining this community.

[16] One such example is Tom McKinnon's, "Alabama Jack," (Nov. 1924, 45-7). In this poem, the titular character "Jack Flowers" fails to adapt to the harsh winter conditions of Alberta and finds himself disappointed with the realities of ranch work, which "wasn't [like] what he had read in a book." Jack is contrasted with the character of a seasoned farmer, "Old Bob," who teases him for his previous 'easier' lifestyle. The poem ends with Jack deciding that ranching was not for him, caving to pressure from the other workers who encouraged him to give up ranching. It may also suggest a clear delineation between the ranch hands and other men who worked in different industries; the ranch hands might have felt superior to other workers due to the difficulty, long hours, and harsh environmental conditions of their chosen profession. McKinnon further emphasizes the character's differences from the ranch hands by choosing the last name "Flowers," which carries connotations of femininity, beauty and gentleness — both traits that were not associated with the tough, rugged and strong, mythological cowboy that the Rocking P cowpunchers strove to emulate. It is possible that this poem is based on a seasonal Bar S worker by the same name, who was employed that year to help with the harvest (Chattaway, *Roderick R. Macleay*, 227).

[17] Lynch, *Outback & Out West,* 14.

important role in shaping the content of the Macleay girls' magazine; they were the girls' audience, but more importantly, they provided inspiration for Dorothy and Maxine's stories, cartoons, and advertisements.

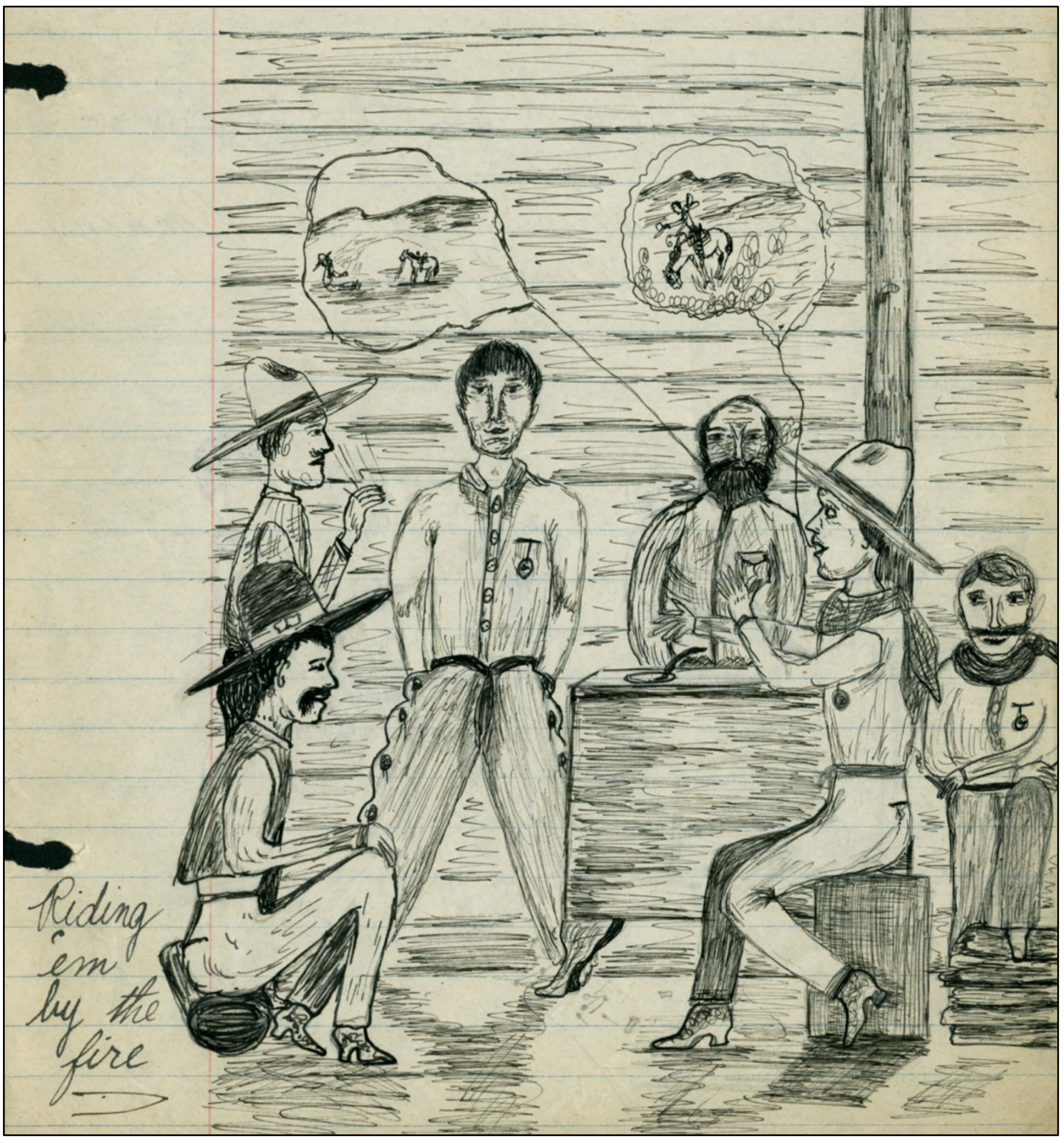

Figure 2.11: "Riding 'em by the fire." Maxine Macleay, Oct. 1924, 15.

The Gaze of Teenage Girls Upon Ranch Hands

Many of the adult-produced media genres adapted, appropriated and engaged with in the *Rocking P Gazette* demonstrate what film theorist Laura Mulvey calls the "male gaze," which describes the way that women and their image have been controlled and portrayed in cinema.[18] The use of male gaze extends beyond cinema and into print and visual media; as such, it is present in the print media consumed and then reinterpreted by the Macleay sisters. I argue that the power relationship the Macleay girls had in relation to their father's employees allowed them to invert the male gaze, resulting in content that represented the 'gaze of teenage girls.'

When applied to the ranch hands in the pages of the *Rocking P Gazette*, the gaze of teenage girls subverts the mythology of the cowboy, which idealizes traditionally masculine traits such as toughness and physical strength. Dorothy and Maxine's documentation and fictionalized portrayals of the ranch hands are evidence of their close observation and scrutiny of the men's personalities, work, recreational activities, bodies, and physical appearances. Along with meticulously recording daily events on the ranch, the girls regularly wrote fictional romances with the ranch hands as protagonists, subverting gendered power dynamics of courtship and the cowpunchers' concept of desirable masculinity in the process.

The sisters' control over the magazine as authors, artists, editors, and publishers meant that their youthful feminine gaze – which emerged from the dynamics of gender, age, and class on their family's ranches – defines much of the content of this home-made magazine. Dorothy and Maxine's work exemplifies the particular intersections between age, gender and class that shaped their lives, and shows their desire to complicate and subvert the conventional representations of masculinity and femininity that were present in contemporary cowboy culture and popular

[18] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16, no. 3 (1975): 11.

media. My analysis throughout this chapter will demonstrate how the Macleay girls and the ranch hands interpreted and represented gender, age, class, and labour within their written and artistic work, arguing that the sisters' work about and for the ranch hands is evidence of a class-based power dynamic.

The Macleay sisters used the power provided to them by their class status to subvert the ranch hands' idealized representation of cowboy culture, objectifying and emasculating characters based on their father's staff. The teenage Dorothy and Maxine spent considerable time working alongside their father's employees, and as the boss's daughters, they were able to observe, record, and imagine the ranch hands without consequence. Subverting the assumption of the relative lack of agency and power possessed by 1920s teenage Canadian girls, the sisters instead objectified the cowpunchers in their fictional works, art, and non-fictional descriptions. The Macleay sisters' representations of the ranch hands in their writing and illustrations demonstrates the power dynamic that existed between them and their father's employees; their status as the boss's daughters is what made their subversion of the male gaze possible.

The Gaze of Teenage Girls in Romances

Feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey writes that in modern cinema, the male gaze is a projection of fantasy "onto the female figure... [W]omen are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact."[19] Therefore, women characters exist to "work against the development of a story-line, to freeze the flow of action in

[19] Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 11. Although Mulvey defines the male gaze as the sexualization of women and the "female figure", I have deliberately chosen not to discuss the gaze of teenage girls in terms of its potential for the sexualization of men. This is primarily due to the lack of sexual content or overt sexualization of men in the *Gazette*. It is certainly possible that the Macleay girls could have viewed the ranch hands in this way as a part of their objectification of the men in fiction and artwork. However, with the desire to avoid inferences, my analysis of the Macleay girls' gaze does not discuss potential heterosexual attraction or sexual objectification between them and the ranch hands.

moments of erotic contemplation."[20] Mulvey's analysis demonstrates that in popular media, men hold power and dominance over the image of women; women and girls are represented or looked at, rather than representers with the power to look at others. Dorothy and Maxine's class-based power overruled the imbalances associated with gender and youth, allowing them to take the role as representers of both men and women. The male gaze affirms the "legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women."[21] This is a key difference that defines the gaze of teenage girls as seen in Dorothy and Maxine's romances; the dominance of male characters is subverted, mocked or satirized, and therefore not guaranteed.

As Barbara Fuchs writes in her history of romance novels, these texts, which became popular in the mid-nineteenth century, "are remarkably iterable: their familiarity, as variations on a basic narrative, is a large part of what makes them so appealing to readers."[22] Quoting from the Romance Writers of America (RWA), Fuchs observes that romances can primarily be defined by their plot that revolves around a love story: "[the] writer is welcome to as many subplots as she likes as long as the relationship conflict is the main story."[23] According to the RWA, romances "end in a way that makes the reader feel good [.] In a romance, the lovers who risk and struggle for each other and their relationship are rewarded with emotional justice and unconditional love."[24] The opposite can be seen in several of the Macleay sister's romances, which often end with the rejection of the male protagonist by his love interest.

[20] Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 11.
[21] Raewyn Connell, "The Social Organization of Masculinity," (2005) in *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*, *5th Edition,* eds. Carole McCann, Seung-Kyung Kim, and Emek Ergun (New York: Routledge, 2022), 195.
[22] Barbara Fuchs, *Romance* (New York & London: Routledge, 2004), 125.
[23] Fuchs, *Romance*, 124.
[24] Fuchs, *Romance*, 125.

The Macleay girls' cowboy romances, while shaped by the conventions of romance writing, were also affected by the culture of North American heterosexual courtship seen in their time. It is important to note that this culture had undergone a shift in the early 1920s, moving away from the "calling system" and towards the practice of dates and dating.[25] As Beth Bailey writes, this meant that the "distribution of control and power in courtship" was reversed; in the calling system, "courtship took place within the girl's home [...] or at entertainments largely devised and presided over by women. Dating moved courtship out of the home and into man's sphere — the world outside of the home."[26] The dating system possessed an element of economic exchange, "[b]ut what men were buying in the dating system was not just female companionship, not just entertainment—but power. Money purchased obligation; money purchased inequality; money purchased control."[27] Wealth therefore complicated the pre-established gendered power dynamic between men and women; this complication of gendered power dynamics is also represented in Dorothy and Maxine's romances that contain characters based on their family's employees.

Although the girls sometimes depicted ranch hands with idealized traits of masculinity like bravery, toughness and strength, in their fictional stories cowpunchers are frequently humiliated or humbled throughout the story's plot. While this trend displays Dorothy and Maxine's sense of humour, it is likely that this was also done intentionally to entertain the magazine's audience of ranch hands, who might have found humour in reading about their coworkers in situations that directly contradicted their own conception of ideal masculinity. Most importantly, however, such stories explicitly demonstrate the power that the Macleay sisters possessed (despite their gender and young ages) over the ranch hands' images; the girls looked at and represented the men

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[25] Beth L. Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore & London: John Hopkins University Press, 1988), 13.
[26] Bailey, *From Front Porch to Backseat,* 20.
[27] Bailey, *From Front Porch to Backseat,* 23.

however they liked, thereby taking away the men's power and increasing their own. Authored by Maxine in 1924, the following excerpt from "Snoose" describes ranch hand Tex Smith's fictional attempt to propose to a female character.

> Tex was nearing his point, and his eyes grew very dreamy and he felt anxiously in his pocket and then gave a sigh of satisfaction. It was still there. Tying his horse in the barn, he walked quickly to the house, where he was met by the girl of his dreams. Tex was cold for it was 20° below, and the girl bustled about and got a chair and helped him take his coat and overshoes off. She stoked up the stove and soon Tex was warm with heat and love.
>
> "I never thought you'd come today, Tex, it is so cold," cooed the sweet girl, blushing beautifully.
>
> Tex looked up with a smile and answered, "Did you think 20° below would keep me away? Why I'd come in a blizzard and 60°, you cunnin' dear."
>
> The girl pulled a chair up fairly close and sat down beside him. Tex then began to talk and he talked more than usual and seemed to be trying to make the fair damsel see something from his point of view. Several times she blushed and looked at the floor.
>
> Finally he made a sudden move and was soon holding her hand. We will not say what happened after that until Tex put his hand in his pocket and, being rather shy, he looked in the other direction as he handed her the small package.[28]

The above story is therefore an example of Maxine playing with the gendered and economic power dynamics of the dating system. Instead of handing the woman a ring, Smith accidently gives her a tin of tobacco pouches, or "snuss." The unnamed woman plays a pivotal role in the story's plot as she angrily rejects Smith's proposal, throws the ring worth "a good two month's wages" into the woodstove and leaves to get her revolver, which sends him running for his life.[29] The gendered power dynamic is inverted here, placing power into the woman's hands as she refuses to participate in the economic exchange of Smith's proposal.[30] This rejection of

[28] Maxine Macleay, "Snoose," Nov. 1924, 78-9.
[29] Maxine Macleay, "Snoose," 79.
[30] The woman's assumption about the ring's worth is a key aspect of the story, as immediately after Tex hands her the ring box: "The furious girl took the package, her eyes flaming, and Tex drew a sigh of relief, then a gasp of

conventional romantic plotlines is a key part of the gaze of teenage girls, as it simultaneously subverts representations and the power relations of masculinity and femininity present in nineteenth and early-twentieth century cowboy culture and popular media.

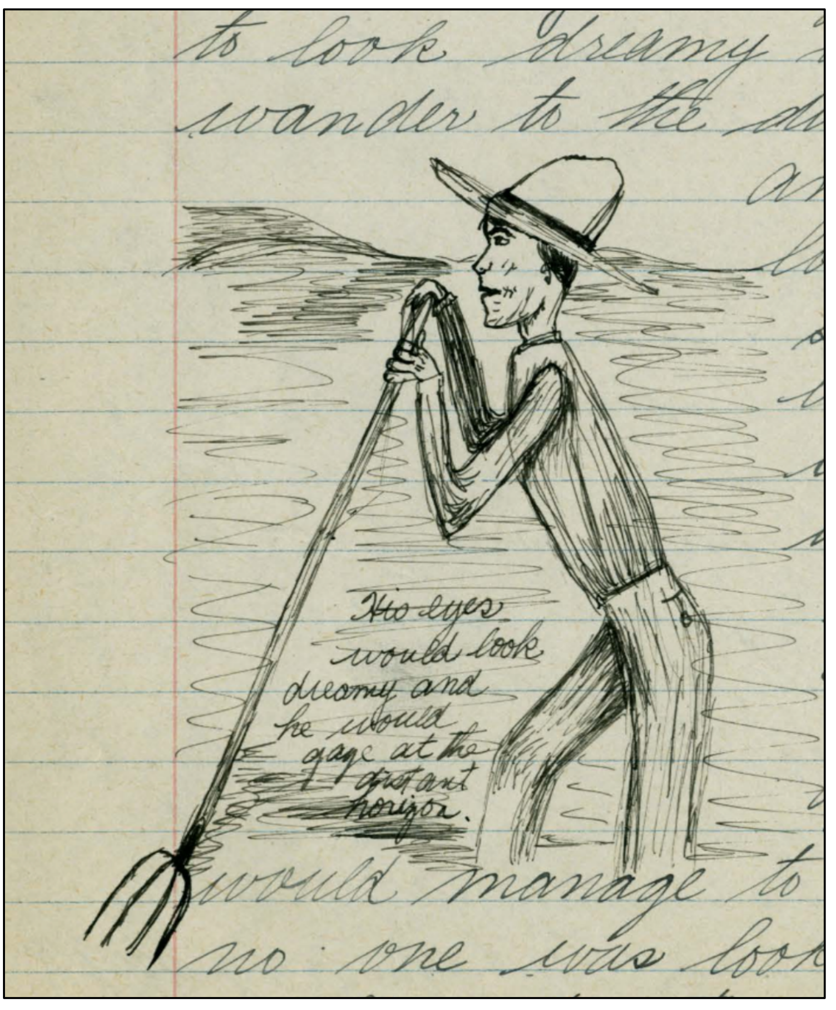


Figure 2.12: Tex Smith, deeply in love before his romantic interest throws his ring in the fire. Maxine Macleay, Nov. 1924, 73.

astonishment as he watched the fated package being thrown into the fire, a good two months' wages going up in flames. He sprang forward and pushed the girl out of the way. Then he lifted the stove lid and grabbed right into the flames with his bare hand, which was burnt badly. With a murderous yell he sprang back as his shirt sleeve caught fire. All that trouble and the ring was still in the fire,— by this time melted. Gold and diamond fell through into the ash-can and were never seen again. Tex cursed loud and long when his burning shirt burned his arm. He rushed to the drinking pail and soon the fire was out. By now Tex was raving angry with himself and the girl. "If that was a ring I threw in the stove it was probably only a 15¢ one," she muttered" (Maxine Macleay, "Snoose," 82-3).

In a discussion of the history of Westerns and dime novels, John G. Cawelti notes that "the [male] hero is usually a center of female admiration."[31] The opposite is seen in the above story, "Snoose," and in several other romances written by the Macleay girls. Their male protagonists may start out as an object of female admiration, but the sisters' plots deliberately invert this power dynamic and instead make the female character the center of male admiration. This can be observed in a story written in January 1925 by Dorothy about the approximately sixty-five-year-old ranch hand Bill Krepps. Titled "Bill's Lost Romance," the story demonstrates similar themes of the economic and gendered power dynamics of courtship and romance, with the plot revolving around Krepps's wealth and ending with his rejection by a female romantic interest.

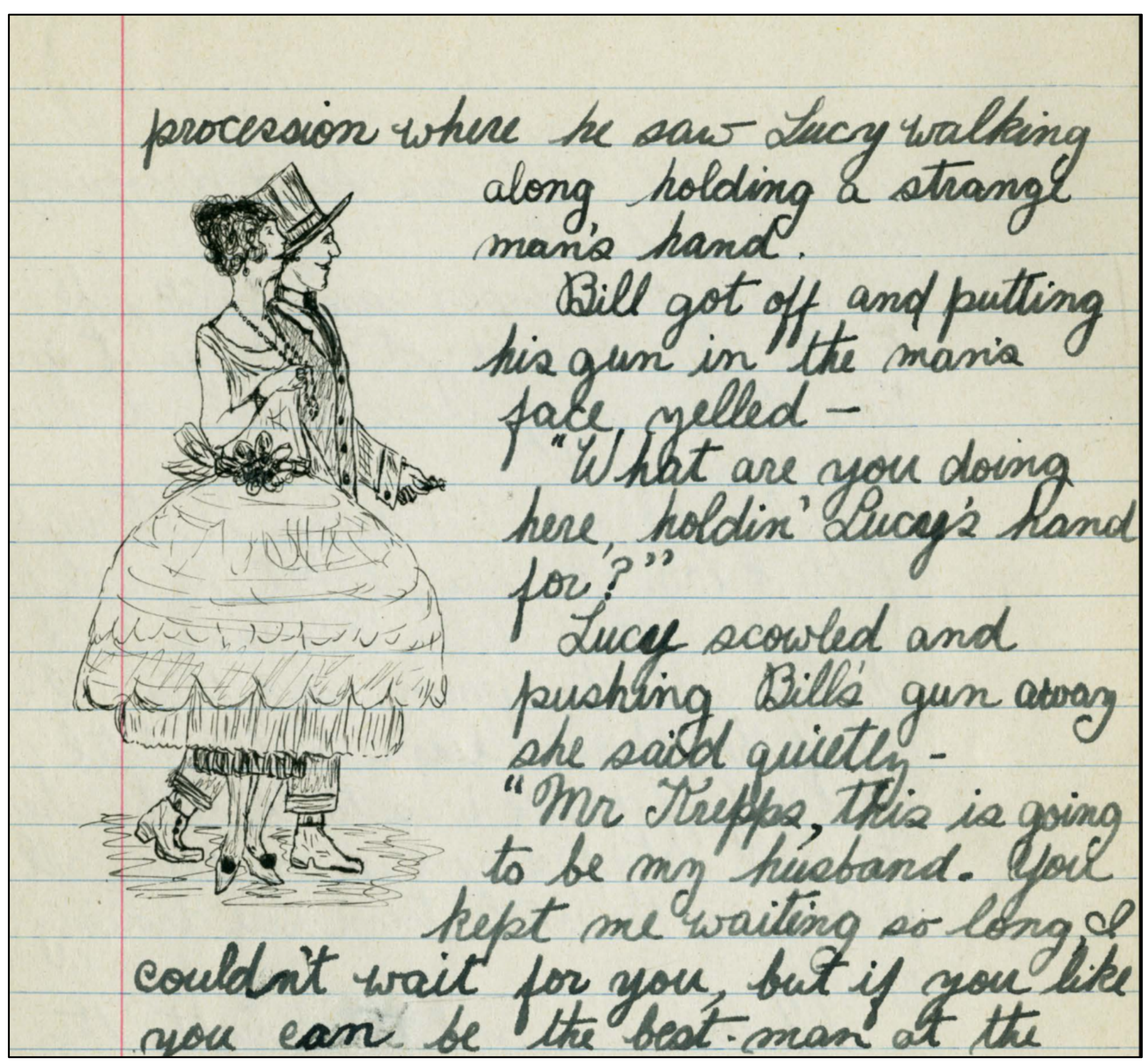
> There happened to be one whom his eye rested upon and that was Miss Lucy O'Brian, the telephone-operator. Bill visited her regularly and on one of his later visits he even advanced far enough to propose, but to this she would not agree until he had $200. in his pocket. Bill thought she was worth $200 so, gathering together his belongings, he hit out to go to work plowing, which was the only job he could find. [...]
>
> This went on for two years; then Bill, with a swelling heart, returned to his beloved with the $200 in his pocket. As he rode to town his thoughts were settled on a little ranch and a little bungalo and a little wife. But, as he rode into town, the sound of church bells made him ride faster and as he rode towards her home he saw a long procession going down the street
>
> He hurried up and getting off, asked one of the men who were following the pro-cession what it was all about.
>
> "Miss Lucy O'Brian's weddin'," the man said in a smiling tone.
>
> "Well, now, if she isn't a bit previous callin' the weddin' the first day I get back!" said Bill to himself, mounting his horse and loping to the head of the procession where he saw Lucy walking along holding a strange man's hand
>
> Bill got off and putting his gun in the man's face yelled— "What are you doing here, holdin' Lucy's hand for?"
>
> Lucy scowled and pushing Bill's gun away she said quietly— "Mr. Krepps, this is going to be my husband. You kept me waiting so long I couldn't wait for you, but if you like you can be the best man at the wedding."

---

[31] John G.G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance Formula Stories As Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 213.

Bill swallowed hard and he felt his heart nearly break, but he managed to get a few more words out before he had to turn away. “Thanks, Lu-Lu,...Lucy,” he said.

“Move on, move on! You are holding up the procession!” yelled the girls husband-to-be, and the procession moved down the street to the church, leaving Bill with his head drooping over his heart.[32]



procession where he saw Lucy walking
along holding a strange
man's hand.
Bill got off and putting
his gun in the man's
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"What are you doing
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for?"
Lucy scowled and
pushing Bill's gun away
she said quietly—
"Mr Krepps, this is going
to be my husband. You
kept me waiting so long I
couldn't wait for you, but if you like
you can be the best-man at the

Figure 2.13: Bill Krepps’ ex-fiancée and her new husband. Dorothy Macleay, Jan. 1925, 51.

[32] Dorothy Macleay, “Bill’s Lost Romance,” Jan 1925, 49-52.

The subversion of popular romance tropes and the rejection of male romantic interest by female characters was made possible by the class-based power relationship between the Macleay girls and their father's staff. While the above stories implicitly challenge the ranch hands' version of desirable masculinity — with more of a focus on the inversion of courtship dynamics and gendered power — some of Dorothy and Maxine's work explicitly contradicts the personality traits associated with this ideal. An example can be found in a 1924 poem authored by Dorothy, titled "Val's Lament." Focusing on cowpuncher Val Blake, the poem portrays Blake as a hopeless romantic, pining after a woman who has abandoned him. Blake's character is portrayed as sensitive and heartbroken, qualities that do not fit within the trope of the tough, independent cowboy or the ranch hands' perception of desirable masculinity.

Aw! Minnie, Minnie, where art thou?
Thou whom I think of when driving the cow,
Thou whom I dream of when working the plow,
And many moons have passed
Since I saw you last, Minnie.

[...]

But you went and left me, as you would—
And left me alone to chop the wood,
Oh, let me again see that face so good.
For many moons have passed
Since I saw you last, Minnie.

Minnie, who was so true and sweet,
Minnie, whose face made my heart beat,
But now my heart is burning with heat,
For many moons have passed
Since I saw you last, Minnie.

Where, tell me where on earth did you go?
All I can do is chew and chew tobacco,
'Cause I know that you are with some foe
For many moons have passed
Since I saw you last, Minnie.

If only you could come back to me alive
And at my wigwam door you could arrive,
I know that my heart would still survive,
Though many moons have passed
Since I saw you last, Minnie.

My heart is growing faint, and if you don't come soon,
I shall fade away and drop into a swoon
In vain I have waited many a long moon,
And many more shall I wait in vain,
Until I see you return again, Minnie.[33]

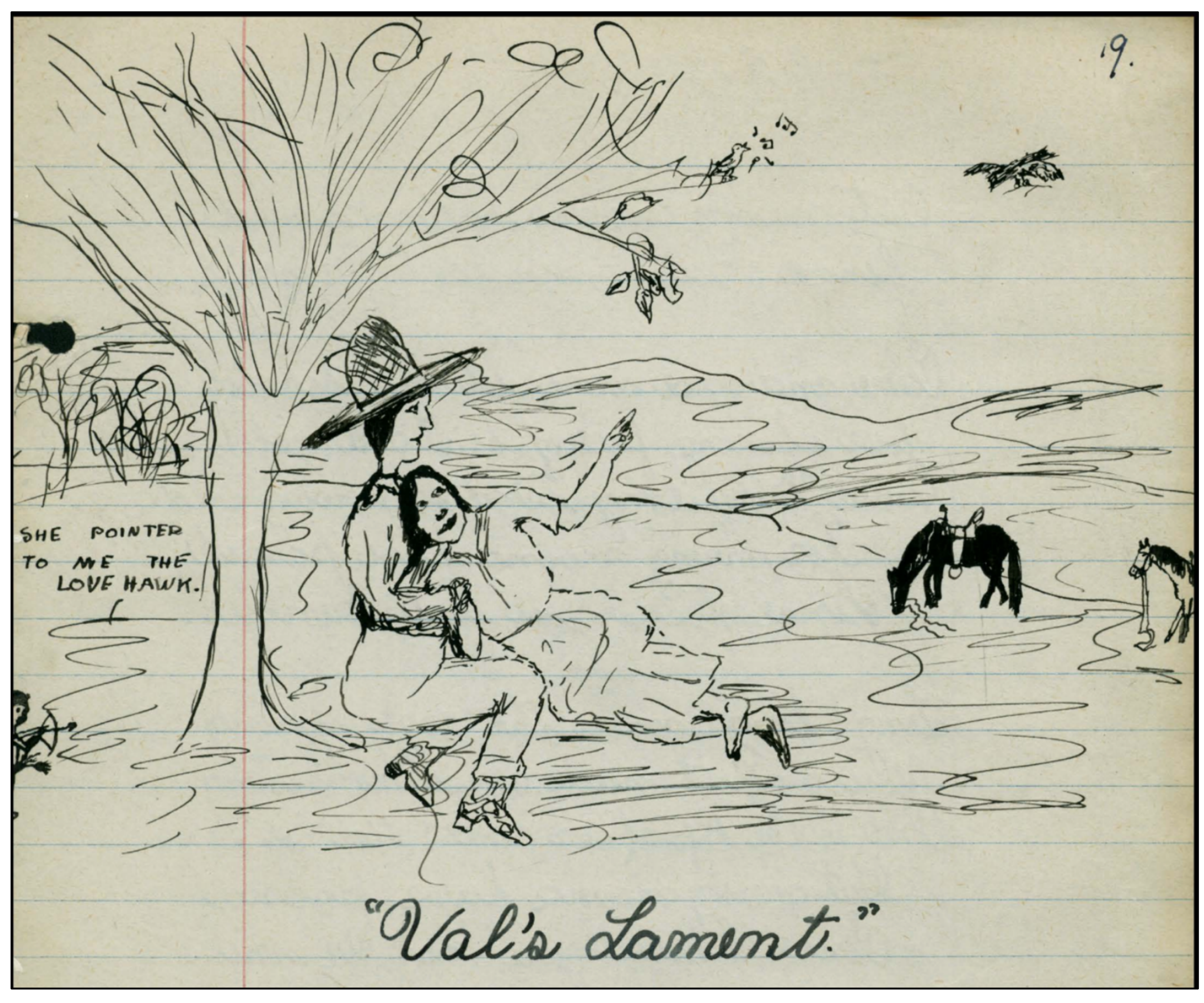

Figure 2.14: Val Blake and "Minnie" spending time together. Dorothy Macleay, Apr. 1924, 19.

[33] Dorothy Macleay, "Val's Lament," April 1924, 19-22.

Overall, these examples demonstrate the Macleay sisters' awareness of the control they had over the ranch hands' images — no romance ended successfully for the sisters' cowpuncher protagonists unless they wanted it to. In the above examples, the Macleay's ranch hands are the subjects of the sisters' imaginations; by using the ranch hands as their main characters, Dorothy and Maxine subverted their cowpuncher audience's perceptions of desirable masculinity, and the gendered power dynamics associated with early twentieth century courtship. Lois Burke notes that subversion and adaptation in child-created media is a widespread yet varied activity that "show[s] their awareness of literary tradition, what is considered age-appropriate reading, and when and to what degree it is suitable to pay homage to, appropriate, or imitate a literary work."[34] The same is being done here by the Macleay girls; they are appropriating, altering, and imitating contemporary romances in their own work. This is not limited to their fictional work, however; the sisters' adaptation and subversion of conventional tropes and genres extended to other elements of the *Rocking P Gazette*, such as the advertisement section.

Subverting Gendered Advertising

The Macleay sisters' subversive gaze can also be observed in the advertisement section of the *Rocking P Gazette*. Appearing at the end of most issues, this section used a combination of illustrations and text to advertise fictional goods and services. The subjects of Dorothy and Maxine's advertisements varied from haircuts, coyote pelts, cigarettes, beauty products, and miracle tonics (for humans and for animals) that could allegedly cure any imaginable ailment. The *Gazette*'s advertisements appear to be modelled from contemporary periodicals and newspapers that the Macleay girls would have read, with a key difference — instead of being

[34] Lois Burke, ""Meantime, it is quite well to write": Adolescent Writing and Victorian Literary Culture in Girls' Manuscript Magazines," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 52, no. 4 (2019): 723.

aimed at women and girls, the beauty and self-care advertisements address the male ranch hands as consumers.

Advertisements aimed towards girls and young women in print media such as magazines were (and still are) designed to promote patriarchal ideals of femininity and beauty. In addition to the pressure of ever-changing societal beauty standards, Joan Jacobs Brumberg observes that during the nineteenth century, young women and girls' appearances were believed to be related to their moral character and physical health: 'bad' or blemished skin "indicated a life that was out of balance."[35] By the early twentieth century, however, Brumberg notes that acne was no longer associated with poor morality. Instead, skin issues were perceived to be "a marker of "dirtiness" and low social class."[36] This, Brumberg argues, demonstrates a societal shift on the philosophy of beauty. Instead of a quality resulting from one's health and moral qualities, girls and young women's beauty was external and could be purchased.[37]

In her analysis of mid-twentieth century American girls' magazine culture, Mary Celeste Kearney emphasizes that periodicals designed for teenage girls "consistently privilege feminine appearance, encouraging girls to survey their bodies, find imperfections, and purchase products to overcome these problems, all with the goal of attracting heterosexual male attention."[38] Consequently, media such as cosmetic advertising is a demonstration of the patriarchal modern society that attempts to mold feminine bodies to fit within an arbitrary ideal size, shape and aesthetic.[39] As a summarized by feminist scholar Sandra Lee Bartky, the numerous societal

[35] Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 64.
[36] Brumberg, *The Body Project,* 69.
[37] Brumberg, *The Body Project,* 70.
[38] Mary Celeste Kearney, *Girls Make Media* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 215.
[39] Sandra Lee Bartky, "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power," (1988) in *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*, *5th Edition,* eds. Carole McCann, Seung-Kyung Kim, and Emek Ergun (New York: Routledge, 2022), 346.

standards imposed on women's bodies (including dieting, waxing, and make-up and skincare routines) essentially serve to make "the body [...] one's enemy."[40]

Discussing early twentieth century cosmetic advertisements, gender historian Jane Nicholas writes that while beauty products could be designed for both men and women, the culture associated with cosmetics placed more pressure on women to alter and improve their bodies.[41] In an article discussing the discourse of cosmetics between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Michelle J. Smith and Jane Nicholas explain that especially in the 1920s, the rhetoric of rejuvenation "was integral to the reformulation of the female beauty ideal and to the embrace of cosmetics and consumerism in its production."[42] Examining Canadian and American cosmetic advertisements from this decade, Smith and Nicholas note that "signals of ageing, such as grey hair and sagging skin, became markers of failure"; to avoid this failure, advertisements urged that "the labour of beauty ideally needed to be performed while a woman was still young and slim, prior to her physical deterioration becoming advanced."[43]

The association of beauty with youth is complicated by its connection to whiteness; Smith and Nicholas emphasize that "the predominant Anglo-American women's beauty periodicals presumed whiteness among their readership, as did the discourse surrounding cosmetics, which omitted reference to women of color or Indigenous women."[44] In summary, cosmetic advertisements placed responsibility on girls and women to consume products that promised the restoration or preservation of the beauty associated with youth. In doing so, cosmetic advertising for beauty products "adds yet another pressure to all of the existing ones

[40] Bartky, "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power," 344.
[41] Jane Nicholas, *The Modern Girl: Feminine Modernities, the Body, and Commodities in the 1920s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 36.
[42] Michelle J. Smith and Jane Nicholas, "Soft Rejuvenation: Cosmetics, Idealized White Femininity, and Young Women's Bodies, 1880-1930," *Journal of Social History* 53, no. 4 (2020): 909.
[43] Smith and Nicholas, "Soft Rejuvenation," 912-13.
[44] Smith and Nicholas, "Soft Rejuvenation," 909.

shaping the experience of growing up in a female body."[45] The above elements of beauty advertising – primarily, whiteness as beauty and the 'restoration' of youth – can be observed in the following examples from January and April 1920 issues of the *Canadian Home Journal.*

Figure 2.15: Advertisement for Woodbury's Facial Soap. *Canadian Home Journal*, Jan. 1920, 6.

[45] Brumberg, *The Body Project*, 90.

Figure 2.16: Advertisement for "Gouraud's Oriental Cream". *Canadian Home Journal*, April 1920, 38.

Figure 2.17: Advertisement for "Danderine". *Canadian Home Journal*, April 1920, 74.

The advertisements created by Dorothy and Maxine Macleay share some of the rhetoric seen in the above advertisements drawn from the *Canadian Home Journal* (published between 1910-1958) with the same emphasis on rejuvenation and implicit whiteness. Contrary to contemporary newspaper and magazine adverts, however, the girls' advertisements place more pressure on their male readers to consume beauty products designed to improve their own physical appearance. As seen in the following examples, they sometimes make direct references to individual ranch hands, using their names and voices to promote both fictional and real products. This shows another way that the sisters were aware of the dynamics of age and gender;

their advertisements inverted conventional representations of femininity and masculinity as seen in cowboy culture and women and girls' magazines, encouraging the cowpunchers to purchase various beauty-enhancing products. While this demonstrates the Macleay girls' media consumption and awareness of marketing trends, it is also further evidence of the gaze of teenage girls, re-emphasizing the agency and control Dorothy and Maxine had over the content of their magazine and the images of their father's employees.

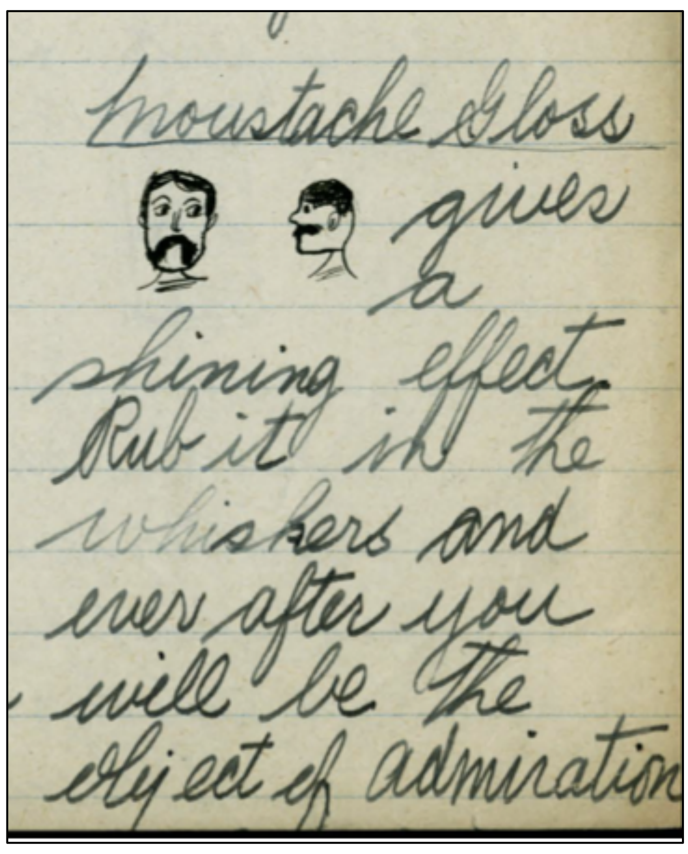

Figure 2.17: "Moustache Gloss gives a shining effect. Rub it in the whiskers and ever after you will be the object of admiration." Maxine Macleay, "Ads.," Nov. 1924, 93.

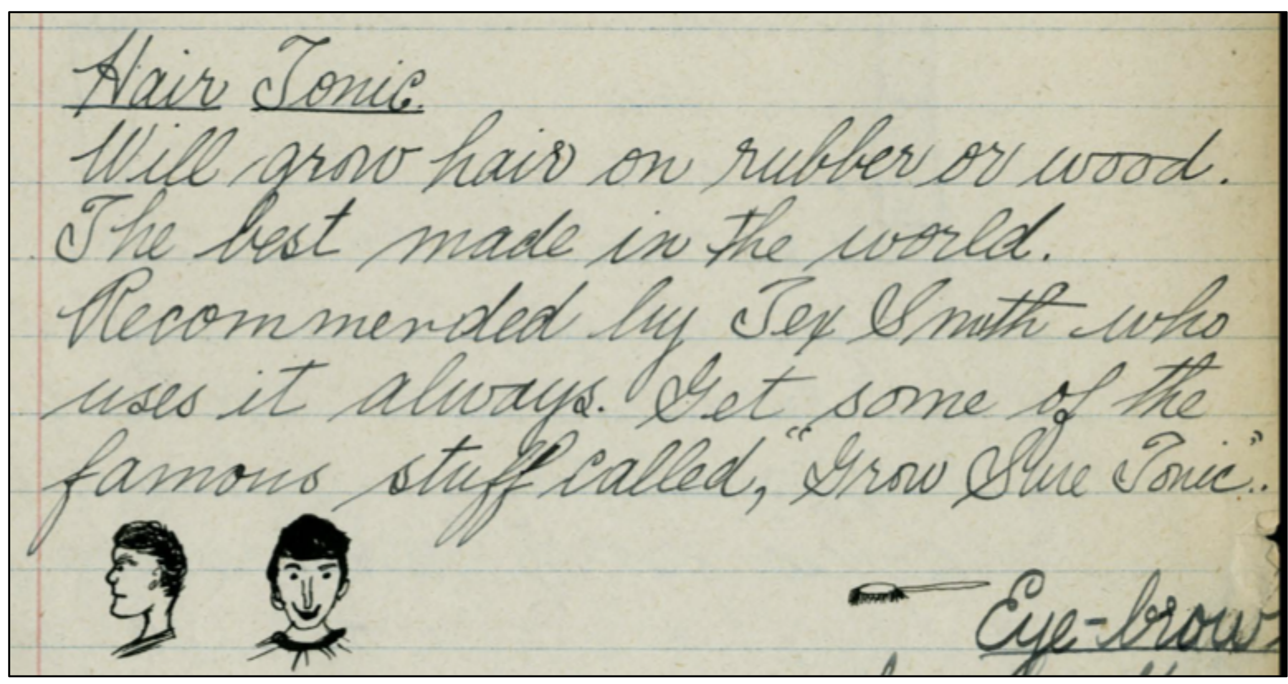

Figure 2.19: "Hair Tonic Will grow hair on rubber or wood. The best made in the world. Recommended by Tex Smith who uses it always. Get some of the famous stuff called, "Grow Sure Tonic." Maxine Macleay, "Ads.," Nov. 1924, 93.

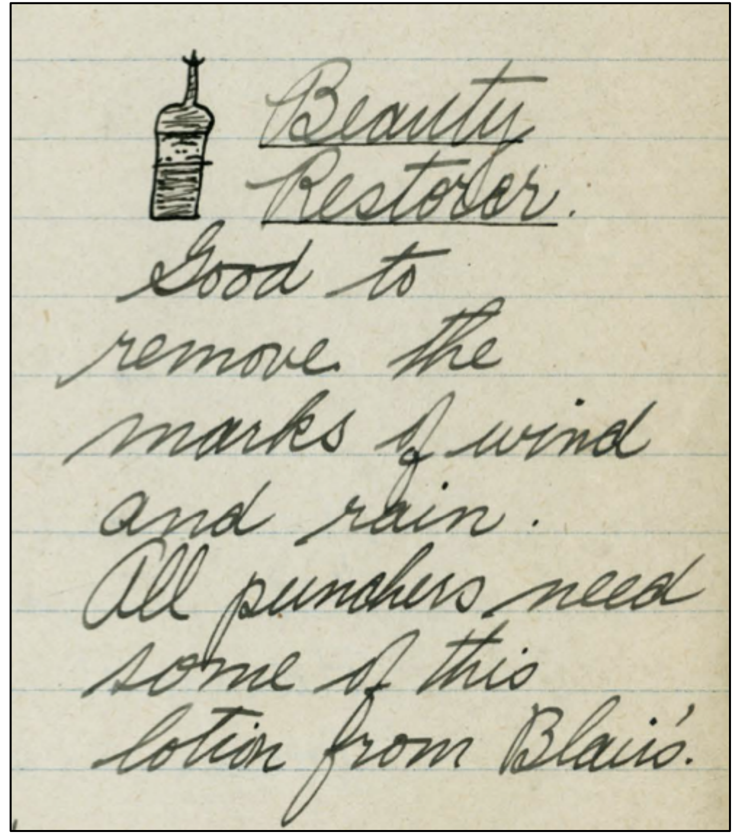

Figure 2.20: "Beauty Restorer Good to remove the marks of wind and rain. All punchers need some of this lotion from Blair's." Maxine Macleay, "Ads.," Oct. 1924, 81.

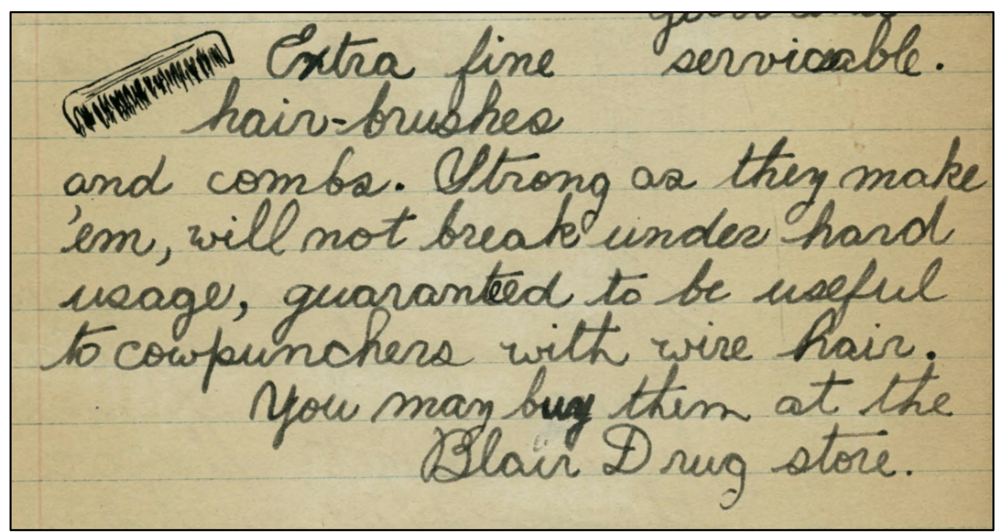

Figure 2.21: "Extra fine hair-brushes and combs. Strong as they make 'em, will not break under hard usage, guaranteed to be useful to cowpunchers with wire hair. You may buy them at the Blair Drug store." Dorothy Macleay, "Ads.," Jan. 1924, 82.

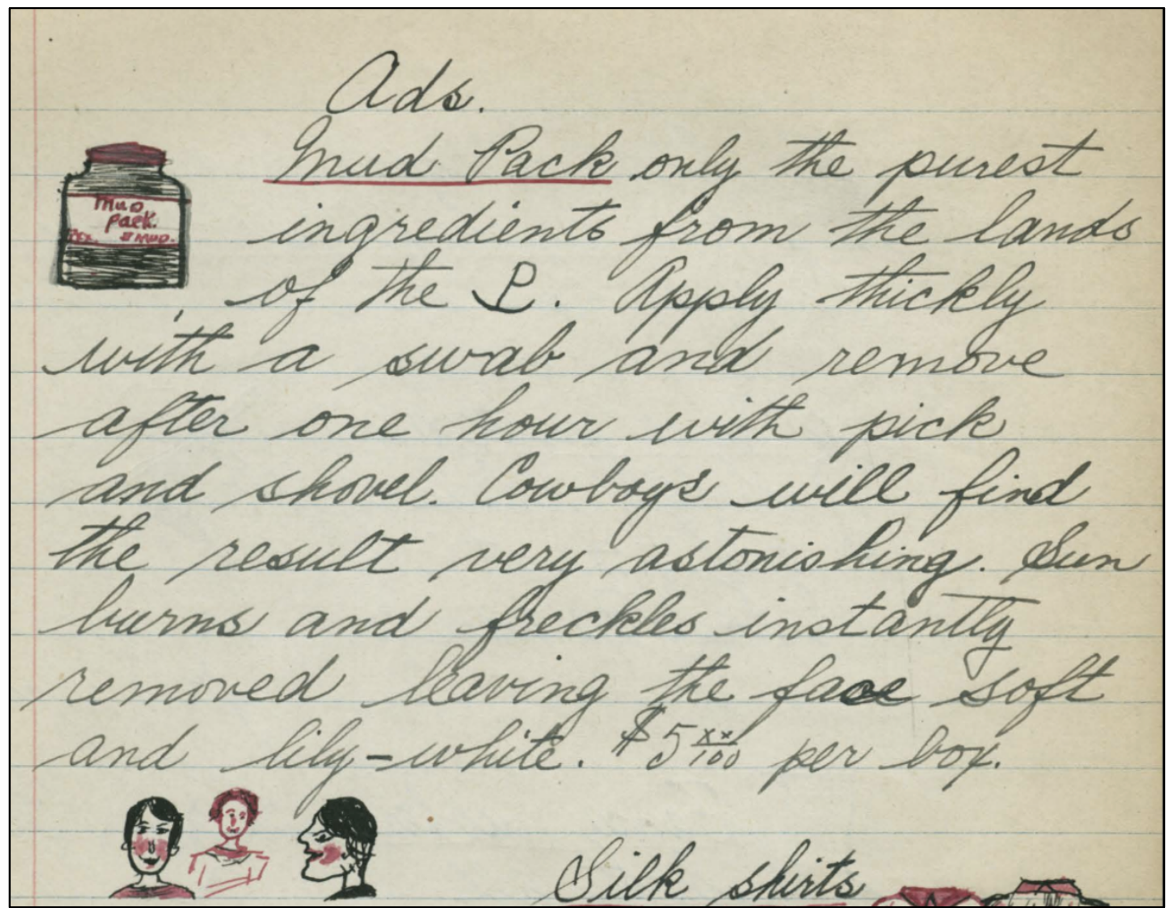

Figure 2.22: "<u>Mud Pack</u> only the purest ingredients from the lands of the [Rocking P]. Apply thickly with a swab and remove after one hour with pick and shovel. Cowboys will find the result very astonishing. Sun burns and freckles instantly removed leaving the face soft and lily-white. $\$5\frac{xx}{100}$ per box." Maxine Macleay, "Ads.," Feb. 1924, 71.

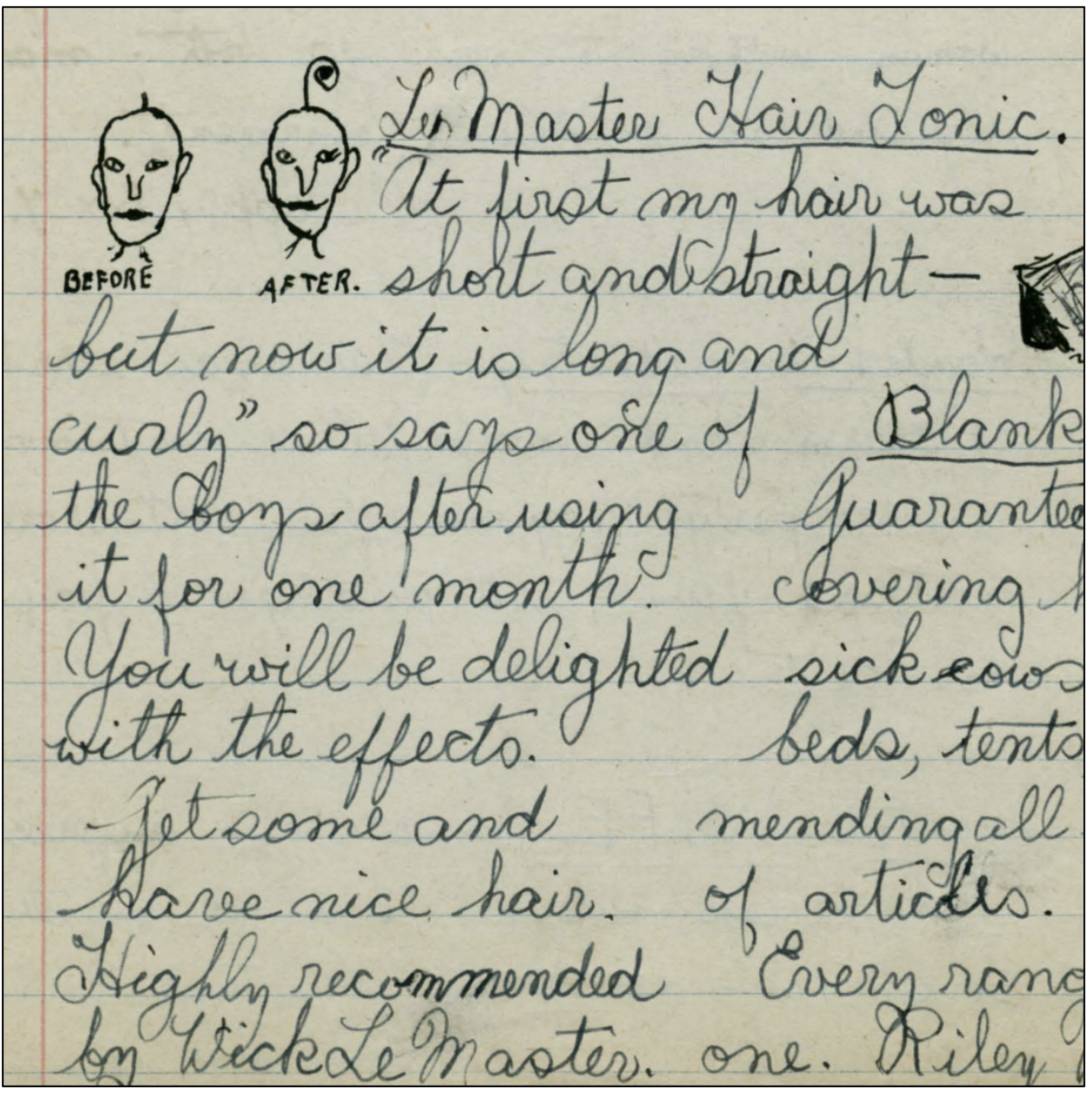

Figure 2.23: "Le Master Hair Tonic. "At first my hair was short and straight—but now it is long and curly" so says one of the boys after using it for one month. You will be delighted with the effects. Get some and have nice hair. Highly recommended by Wick Le Master." Dorothy Macleay, "Ads.," Apr. 1924, 75.

The language used in the above advertisements contain several parallels to newspaper and magazine cosmetic advertising in the 1920s that assume whiteness and encourage the repeated use and purchases of the product — for example, the mud pack removes blemishes to

"leav[e] the face soft and lily-white", and both "Grow Sure Tonic" and "Le Master Hair Tonic" promise to grow hair with consistent use.[46] Real advertisements (such as the ones seen above from the January and April 1920 issues of *Canadian Home Journal*) encouraged women and girls to spend money on improving their appearance. The *Gazette*'s advertisements do the same but are instead directed at men. This is evidence of Dorothy and Maxine's recognition of marketing towards girls and young women in print media, and their consequent subversion of such advertisements in their own work.

Just as they subverted their audience's expectations of romance in their fictional stories, Dorothy and Maxine expressed their agency over the content of their magazine by altering patriarchal marketing to fit their readership of adult male cowpunchers. Like their romances, the sisters used humour in their adaptation of conventional tropes and messaging, tailoring their advertisements to the ranch hands and once again portraying them without traits of desirable masculinity. Depicting the ranch hands in such a way was made possible by the girls' relative class-based power over their father's staff. As such, the advertisement section of the *Rocking P Gazette* reflects Dorothy and Maxine's interests and sense of humour, as well as their understanding of the messages behind advertisements directed towards them in other print media. Overall, this section is demonstrative of a key element of the gaze of teenage girls: the cowpunchers' bodies are observed, objectified and represented by the Macleay sisters as a part of their subversive imitation of adult-made print media.

Observing, Recording and Portraying Ranch Hands' Work and Bodies

The Macleay sisters' commentary on the physical appearance and personalities of the ranch

[46] Maxine Macleay, "Ads.," Feb. 1924, 71 and Nov. 1924, 93; Dorothy Macleay, "Ads.," Apr. 1924, 75.

hands was not limited to their fictional romances and cosmetic advertisements; this was also a primary feature of the cartoons and "Local News" sections of the *Gazette*. Shaped by the gaze of teenage girls, these sections of the magazine demonstrate the sisters' scrutiny and documentation of their father's employees' daily activities, physical appearances, and personalities. Like the *Gazette* as a whole, the cartoons and "Local News" sections exemplify Dorothy and Maxine's protected status relative to the ranch hands. Since they were the boss's daughters, they were able to directly comment on, illustrate and occasionally mock the ranch hands' labour and bodies without consequence.

Whether funny or factual (or both), most cartoons visually documented the ranch hands' daily life and labour in a realistic style. Therefore, it is possible to interpret the cartoons documenting the ranch hands' labour as surveillance by the Macleay girls of their father's employees. As discussed in the first section of the chapter, the sisters had ample time and opportunity to observe the habits of the ranch hands, which they then reported in the *Gazette*. A cartoon titled "Which way do they stack grain?" shows men in a wheat field, with two panels that present different options to the titular question.[47] The first option shows the ranch hands moving quickly, with their team of workhorses in motion. The second is a scene where an employee sleeps against a stack of grain, and the rest are lounging and smoking next to sleepy horses hitched to an empty cart.

[47] Maxine Macleay, "Cartoons," Oct. 1924, 17.

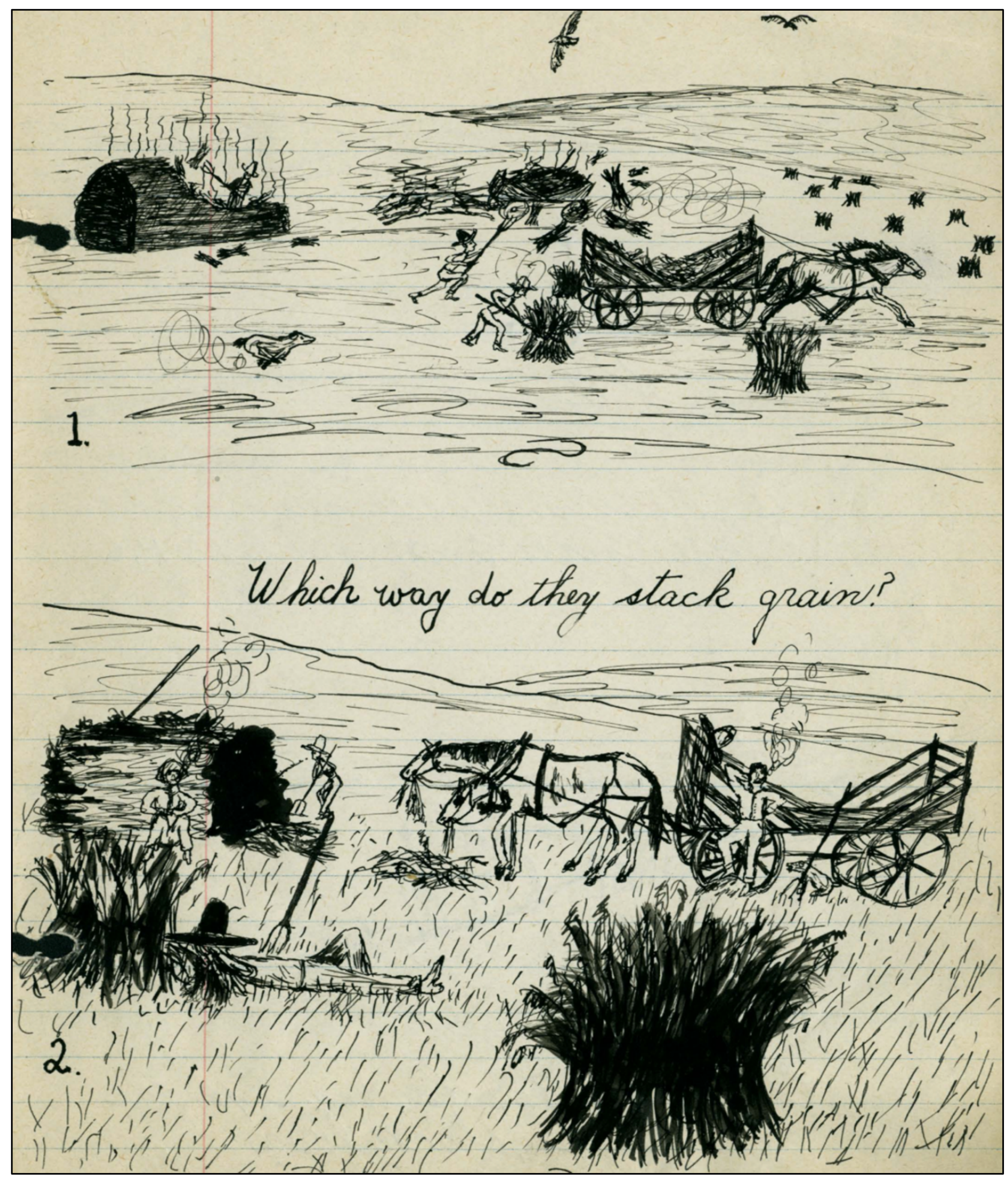

Figure 2.24: A cartoon possibly pointing out some ranch hands' bad work ethic. Maxine Macleay, Oct. 1924, 17.

This cartoon suggests Dorothy and Maxine's awareness of their authority and status in relation to their father's employees; it is possible that they used this authority to point out ranch hands with apparently poor work ethics using humour. In this way, the *Gazette*'s cartoons could be viewed a tool for the enforcement of expected workplace behaviours, teasing certain individuals with the intent to provoke them into improving their work performance.[48] Importantly, the magazine was read by the men's boss, Roderick Macleay, which possibly provided further incentive to cowpunchers not to slack off.

The gaze of teenage girls can be observed throughout the "Local News" section in each of the seventeen issues of the periodical, demonstrating the girl's close attention to the ranch hands' lives and physical appearance. In September 1924, Maxine observed: "Mr. Stewart Riddle has invested in a new pair of pants which cost $\$9\frac{xx}{100}$. They are rather baggy but are supposed to be all wool."[49] One month later, the "Local News" (aka. Maxine) reported that Riddle had torn his pants while working. In this case, the attention paid to Riddle can likely be attributed to the man's familial relation to Dorothy and Maxine; Riddle was both cousin and brother-in-law to Roderick Macleay and was hired as foreman of the Bar S ranch soon after the Macleay's purchase of the operation.[50] According to the 1921 census, Riddle would have been eleven years younger than Roderick, and approximately thirty-four years old at the time of Maxine's reporting.[51]

The girls' observations of cowpunchers' bodies were not limited to their relatives, however. In a similar example, published in the "Local News" section in September 1924, Maxine noted

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[48] Simon Critchley, "Humour as practically enacted theory, or, why critics should tell more jokes," in *Humour, Work and Organization*, eds. Robert Westwood and Carl Rhodes (London & New York: Routledge, 2007), 50.
[49] Maxine Macleay, "Local News," Sept 1924, 5.
[50] Chattaway and Elofson, *Rocking P Ranch,* 72.
[51] Library and Archives Canada, *Form 1. Sixth Census of Canada, 1921. Alberta District No. 8. Enumeration Sub-District No. 27 in Loc. Imp. Dist. #160. Page 6*, line 37.

that labourer "Val K. Blake is now growing a "miss-placed" [sic] eye-brow."[52] This observation is accompanied by several cartoons of the approximately twenty-six year old cowpuncher with a luxuriant mustache, all captioned with some variation of "three eye-brow Blake."[53] Several months later, Maxine followed up on this news story, stating that "Val Blake has only two eye-brows now, one above each eye. The one under his nose has disappeared altogether."[54] This example is in direct contradiction of the male gaze as defined by Laura Mulvey. Mulvey describes how in conventional film media, men observe and pass judgement upon women's bodies to shape them into a fantasized or idealized figure that is then portrayed in film.[55] The gendered dynamic is flipped here, as Maxine is observing and judging Blake's body, and then representing it in a stylized manner in her cartoons. The Macleay sisters, in other words, subverted gender dynamics as they observed, judged, and represented the bodies of the ranch workers, made possible due to the class-based power dynamic on the Rocking P ranch.

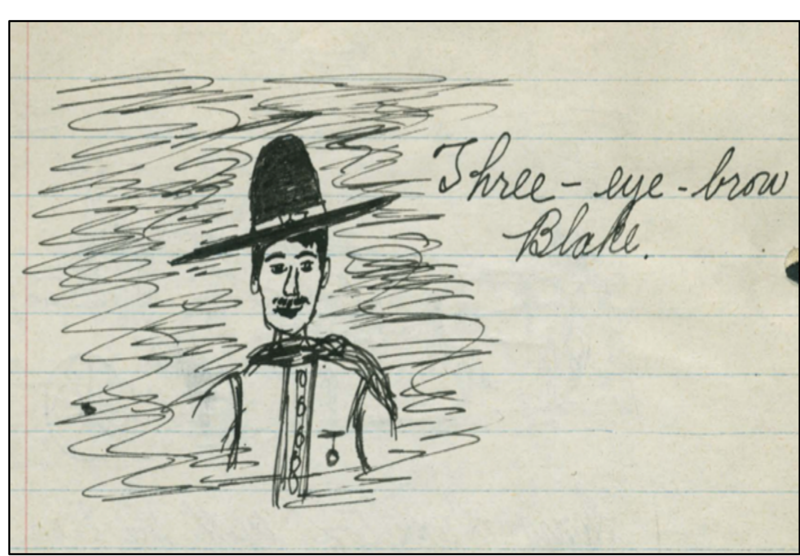

Figure 2.25: "Three-eye-brow Blake." Maxine Macleay, Sept. 1924, 10.

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[52] Maxine Macleay, "Local News," Sept 1924, 5.
[53] Library and Archives Canada, *Form 1. Sixth Census of Canada, 1921. Alberta District No. 8. Enumeration Sub-District No. 22 in L I Dist no 130. Page 1*, line 43.
[54] Maxine Macleay, "Local News," Jan. 1925, 4.
[55] Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure in Narrative Cinema," 11.

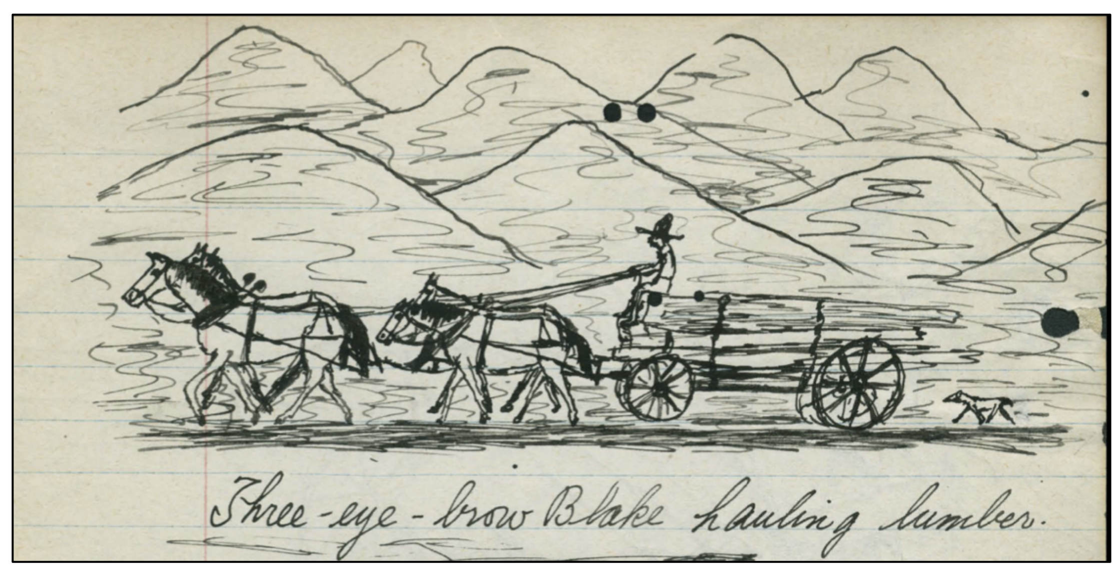

Figure 2.26: “Three-eye-brow Blake hauling lumber.” Maxine Macleay, Sept. 1924, 12.

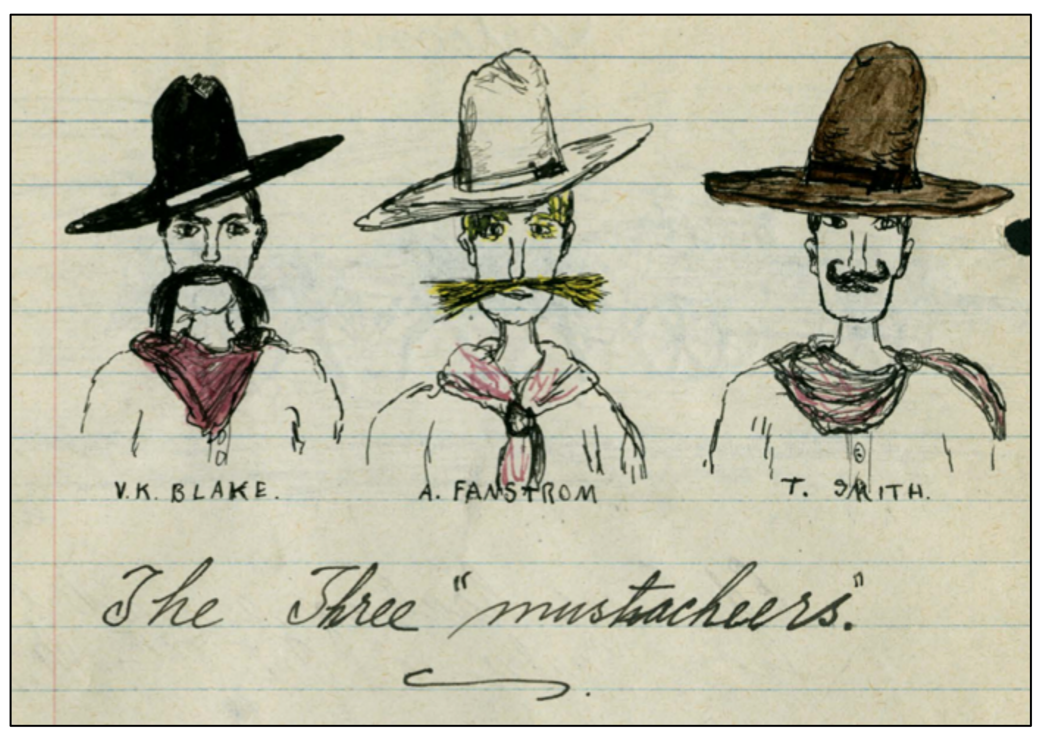

Figure 2.27: Some cowpunchers and their mustaches, including Val Blake. Maxine Macleay, Oct. 1924, 12.

The Macleay girls’ attention to the physical appearance and bodies of the ranch hands is also evident in cartoons that show individual ranch hands and their new purchases. Interestingly,

these cartoons steer away from the accuracy of those that portray real-life events and exaggerate the ranch hand's physical features. For example, there are two instances of drawings showing cowpunchers with their new boots and matching gigantic feet. Of course, drawing the feet larger would allow for the inclusion of more artistic detail, but this could also be viewed as a humorous representation of the cowpunchers' pride in their new riding boots or a critique of their vanity.

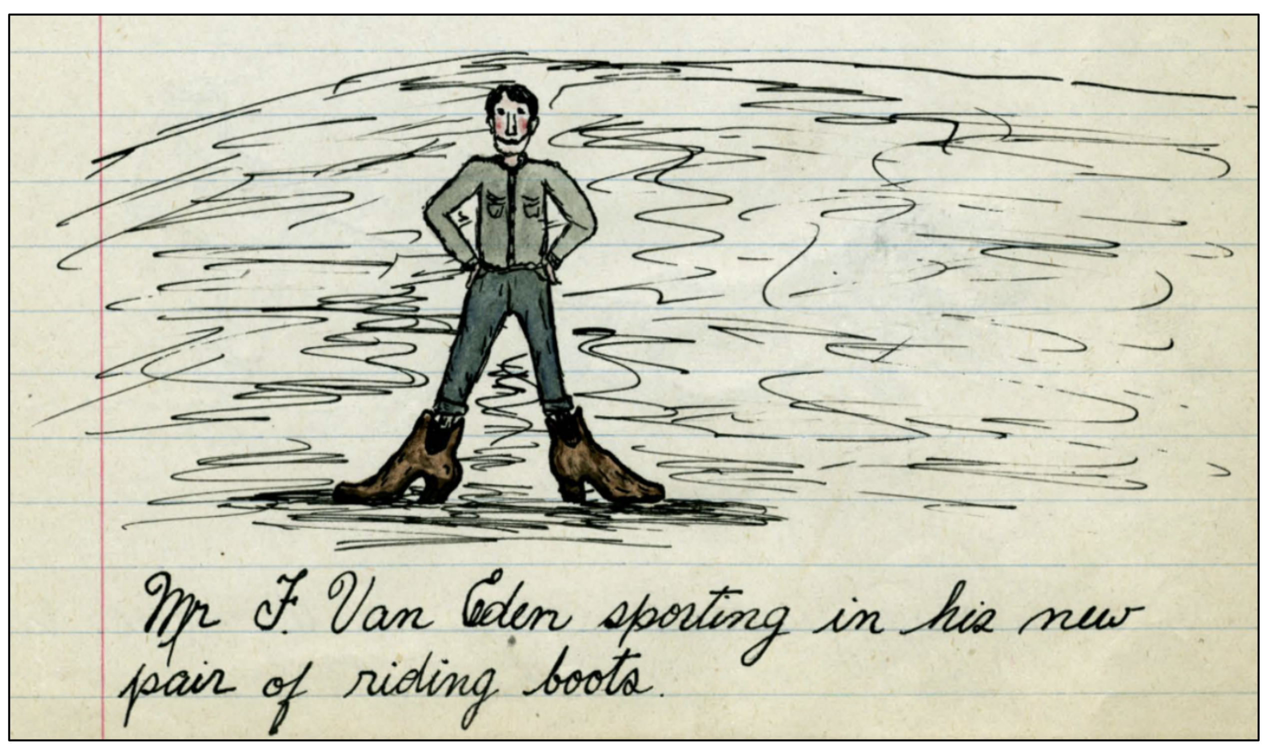

Figure 2.28: Frank Van Eden wearing his new pair of boots. Dorothy Macleay, Mar. 1925, 15.

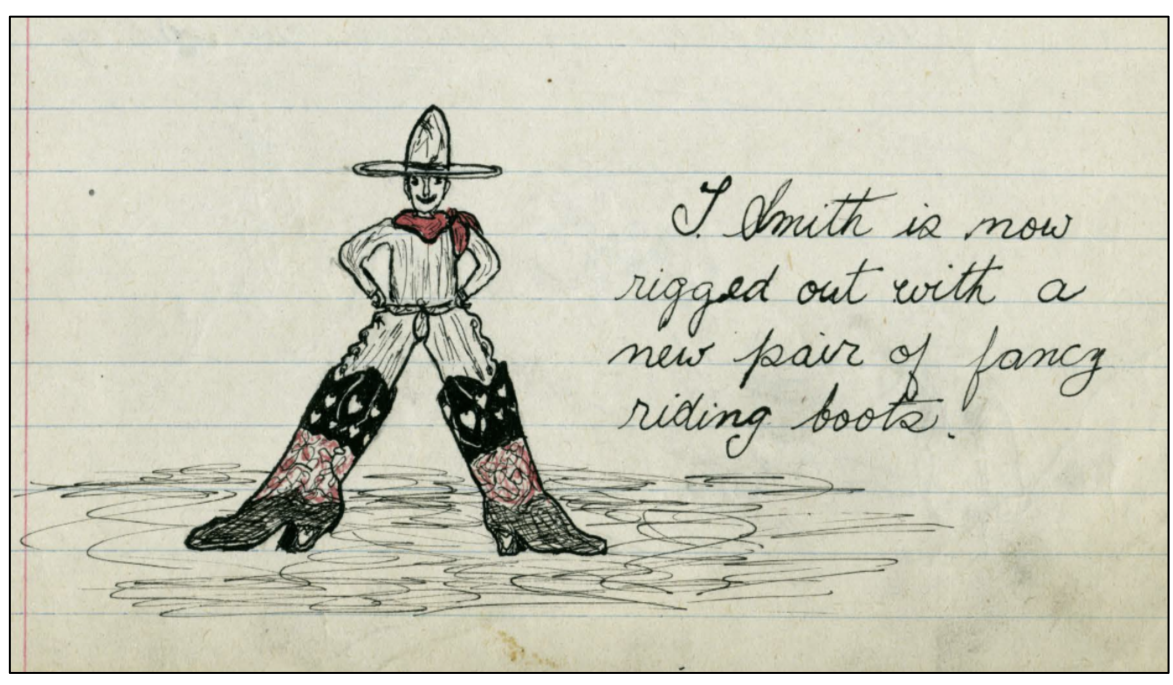

Figure 2.29: Tex Smith and his new boots. Dorothy Macleay, Apr. 1925, 21.

The above examples demonstrate a pattern of the girls observing and recording the ranch hands' physical appearance and daily lives, effectively inverting the gendered power dynamic inherent in the male gaze. These observations by the Macleay girls are evidence of their awareness of their class status relative to the ranch hands; in other words, they could have felt empowered to look at, represent, and occasionally mock the ranch hands since they were the daughters of their boss. Overall, the "Local News" section and the cartoons portraying the cowpunchers are examples of the Macleay girls' agency in taking back power that would have otherwise been denied to them based on age and gender inequalities.

Concluding Thoughts

The written and artistic work in the Macleay girls' magazine demonstrates how Dorothy and Maxine controlled the ranch hands' images with the gaze of teenage girls. Living and working on the Rocking P and Bar S ranches, the Macleay's cowpunchers formed a unique homosocial

community. As a part of their consumption and production of cowboy culture, ranch hands' contributions to the *Gazette* expressed their ideals of masculinity and ranch life. Based on their real relationships and personalities, the Macleay girls fictionalized and documented the cowpunchers in such a way that contradicted their concept of desirable masculinity.

Demonstrating their awareness of the class-based power difference between them and the ranch hands, the Macleay sisters wrote stories and described the cowpunchers in ways that subverted conventional ways of seeing and representing masculinity and femininity. This subversion extended to the advertisement section of the *Gazette*, which satirized early twentieth century women and girls' magazines, and instead prompted their male readers to survey, critique, and spend money on the improvement of their own bodies.

In their history of the Macleay family, Chattaway and Elofson argue that the *Rocking P Gazette* "attempted to relate to and reflect a bunkhouse culture," as it was "circulated through the bunkhouses on both ranches, where single and relatively young rough-and-tumble cowpunchers predominated."[56] Based on the artwork and poems by the Macleay sisters that describe the bunkhouses, this appears to be true. However, I argue that while the *Gazette* was constructed to appeal to its readers' interests, it is primarily a collection of girl-created and moderated media that voices the perspectives and interests of teenage Dorothy and Maxine.

In a chapter about girls' involvement in the male-dominated industry of modern filmmaking, Mary Celeste Kearney describes how "young female directors are developing the "girls' gaze" by challenging the ideologies of gender, generation, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and disability prevalent in U.S. society and commercial film culture."[57] Girls' filmmaking, Kearney argues, "makes visible the unseen and audible the unheard... complicating the stories associated

[56] Chattaway and Elofson, *Rocking P Ranch,* 95.
[57] Kearney, *Girls Make Media,* 237.

with their demographic group, and challenging stereotypes of female youth as technically ignorant and culturally unproductive."[58] Decades before the period Kearney is writing about, the young creators of the *Rocking P Gazette* achieved similar ends. Writing for an audience composed primarily of men, Dorothy and Maxine established themselves as writers and publishers, using their awareness of gendered power dynamics and their class privilege to observe, document, and fictionalize the ranch hands for content and entertainment. In doing so, the Macleay girls asserted themselves as a part of a male-dominated community of ranch hands and subverted the male gaze to better represent their own perspectives and experiences.

[58] Kearney, *Girls Make Media,* 237.

CONCLUSION

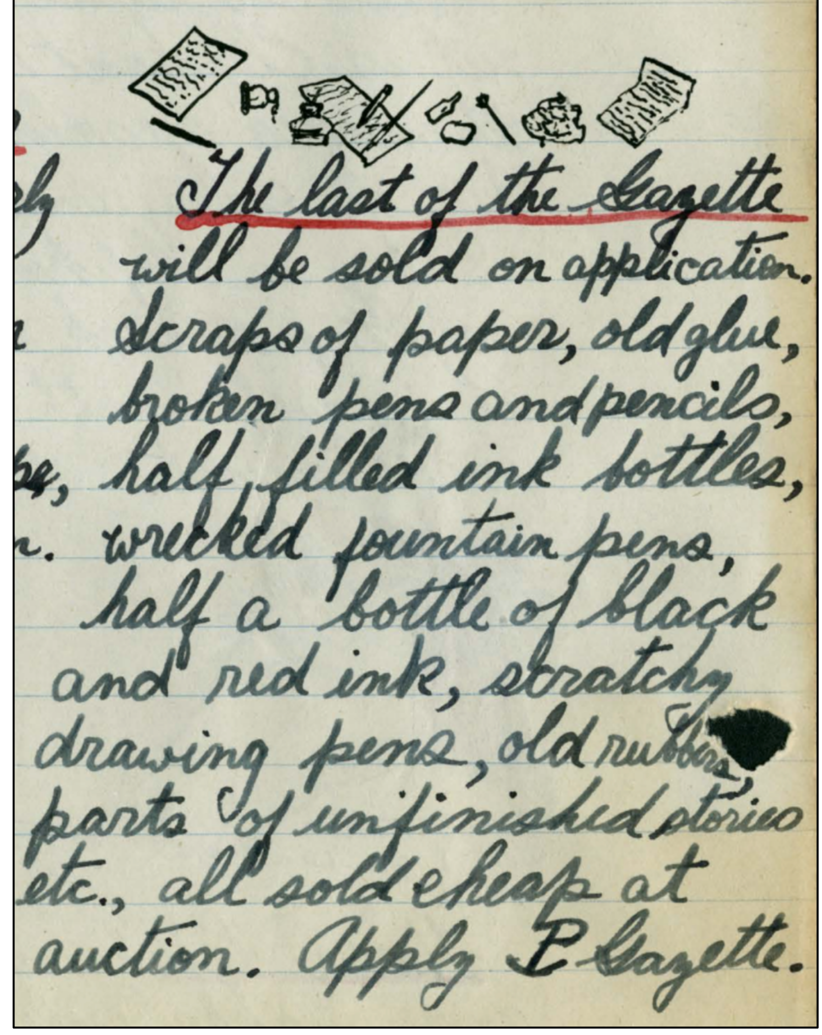
The last of the Gazette
will be sold on application.
Scraps of paper, old glue,
broken pens and pencils,
half filled ink bottles,
wrecked fountain pens,
half a bottle of black
and red ink, scratchy
drawing pens, old rubbers,
parts of unfinished stories
etc., all sold cheap at
auction. Apply P Gazette.

Figure 3.1: “The last of the Gazette will be sold on application. Scraps of paper, old glue, broken pens and pencils, half filled ink bottles, wrecked fountain pens, half a bottle of black and red ink, scratchy drawing pens, old rubbers, parts of unfinished stories etc., all sold cheap at auction. Apply [Rocking P] Gazette.” Dorothy Macleay, “Ads! Ads! Ads!,” Apr. 1925, 84.

Appearing in the final issue of the magazine in April 1925, the above advertisement describes some of the materials involved in the creation of the *Rocking P Gazette* as items to be auctioned off to the Macleay sisters’ audience of ranch hands. Disassembled into its basic material elements – paper, glue, and ink – it is hard to imagine the *Gazette* as a source that

communicated nuanced power relations of age, gender, and class as understood by 1920s rural teenage girls. This thesis has analyzed Dorothy and Maxine Macleay's homemade magazine, the *Rocking P Gazette* (1923-5), within Canadian settler colonialism and a longer tradition of Anglo-American youth publishing. In doing so, I have argued that the sisters' written and artistic engagement with adult-made media proves that 1920s teenage Canadian girls could be active cultural producers. The Macleay sisters' imaginative appropriation and interpretation of cowboy culture in the *Gazette* reproduced silences inherent to the Alberta settler-colonial imaginary, contributing towards the naturalization of Canadian settlers on Blackfoot land.

Examining the *Gazette*'s cover art and western-style fiction, Chapter 1 argued that Dorothy and Maxine used their magazine to express themselves independent from contemporary gender and age-based behaviour conventions. With the appropriation and interpretive reproduction of adult-made western artwork and fiction, the sisters wrote themselves and their family's ranches into Alberta's ranching mythology. Throughout the chapter, I emphasized that Dorothy and Maxine's magazine should be interpreted as both a product and a producer of early twentieth century Canadian settler colonialism. The *Gazette* reproduced silences and stereotypical depictions of Indigenous peoples and cultures, contributing towards the naturalization of Canadian settlers and ranching on Blackfoot land. Dorothy and Maxine's interpretive reproduction and "play(giarism)" of western plots, characters, and settings in their fictional stories based on the ranch hands of the Rocking P and Bar S demonstrates the girls' engagement and interest in this form of media, as well as the importance of the figure of the cowboy to their version of ranching mythology.[1]

[1] Cassie J. Brownell, "Creative Language Play(giarism) in the Elementary English Language Arts Classroom," *Language Arts* 95, no. 4 (2018): 219.

Shifting focus to the Macleay's ranch hands and how they were represented throughout the *Gazette*, Chapter 2 argued that Dorothy and Maxine's profound understanding of age, gender and class was reflected in much of their written and artistic work on and about the cowpunchers of the Rocking P and Bar S ranches. The ranch hands' shared culture as a tight-knit, masculine homosocial community was expressed in the men's written contributions to the *Gazette.* Importantly, this chapter argued that the Macleay girls' class status allowed them to observe, record, and represent their father's employees however they wished. Subverting the male gaze, and demonstrating a power and agency not typically associated with 1920s teenage Canadian girls, Dorothy and Maxine's fictional romances about ranch hands exemplify the gaze of teenage girls. The gaze of teenage girls can also be observed in the Macleay sisters' comedic objectification and mocking of the cowpunchers in cartoons and cosmetic advertisements that subverted power dynamics conventionally associated with masculinity and femininity.

Humour, especially mocking or teasing, permeates the *Gazette*. As an emotional release, a tool, a method of community building, and more, humour is a varied concept that is difficult to pin down and describe. Examining the social history of humour, historian Sandra Swart emphasizes that humour and jokes play an important role in "constructing and policing [the] internal hierarchy" of a community.[2] Furthermore, Swart argues that humour is "predicated on and thus [illuminates] shared (gendered) cultural values."[3] Making fun of the ranch hands' masculinity in the cartoons, advertisements, and stories of the *Gazette* is a key element of the gaze of teenage girls, as the Macleay sisters used humour to express their class status relative to

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[2] Sandra Swart, ""The Terrible Laughter of the Afrikaner": Towards a Social History of Humor," *Journal of Social History* 42, no. 4 (2009): 894.
[3] Swart, ""The Terrible Laughter of the Afrikaner"," 896.

their audience, but also to subvert conventions of masculinity and femininity that would have been shared by the cowpunchers working on the Rocking P and Bar S.

As a work that allowed its creators to imagine and engage with power dynamics associated with age, gender, and class, the *Rocking P Gazette* shares considerable similarities with girl-made zines produced in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.[4] Zines, as described by media scholar Mary Celeste Kearney, “can be defined generally as nonprofessional, noncommerical publications that are created, reproduced, and distributed by individuals wanting to create something different from mainstream forms of communication and entertainment.”[5] A characteristic feature of zines, Kearney writes, is that they are “typically created via relatively unexpensive and unsophisticated means: hand-written or typewritten text, hand-drawn illustrations, and text and images cut from commercial media texts.”[6] Furthermore, Kearney emphasizes that girl zine-makers often “employ the textual and representational styles of teen magazines to disparage these texts and mock the stereotypes of females reproduced in them.”[7]

Girl-made zines, Kearney writes, have “increased phenomenally since the early 1990s” and can often be classified “under the genre of personal zines (or “perzines”), zines created by one individual and comprising mainly personal experiences and opinions.”[8] As a part of a broader Anglo-American subculture of feminist rebellion against mainstream culture, girls’ zines often critiqued consumerism and mass media, and “encourage[d] their readers to publicly express their personal and political concerns as well as to develop their creative abilities and self-

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[4] Mary Celeste Kearney, *Girls Make Media* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 146.
[5] Kearney, “Zines,” in *Girlhood in America: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Miriam Forman-Brunnell (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Inc., 2001), 699.
[6] Kearney, *Girls Make Media,* 143.
[7] Kearney, “Zines,” 701.
[8] Kearney, “Zines,” 700.

confidence."[9] Characterized by a philosophy of anti-commercialism, zines were and are often made and consumed by middle-class youth and young adults.[10] Based on Kearney's descriptions, there are significant parallels between Generation X and Millennial girls' zine-making and the teenage Dorothy and Maxine's *Gazette.*

Although it was created more than half a century before the popularization of zines and girls' zine-making as discussed by Kearney, the *Rocking P Gazette* can and should be considered as part of the longer history of this tradition of girls making media; the *Gazette* was homemade, entirely handwritten and illustrated, and engaged with adult-made periodicals and artwork. Similarly to girl zine-makers, the Macleay girls selectively subverted media conventions (like the male gaze), and reproduced elements of the Canadian settler-colonial imaginary, such as silences and narratives that naturalized settler presence. Like a zine, the *Gazette* served many purposes: a school assignment, an outlet for creativity, and a tool for teenage sisters to explore power dynamics and behaviour conventions associated with age, gender and class. Influenced by the Canadian settler-colonial imaginary, Dorothy and Maxine used the *Gazette* to express their own version of cowboy culture, writing their family's ranches into Alberta's ranching mythology in such a way that naturalized Canadian settlers' use and occupation of land.

This thesis has argued that the *Rocking P Gazette* is much more than just a homemade magazine. It illuminates age, gender and class-based power dynamics on a southern Alberta family ranch, and shows that the teenage sisters engaged with the Canadian settler-colonial imaginary by making their own contribution to cowboy culture and ranching mythology.

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[9] Kearney, "Zines," 700-1. Kearney connects zine-making to the emergence of various youth subcultures over the mid- to late nineteenth century. She explains that, while zine-making became more popular and widespread in the 1980s, zines have in fact been produced by members of different subcultures – such as fans of science fiction – as early as the late 1930s.

[10] Kearney, *Girls Make Media*, 143. It is important to note that despite the class status of their creator(s), a defining characteristic of zines is that they are homemade and not professionally published often in protest of commercialism and mainstream culture.

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