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“TALENTED AND CHARMING STRANGERS FROM ACROSS THE LINE”

*Gendered Nationalism, Class Privilege, and the
American Woman’s Club of Calgary*

NORA FAIRES

*It is safe to say that in Calgary there are one thousand American women....
Outside of the life of the home what has the American woman who first
comes in this country to interest her?...[T]he time has arrived for the former
women residents of the United States to band together and do something to
make it easier and more pleasant for the American sister upon her arrival
in a new country.*

—“Organization of a Club for American Women,”
Calgary News Telegram, 26 March 1912

Many prominent Americans...had already established lovely homes [in what] was known as "American Hill." These ladies were anxious to extend a friendly greeting to the many talented and charming strangers from across the line, and they were included in our first roster.... [T]he American Woman's Club of Calgary rejoices in the fact that it is, every day of its existence, proving of value in this far west, to those who are but "ships that pass in the night."

—*Glimpses of the Past*, American Woman's Club of Calgary
Golden Anniversary Booklet, 1912–1962

WRITING IN 1922 for the popular Canadian weekly *Saturday Night*, Toronto journalist Anne Anderson Perry took up the subject of "The American Woman in Canada."¹ Focusing on the five "American Women's Clubs" established in leading Dominion cities during the previous decade, Perry began by placing these organizations in the context of parallel institutions flourishing across the border: "Dotted over the United States are many Canadian Clubs [in which] Canadian men or women, living away from the land of their birth, seek to promote sociability among themselves, to do constructive civic or community work in the cities where their lives are cast." Perry lauded the clubs as sites where "thousands of Canadians avail themselves of the opportunity...to preserve their national sympathies, to feel anew their ties of sentiment with Britain, to reaffirm, in a word, their Canadianism, even though many of them are naturalized Americans and lead the lives of American citizens." She assured her readers that "in this there is nothing amiss, nor is there ever any question among our friendly cousins to the south of the right or rightness of these Canadian Clubs to exist and flourish." The same was true of organizations of Americans living in Canada, Perry maintained, which differed from the Canadian societies in a single key respect: the American clubs "have all been formed by women, for women, and are known as American Women's Clubs."²

This essay analyzes the first of such organizations, the American Woman's Club of Calgary (AWC), from its founding in 1912 through the

Second World War. Most of the members of this organization were well-to-do white married women who crossed the international border as dependants of their husbands. They had the leisure time to pursue a round of mannered socializing that included card parties, teas, paper flower-making, travelogues, and cooking demonstrations for elegant repasts. With the means to dispense charity to the needy, they also had the resolve to deny their benevolence to those they deemed unworthy. The club members endeavored to use their gender, race, and class privilege to insulate themselves from pressing economic, social, and political questions, often with striking success. In line with Perry's depiction, these women self-consciously constructed themselves not as settlers to Calgary but as U.S. women whose lives temporarily "cast" them in Canada; their organizational outpost reinforced this gendered, classed sojourner identity, even as some became long-term residents of Alberta.

Meanwhile, the act of establishing the club connected them to the city where they resided (but pointedly refused to call home), enmeshing them in the burgeoning realm of local women's associations.³ The club's charter inscribes this unstable, marginalized position. Mandating that the organization remain aloof from both religious and political issues in case these might provoke controversy within the group, it also encouraged cooperation with other associations in Calgary engaged in civic and philanthropic causes. Local, national, and international events and concerns at times strained this tenuous and artificial distinction, intruding on the club's devotion to its social routine and destabilizing its members' self-imposed position on the periphery of the community.

My research examines how this group of privileged women negotiated their status as civic outsiders in Canada, and how they created, maintained, fortified, and sometimes transgressed the boundaries of a gendered, sojourner American identity and allegiance. The essay focuses on the tumultuous periods of the two world wars, when nationalisms mattered intensely and when twice the border initially divided a combatant from a noncombatant nation and then designated a boundary between allies waging war against a common foe. In these parallel historical moments of crisis, the AWC's patterns became disrupted: the

boundary between the United States and Canada became alternately brittle or blurred, the meaning of “American” complicated and contradictory. AWC members variously conflated nationalism and continentalism, subsumed nationalism under Anglocentrism, and elided the distinction between a mobilized Canada and a noncombatant United States. Yet, even in times of extranational emergency, the AWC remained vigilantly within a framework of bourgeois propriety and gendered gentility, translating the concepts of patriotism and citizenship into its own domestic vocabulary. After sketching the foundation of the club and its membership, I explore episodes that offer insight into the identities of these “talented and charming strangers from across the [border]line.” Reconsidering Perry’s formulation of the AWC, I conclude by viewing this organization and its members through the lens of growing American hegemony during the first half of the twentieth century.

* * *

WHEN THE SEVENTY-FIVE charter members of the American Woman’s Club of Calgary met on April 11, 1912, the city was in the midst of an unprecedented economic boom that transformed its economy and caused its population to skyrocket.⁴ As an article appearing in a local weekly in 1913 expressed it, during the past decade the “wild and woolly cow town of four thousand” had become “an up-to-date city of sixty thousand.”⁵ The expansion of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), a world-wide upsurge in wheat prices, the growth of food-processing and allied businesses, and, especially after 1914, the development of natural gas and oil companies, prompted the city’s rapid metamorphosis from a small center in a cattle ranching region to an industrial and financial hub, albeit one particularly prone to cycles of boom and bust.⁶

During these years Calgary grew primarily through in-migration. Settlers from the provinces of eastern Canada, immigrants from across Europe, and European step-migrants who first had made homes in eastern Canada all swelled the ranks of Calgarians.⁷ So, too, did immigrants from the United States. In the two decades prior to the Great War, as many as 600,000 Americans flooded into Canada’s Prairie West,

settling the agricultural frontier and adding to the workforce in the region's extractive, manufacturing, and commercial centers.⁸ By 1911 immigrants from the United States comprised more than a fifth of Alberta's population, and in some rural areas Americans made up nearly half of all the province's farmers.⁹ In that year more than three thousand Americans lived in Calgary, comprising more than 7 percent of the city's population and 13 percent of its foreign-born residents.¹⁰ Ironically, the establishment of the "Calgary Stampede," a rodeo extravaganza, signaled that Americans had begun to put their stamp on the city. This world-famous exhibition of the "cowboy days" of the Canadian West was created by an American entrepreneur, and even its founding was an exercise in racialized nostalgia, for by 1912 the ranching frontier in Alberta (wrested earlier from First Nations peoples) had given way, for the most part, to farming and gas and oil drilling.¹¹ American men were prominent in all these economic endeavors, from the ranches, farms, and wells in outlying districts to the banks and businesses lining downtown streets.¹²

Established the same year as the Stampede, the AWC more quietly testified to the substantial presence of Americans in the city. Virtually from inception, the club expressed its identity as a society of American women in Canada by joining both the most prominent umbrella organization of U.S. women's organizations, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and the Calgary branch of Canada's most important coalition of women's societies, the National Council of Women.¹³ When the AWC joined the Local Council in 1913, the group encompassed forty-eight societies, ranging from the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) to the smaller Society for the Prevention of Tuberculosis.¹⁴ As I discuss below, affiliation with the Local Council sometimes proved problematic for the AWC, since the alliance of Calgary women took on lobbying efforts and social causes that stretched the AWC's boundaries of acceptable activity and engaged the aloof Americans more closely with their Canadian environs.

The attention of these—and other—Americans did not always prove welcome, for intermingled currents of Canadian nationalism, British empiricism, and anti-Americanism periodically coursed through Calgary

as elsewhere in the Dominion. The Local Council, for example, also included the Woman's Canadian Club of Calgary, established in 1911 to foster patriotism and promote Canadianism.¹⁵ This club regarded the schools as a crucial arena for acculturation, for example offering prizes "to those of the English speaking foreign born students...who have shown greatest progress in the study of Canadian history."¹⁶ Aimed primarily at the children of southern and eastern European immigrants to Calgary, this assimilation project may well have extended to the sons and daughters of Americans. In contrast, the Anglophilia underpinning much of the club's nationalist vision probably exempted the offspring of the city's numerous English settlers from this effort. Indeed, some leading women of British origin or descent (including those born in Canada) conducted their own immigrant assimilation campaigns as members of the Calgary branch of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire. Affiliated with the Local Council but open to membership only through invitation, this exclusive society's motto—"One Flag, One Throne, One Empire"—at least rhetorically distanced it from the AWC, whose patriotism flouted the superiority and supremacy of the Union Jack.¹⁷

A major economic dispute in the long-troublesome arena of tariffs between Canada and the United States also shaped opinion about American immigrants. The year before the AWC's founding witnessed the Dominion-wide "Reciprocity debate," a bitter controversy over U.S.-Canadian trade relations that resurrected many Canadians' fears of American imperial designs.¹⁸ In this climate, wealthy Calgary lawyer R. B. Bennett came into national political prominence, winning a seat in Parliament largely by running against a special tariff arrangement with the United States. Bennett, a Conservative, appealed to Albertans to reject tariff "reciprocity" and thereby defy what he deemed yet another annexation effort of Canada by the United States, this time an economic rather than military expression of "manifest destiny."¹⁹ Once in Parliament Bennett decried the continued immigration of the U.S.-born, with their "love of republican democracy" and "spirit of unrest," as one of the "two greatest dangers which threaten the [Canadian] west today." Ironically, as his critics pointed out, the other peril Bennett saw looming was "the ease with which people

can get rich”—precisely what Bennett had accomplished by speculating in Albertan real estate, much of it sold to settlers from the United States.²⁰

This prosperous and influential politician (who served as prime minister two decades later) also led a successful anti-American effort in his home district. Many well-to-do U.S. immigrants lived in a subdivision in the southwest section of the city designated as “American Hill.” Believing that they, like other immigrants, should forge loyalties to Canada, Bennett spearheaded a campaign to have the CPR, which owned the land, rename the subdivision “Mount Royal” and give its streets patriotic Canadian names.²¹ In a stroke, the “Americanness” of this fashionable ethnic enclave thus was erased from public view, if not social memory or lived experience. For despite the official name change, through the 1940s and beyond, many Americans resided in the substantial homes that dotted the hillside of Mount Royal. Members of the AWC clustered there and in the stately apartment buildings that lined the numbered avenues just to the north, recruiting neighbors to join the club.²² Suitably, it was in Mount Royal that in 1938 the AWC bought its own clubhouse, purchasing and refurbishing a snug brick building that had housed a telephone exchange.²³

The great majority of women who met in the clubhouse and in the rented rooms that served the AWC during the first quarter century of the club’s existence were married. Although the announcement of the club’s formation explicitly welcomed “all American women, young and old, married or single,” like other women’s organizations of its ilk during this era, the AWC primarily served as a club for wives.²⁴ Of the nearly 500 women accepted for membership from 1912 to 1942, 95 percent listed themselves by the title “Mrs” followed by their husbands’ names (rather than their own first names).²⁵ The club founders consisted overwhelmingly of women who had arrived in Calgary when their husbands took positions in the city’s bustling oil, lumber, milling, construction, and farm equipment firms, in banking, insurance, and real estate, or in the professions.²⁶ The very first name on the club roster, for example, was that of Mrs A.J. Cumming, who was married to an oil executive. Likewise, other charter members included Mrs Walter F. McNeill, wife of an owner and manager of a coal mine in nearby Canmore; Mrs E.T.

Critchley, married to the managing director of a major lumber company; Mrs Charles E. Fenkell and Mrs. Jacob Stoft, whose husbands were sales managers for a leading paint firm and the CPR, respectively; and Mrs A. McKillop, whose husband owned a wholesale shoe business and was regarded as a “prominent sportsman.” Mrs J.M. Streib’s husband had a distinctively American occupation: he managed the Calgary Baseball Club, furthering a sport whose popularity already had eclipsed that of Canada’s lacrosse.²⁷ Four unmarried charter members form an interesting contrast. One worked as a stenographer and another gave as her occupation “president West End WCTU”; a third, Dr. Helen E. Walker, was an osteopath who had a private practice in partnership with the husbands of two other founding AWC members; and the fourth, Miss Mabel Childs, was a “comptometer” who soon gave up operating her intricate adding machine to become the wife of S.C. Reat, the American consul to Calgary.²⁸

The club continued to have this class and marital profile, with members in the main coming from the ranks of the well-to-do professional and, especially, business elite.²⁹ Like such privileged women in the United States (and Canada) some of the married members carved out prominent places in the community in their own rights, most through their contributions in the realm of women’s clubs. Among the charter members, for example, Mrs E.P. Newhall, a Canadian-born legal secretary who had resided in the United States for nearly thirty years, headed the Calgary Consumers’ League.³⁰ After a distinguished nursing career, Mrs W.J. Selby Walker transferred her talents to the leadership in the YWCA and activism on behalf of the city hospital.³¹ Similarly, at least three AWC stalwarts served as presidents of the Local Council of Women, the most celebrated of whom was Alice Jamieson, the Council’s inaugural and four-time executive.³² The widow of the general superintendent of the CPR, in 1915 Jamieson became Canada’s first woman juvenile court judge and, two years later, the country’s second female police court magistrate.³³

In terms of place of birth, the AWC comprehended a far-flung membership. During its first three decades the club drew members from twenty-eight states (and the then-territory of Alaska), but disproport-

tionately from the West (Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota) and, even more, from the Midwest (Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin).³⁴ Fully half the members were Midwesterners, and one in six came from Minnesota alone, some of whom must have found Calgary's low humidity and looming mountains a substantial change. Looking at these data from a borderlands perspective reveals that nearly three of five were born in states sharing the boundary with Canada.³⁵ While some who joined the AWC were born in cities larger than Calgary (including Chicago and Minneapolis), most came from smaller places (including two from the evocatively named Americus, Kansas). Not all members were born in the United States, with the club accepting women born in New Zealand, Australia, Germany, Bohemia, and, perhaps most intriguingly, Canada itself (including Ontario and even Alberta). One declared herself a "naturalized American," but the remainder claimed American nationality—and it would seem, identity—derivatively, stating that one or both of their parents or, twice as often, that their husband was American-born.

For AWC members on the whole, the occupational needs and personal inclinations of their husbands prompted their migration to Alberta. The AWC referred to itself as a "home away from home" and its members as "ships that pass in the night," reflecting the expectation that these women would regard prairie Calgary as a landlocked port of call and would leave, as they came, according to their husbands' itineraries.³⁶ For many members Calgary apparently did prove a short-term location. The minute books record the departure of members matter-of-factly, their resignations accepted with regret but without surprise. In 1930 the club formalized the ritual of leaving: those with three years' membership received a teaspoon decorated with a bluebird, the club's emblem.³⁷ Nonetheless some members spent many years in Calgary, at least a few remaining in the city most of their lives. Mrs Roy Beavers, for instance, was born in Illinois, arrived in Calgary in 1911, joined the AWC in 1916, and was a partner with her husband in the Club Cafe, a popular downtown bar and restaurant; she was an AWC member until her death in 1973.³⁸ Others had similar or even greater longevity in Calgary and in the

club: Mrs Clarence Cosgrove, for example, belonged for fifty-four years; Mrs William H. Blatchford, sixty years; and Mrs Walter McNeill, sixty-two years.³⁹ These matriarchs may have been exceptional in their decades of affiliation, but fragmentary evidence indicates that a sizeable segment of the membership stayed in Alberta, some becoming pillars of the AWC. For instance, the club made a practice of visiting local cemeteries each May to place flowers on the graves of “departed members.”⁴⁰ The roster of the club’s sixtieth anniversary celebration, held in 1972, similarly testifies to some members’ residential persistence and enduring organizational attachment. Mrs E.T. Critchley was the only charter member attending the festive gathering, but eight others at the luncheon had been affiliated for more than forty years, another nineteen for at least two decades, and eleven more for at least ten years.⁴¹

Yet this pattern did not alter the organization’s conception that it served American women who found only temporary quarters across the border. In 1960, veteran member Mrs McNeill, whose daughter-in-law also was active for years in the club, reasserted this view, declaring that the AWC was “ever striving to give happiness and friendship to the many Americans who come and go from Calgary.”⁴² Several episodes in the history of the AWC during both world wars and the interwar years illustrate how these self-proclaimed sojourners expressed their liminal status as civic outsiders in Calgary.

* * *

IN SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND the constructions of national identity of these elite migrant women, I relied on the club’s scrupulously kept minute books, attending to disruptions in the club members’ comfortable, albeit energetic and time-consuming, routine of benevolent visiting, socializing, and attendance at lectures on a parade of places they clearly deemed exotic (from China and the Soviet Union to Iceland and the islands of the South Pacific). The very orderliness of their doings and the bureaucratic assiduousness with which they recorded their leisure-time endeavors make departures from this routine more remarkable.

The devastating global conflict of the Great War provides the first context in which to trace their negotiations of identity and allegiance.

Beginning in 1914, Calgary's Local Council led the mobilization of women's organizations to aid the war effort and meet the needs of those on the home front.⁴³ In Local Council meetings and throughout the city, AWC members must have witnessed evidence of Canada's involvement in the war, even while their nation remained a noncombatant until April 1917. To Calgary's west, hundreds of immigrants from the Ukraine and other lands constituting the Austro-Hungarian Empire were incarcerated in a mountainous internment camp. In February 1916 anti-German sentiment in the city fueled a riot, with 1,500 soldiers and citizens destroying two restaurants and a hotel in an immigrant neighborhood.⁴⁴ Moreover, thousands of soldiers trained at military bases in Calgary, among them more than 150 Americans, sons of American residents in Canada or men who had left the United States to fight in Canadian regiments against the Central Powers.⁴⁵ Some trained locally would not survive: by war's end, Alberta had Canada's highest rates both of enlistments and casualties.⁴⁶

Despite the proximity of massed troops and the visibility of a mobilized homefront, AWC support for the Allied effort was meager prior to U.S. entry into the war.⁴⁷ In 1915 the club sponsored a speaker who lectured on "Certain Aspects of the Present World War" and the next summer held a concert to benefit a local Serbian Relief Fund.⁴⁸ As wounded soldiers began to fill Calgary hospitals and convalescent homes, the club donated money, exercise equipment, clothing, and reading material.⁴⁹ In late October 1916, the club turned over proceeds of another benefit to the Local Council "for the purpose of buying dainties for the soldiers at the front," apparently the club's first direct support for Allied forces.⁵⁰ Its timing could not have been more opportune for reassuring a skeptical Calgary public of American virtue: two weeks before, several hundred American volunteers in the Canadian Expeditionary Force had stormed the local barracks of the Royal Canadian North West Mounted Police, protesting the conviction of five of their number who had violated Alberta's liquor law.⁵¹ The club marked the next patriotic occasion, Abraham Lincoln's birthday in mid-February 1917, by hosting a card party to raise funds for Belgian children.⁵²

Such small-scale activities helped prepare the club for the intensive work it undertook upon America's declaration of war two months later. The AWC immediately organized a group called the "Daughters of the Allies," led by its members but including other women in Calgary. Reflecting the AWC's organizational prowess, the Daughters of the Allies quickly convened a series of knitting and sewing groups, purchasing machines and supplies, installing the machines in rented quarters, issuing a schedule of times for the groups to meet, and suggesting quotas to fill.⁵³ The results of their labors proved impressive. In eighteen months the Daughters of the Allies produced nearly 38,000 articles of clothing, the monthly totals made by each group duly logged in the club's minute books. They furnished the U.S. Navy League with only 500 of these articles and supplied the rest, via the Local Council, to the Canadian Red Cross.⁵⁴ Their contributions to this charity exceeded that of any other women's organization in Alberta, an achievement of particular pride for the club.⁵⁵

Turning its attention to the home front, in June 1918 the AWC issued the *Daughters of the Allies Conservation Cook Book*, which it "offered to the public as an aid in the conservation of Beef, Bacon, Sugar, and animal fats, which are needed by our soldiers." These self-proclaimed "thrifty housewives of Calgary" assured potential buyers that they had tested the recipes themselves, and dedicated their book to "The Soldiers of the Allies," with the "earnest wish that [it] may be of real assistance in winning the world's greatest war."⁵⁶ In response to this shared national emergency, the club seems to have earned the name of its relief organization, the American outsiders becoming allies of their Canadian counterparts.

Notwithstanding this collaboration, the AWC remained detached from most civic activism in Calgary throughout the Great War and into the 1930s. At the same meeting in December 1916, for example, that the club's executive board agreed to continue providing magazines to recuperating Canadian veterans, it refused to endorse a series of measures proposed by the Local Council regarding equal property rights for wives, mothers' pensions, and neo-natal care, deeming these issues "not within our province as a body to discuss or consider."⁵⁷ Three years later the AWC

shelved an initiative by the Calgary Consumers' League to limit business profits to 10 percent, despite charter member Mrs Newhall's leadership in the League; in 1923 the club tabled a Local Council proposal to abolish capital punishment; and the following year it declined to participate in the District Anti-Narcotic League's campaign "to limit the growth of poppy and coca plants" internationally.⁵⁸

While refusing to support these and other activities defined as beyond its scope, the AWC cooperated with the Local Council and other Calgary groups on selected social issues and benevolent efforts. The club promoted community singing; worked with civic agencies to curb the 1918–1919 influenza epidemic; supported the area chapters of the Salvation Army and Humane Society; and sometimes allocated funds to Calgary's Public Welfare Board for dispersal to the local poor, in part to quell criticism of the club's practice of assisting only indigent Americans.⁵⁹ Similarly, in 1925 the AWC helped the WCTU decorate a float for the Stampede Parade by lending it an Uncle Sam outfit.⁶⁰ With Prohibition the law of their nation, club members seemed either to have construed this gesture as nonpartisan, despite Alberta having rescinded a ban on the sale of alcohol two years before, or believed the temperance battle, wherever joined, fell within its purview.

Throughout the interwar period, only one major public issue seemed to engage club members' sentiments, occasionally puncturing their civic reserve and garnering their discursive support. The horrific spectacle of the Great War, perhaps glimpsed more fully because witnessed from Canadian ground, seems to have convinced the AWC of the merits of international endeavors to foster peace. Hence, although the United States did not join the League of Nations, American women in Alberta did. For all but a few years, the AWC was an organizational member of the League until the Second World War, and then aligned itself with its successor, the United Nations. An example from the post–World War I period illustrates both how sincere and how circumscribed was the club's advocacy of its most outward-looking cause.

In the early 1920s Alberta suffered from a postwar economic slump and a prolonged drought, leading to business closures and unemploy-

ment in Calgary; woman's suffrage recently had been enacted in both the homeland of AWC members and their land of settlement; and international tensions ran high.⁶¹ Meanwhile, as usual, the activities of the club revolved around the hospitality and recreation of its members. But in September 1921 world affairs encroached on this citadel of affluent female American sojourners when one of its members, Mrs H.H. McKinney, the wife of a "life assurance" manager, put forward a bold proposal for the club's endorsement.⁶² She urged her club sisters to send a resolution "to the representatives of the land of their birth and the land of their adoption," supporting "the disbanding of armies and navies and the disarmament of the world."⁶³ It seems that this extraordinary request was met with stunned silence: club members at first took no action on it, instead turning to the planning for the annual Thanksgiving dinner dance, held as per the U.S. custom in November (not October, when the holiday is celebrated in Canada) and then listening to a travelogue on India. But before the meeting adjourned, controversy broke out over the proposed resolution, the details of the disagreement characteristically glossed over in the club's minutes. The upshot of the apparently protracted wrangling, however, is clear: a motion to send the resolution to U.S. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge prevailed. On this occasion, concern about world affairs interrupted the socializing, and in the name of international peace the organization crossed the line into a mild form of political action directed at its own, but not Canada's, government.

During the remainder of the decade the club took no similar action, although it hosted speakers who stressed the need for world peace.⁶⁴ But in 1934, as fascism triumphed in Europe and beyond and as the goal of international harmony consequently appeared both more elusive and more urgent, the AWC enthusiastically joined Calgary's newly formed Peace Council.⁶⁵ The club embraced the group's plan to hold a city-wide rally in November 1935, the seventeenth anniversary of the end of the Great War, becoming a sponsor of the day-long event. Once again the club took a firm rhetorical stand, this time joining with Canadians to urge the leaders of the Dominion, rather than the American government, to take action. The AWC endorsed a Peace Council resolution that

“Canadian foreign policy should be directed toward the eventual establishment of a world body, clothed with the legal authority to regulate distribution of raw material in accordance with the needs of mankind, irrespective of political frontiers.”⁶⁶ The proposed international body would exercise sovereignty over the United States as well as Canada, of course, but for a brief moment the members of the AWC seem to have allowed concern for global peace to supersede their commitment to maintaining national borders, including the 49th parallel. However fleetingly, they seem also to have set aside (or perhaps failed to consider) the implications of such a resolution on their own circumstances as wives of men whose wealth rested to a great extent in controlling the distribution of just such materials—oil, gas, foodstuffs—as the proposed international body would regulate. In the next five years, as fascist forces overcame armed resistance in such far-flung places as Ethiopia, China, and Spain, the AWC remained active in Calgary’s Peace Council; sent dues to the Women’s Peace and Disarmament Committee based in Geneva, Switzerland; heard lectures on developments in the Mediterranean, Asia, South America, and, especially, Europe; and, in the wake of the Nazi takeover of Austria, discussed “Great Britain’s foreign policy” and again sent members to a local peace rally.⁶⁷

High-blown rhetoric about distant conflicts and pie-in-the-sky international economic tribunals being one thing, action counter to class position and ideology quite another, throughout the grim years of the Depression the wealthy women of the AWC declined to cooperate in efforts to alleviate Calgary’s suffering populace. In 1934, the same year that the club joined the Peace Council, it resigned from the Local Council of Women, AWC members voting unanimously to sever the decades-long tie.⁶⁸ The immediate impetus for the break was the Local Council’s denunciation of a cut in relief payments to the unemployed, but the AWC had become restive almost as soon as the Depression hit, rejecting the Council’s advocacy for Calgary’s poor and working-class residents as too political. In 1930, for example, the club refused to participate in Local Council programs to aid unemployed women and improve local recreation facilities; three years later it declined to join the Council’s protest of the

closing of dental clinics and its effort to curtail landlords' seizures of household property from women delinquent in rent.⁶⁹ Instead, throughout these hard times the club confined its benevolence primarily to providing charity to needy Americans, a long-standing practice taxed by increasing demand; delivering Christmas hampers to Canadian families it deemed especially poverty-stricken and worthy; and sending books, used magazines, and playing cards to men in relief camps.⁷⁰

When war once more engulfed the globe at the end of the decade, AWC members again confronted the problem of how to situate themselves, as foreigners, in the civic landscape of a combatant nation. Unlike World War I, when the AWC had waited for American entry to undertake its marathon sewing sessions, the club began a sewing campaign in September 1939, when Canada entered World War II. No longer affiliated with their Canadian counterparts through the city's coalition of women's groups, club members perhaps felt their organization's as well as their nation's isolation and sought to demonstrate some immediate support for their neighbor's cause. But six months into this effort (and eighteen months before the U.S. joined the war), charter member Mrs McNeill, now fifty-nine years old, expressed her concern that the AWC was flagging in its duty and urged members to increase their output of caps, sweaters, socks, sheets, dressing gowns, hot water bag covers, and "pneumonia jackets." Invoking the club's proud heritage of production during the Great War, she extolled the attainments of the Daughters of the Allies to an audience largely unfamiliar with the group.⁷¹

The unhurried pace of the members' sewing machines and knitting needles in early 1940 may have reflected the AWC's then muted and partial sympathy with the Allied cause. The club's day-to-day routines continued much as usual, its minutes omitting even an announcement of Canada's taking up of arms. The first inkling that the Dominion would enter the fray occurred in an off-hand comment made regarding a last-minute "change in program" for a regular meeting of the club's Domestic Science branch. On 5 September 1939, four days after German troops invaded Poland, and just five days before Canada formally joined the Allied war effort, club member Mrs Philips announced with regret that

“owing to Mr. Lick enlisting for war service he was unable to carry out [the] Standard Brands demonstration and talk [but that a] demonstrator of Magic Baking Powder” would come instead, adding that she “anticipated an interesting program” despite this substitution.⁷²

Similarly, the AWC’s bulletin of upcoming club events for the year 1940–1941, printed just a few months after Mrs McNeill’s admonition, viewed the catastrophic world situation at arm’s length; in contradistinction it lauded the close ties between Canada and the United States. Such annual club calendars had a fairly standard format, with the first few pages typically listing the lyrics to one American and one Canadian patriotic song side by side. The 1940–1941 edition, however, featured a fascinating hybrid consisting of four patriotic songs.⁷³ In addition to the words for the “Star Spangled Banner” and “O, Canada,” the bulletin included “God Bless America,” with an introduction alluding to the danger, rather than the actuality, of war “across the sea.” The calendar also included a song that interwove the two nation’s histories, destinies, and identities. The “International Hymn” began with the first stanza of “America the Beautiful”; continued with the first stanza of “God Save the King”; and concluded with a stanza that celebrated what club members evidently regarded as the common British, English-speaking, Christian heritage that bound Americans with Canadians:

Two empires by the sea,
Two nations, great and free,
One anthem raise.
One race of ancient fame,
One tongue, one faith, we claim.
One God, whose glorious name
We love and praise.

Likewise, the unusual inclusion of a poem entitled “Our Borderline” bespoke the club’s sentiment that the international divide separating the United States and Canada proved no barrier to this common heritage but rather symbolized the kinship between nations. In the poem’s

words, the boundary constituted “three thousand miles” that represent “living proof to all the world of faith in brotherhood.” This paean to the 49th parallel concludes by invoking a half-century-old trope of American-Canadian relations: “God speed that surely dawning day—that coming hour divine— / When all the nations of the earth shall boast such border line.”⁷⁴

Thus in the spring of 1940, with the army of the Third Reich already occupying Poland to its east and Hitler secretly planning the invasion of France, members of the AWC held the war-torn world at a distance. Identifying as citizens of a noncombatant nation, they located themselves outside the global conflict. Simultaneously, they recast themselves as members of a civic society that stretched across the U.S.-Canada border, rhetorically relinquishing their position as outsiders to the nation in which they dwelt.⁷⁵ Yet their assertion of an imagined joint Anglophile heritage and mythologized history of continuous harmony between the United States and Canada did not alter the fact that the international boundary then divided a neutral nation from an embattled country, nor did their invocation of a “surely dawning day” of international peace square with the reality that throughout much of the world former borders had become soaked with blood.

By November 1940 the presence in Calgary of their own countrymen as volunteer soldiers, echoing the Great War, seems to have rendered the yearbook’s discursive transborder allegiance as well the war itself more palpable for club members. While the AWC declined to help raise funds for Allied aircraft, turning down a member’s suggestion that they “sponsor a Spitfire Drive for Americans,” the club took up the entertainment of Americans training nearby, inaugurating a program of twice-monthly Sunday dinners.⁷⁶ At first the club hosted only U.S. officers and servicemen but soon expanded their guest list to include Australians, New Zealanders, and then Canadians.⁷⁷ Perhaps to provide the soldiers with suitably manly conversation, club members also invited their husbands to attend, and out-of-town members, often on the margins of club activities, contributed produce and chickens for the hearty suppers.⁷⁸ Then in February 1941 the war for which so many Canadians already

had sacrificed became more personal and tangible to the AWC when an American volunteer was killed nearby.⁷⁹

Quentin Burl Chace from Wichita, Kansas, held the rank of Leading Air Craftsman in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). He and RCAF Sergeant Pilot Alfred Reginbal of Lafleche, Saskatchewan, died while on a training mission, their plane crashing twenty miles [32 km] west of Calgary.⁸⁰ In August 1941, along a barren roadside near the crash site, AWC members gathered with local leaders to unveil a stone monument to the American and Canadian fliers, erected by the city's League of Nations chapter. At its regular monthly meeting three weeks later, the club voted to accept custody of the Chace-Reginbal memorial, agreeing to maintain the cairn and decorate it with a wreath on patriotic occasions.⁸¹ The month after the crash, the AWC invited an American woman who was not a club member to be their guest at a Sunday dinner: Mrs S.F. Chace, the young Kansan's widow.⁸²

Characteristically, after the U.S. joined the Allies in December 1941, the club's wartime activities accelerated. The AWC stepped up its production of knitted and sewn garments, participated in local anti-inflation and rationing efforts (even forswearing coffee and tea at its monthly meetings), heard speeches on wartime conditions in Europe and Asia, entertained servicewomen and Red Cross volunteers, visited the wounded in city hospitals, and donated funds to help furnish a clubhouse for U.S. officers stationed in Calgary.

Yet even with the United States fully engaged in the war, its homeland rapidly and thoroughly mobilized to support the Allies, the AWC's efforts to support the cause remained saturated with gendered gentility. At least in their official records, club members cast, in wartime even more pointedly than in peace, what historian Laura Wexler has in another context termed the "averted gaze," a look of "domestic sentiment [that] normalize[s]" relations of dominance. In this case, the AWC's averted gaze domesticated global state-sponsored violence.⁸³ During the war years, for example, the club's Travel Department noted a lecture offered to the group on "Head Hunting in the Solomons" in the same tone (and perhaps with similar racist tinges) as it reported on a slide presentation

portraying events at Pearl Harbor and U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt's subsequent signing of the declaration of war against Japan.⁸⁴ Other AWC departments seemed to adopt a similarly normalizing view about war-time conditions. The Domestic Science department announced to the club's general membership "an interesting program" of study for 1942 and 1943 that "stress[ed] sugarless cakes, inexpensive dishes and suggestions for overseas parcels."⁸⁵ In like vein, the Arts and Crafts department, pursuing the theme of "war and crafts," heard at one of its meetings a "splendid" report that ranged from the difficulty of obtaining spinach seed, to the continued export of fine blankets, lace, and tweeds from Britain, to the status of "brave China," which had "hidden in her hills... 30,000 tiny industries, goods carried in every conceivable fashion... [and people living] in caves—moving from one spot to another when necessary but always with the resolve that the work must go on."⁸⁶ Club members translated even the equipment of death into an object of refined discussion. As the naval battle raged in the North Atlantic, in the course of a meeting's usual round of reports club members learned, seemingly with equanimity, that their fundraising "had supplied a depth charge for the Calgary Corvette [sic]." Six months later, tucked into the corresponding secretary's report, is notification of the receipt of a "letter from J. Davis, officer of the ship *La Malbin* [sic] thanking us for the depth charge."⁸⁷ To what end that depth charge was put remains unremarked in the AWC records; having raised the monies to provide it and received courteous thanks for doing so, these elite women mentioned the topic no more.

* * *

SUPPORTING THE ALLIED CAUSE, hoping for victory, and perhaps imagining the peacetime world that might ensue, in fall 1942 AWC members held a fundraising tea for the "United Nations," a term coined earlier that year by Franklin Roosevelt to denote the twenty-six countries fighting against the Axis Powers.⁸⁸ A photograph of the event printed in a local paper captures the AWC's signature combination of efficient but well-bred organizing, cautious internationalism, sororal

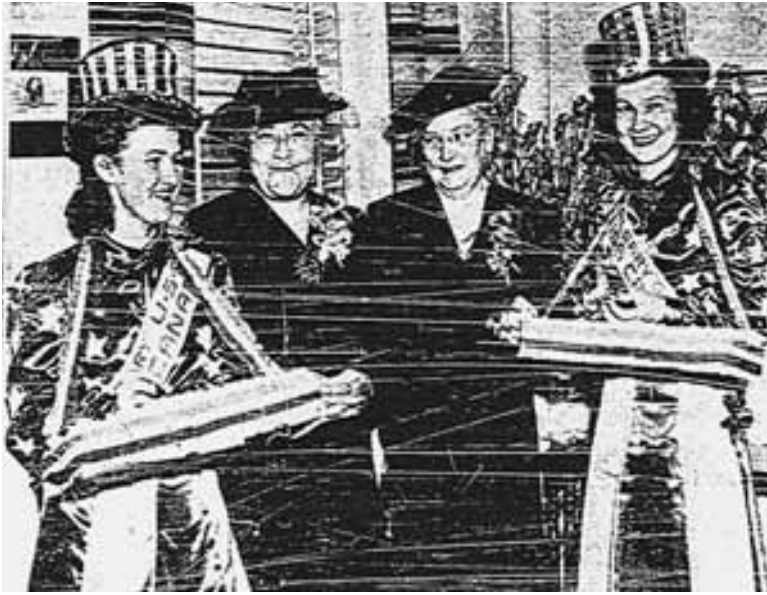


FIGURE 11.1: On 29 September 1942 the American Woman's Club of Calgary hosted a tea for more than 400 guests at their clubhouse. The club raised funds for the United Nations by selling corsages that incorporated war savings stamps. L. to r: Miss Dorothy Benfield, Mrs S. G. Coultis, Mrs F. M. Motter, and Miss Delores Heiters.

[J.L. Rosettis, photographer. Permission of The Calgary Herald]

if not matronizing admiration for Canada, and ebullient American patriotism.⁸⁹ The tea's convener, Mrs S.G. Coultis, and the club's president, Mrs F.M. Motter, wear corsages cleverly fashioned from fresh flowers and war savings stamps and lapel pins with war savings certificates attached, both designed by the club. They are clothed soberly but elegantly in dark dresses and veiled hats. Posed like cigarette girls, two young women, Miss Dorothy Benfield and Miss Delores Heiters (daughter of a prominent club member), flank the AWC officers, holding trays from which they sell the corsages and pins. Bedecked with Uncle Sam hats and clad in satiny, "attractive red, white, and blue star spangled costumes," these stylish vendors sport sashes declaring that they are "Calgary U.S.A. Miss Canadas." All four are smiling, seemingly pleased with and proud of themselves, each other, the club, their endeavor, and their homeland.



FIGURE 11.2: *The executive of the American Woman's Club, May 1956. Mrs V. V. Forcade, far left, presents a gavel to Mrs Wilbur McNeill, second from right. She stands between two charter members of the club, her mother-in-law Mrs Walter F. McNeill (far right) and Mrs E. T. Critchley (second from left). Despite the club's identity as a haven for sojourners, many club leaders persisted for decades in Calgary. 3 May 1956.*

[Jack De Lorme, photographer, The Albertan; permission of Glenbow Archives NA-5600-8449a]

Perhaps at the time of this event the AWC, then fully launched in its country's wartime cause, subsumed the identity of Canada beneath the U.S., erasing the border between the countries in support of a postwar world where a "united nations"—under American hegemony—would prevail. Had she lived to see that day, Mrs H.H. McKinney, who two decades before had swayed the AWC to appeal for disarmament, no doubt would have endorsed the club's reconceptualization, however fleeting,

of their allegiance as well their implicit confidence in their nation's leadership in a postwar world.

Rather than simply mirroring elite Canadians residing in the United States, as journalist Anne Anderson Perry portrayed them in 1922, AWC members constituted, intentionally or not, representatives of an increasingly dominant nation whose shadow lengthened across its northern neighbor during the first half of the twentieth century.

Exploring the identities of the elite women who comprised the AWC is one means to shed light on the making of a transnational prairie West and the crafting of a gendered Americanism during the first half of the twentieth century. All the women who belonged to the AWC crossed the international borderline and took up residence in Calgary at least long enough to seek out and affiliate with others of their nationality, race, gender, and class; for some this affiliation lasted for decades, the club becoming an absorbing arena beyond their families and the clubhouse a sustaining female domain. Boasting patriotic corsages and dining at banquet tables resplendent with U.S. flags, these well-to-do American women living in Canada reinforced their national pride in ways that both paralleled and departed from women in other ethnic societies. Resistant to assimilation, seemingly secure in their national superiority, and insulated by wealth, they generally set themselves apart from Canadian women, even those of their social rank. In the dusty prairie city they regarded as a temporary dwelling place, these cosseted ladies attended to their own pastimes and to charity work for needy Americans, largely ignoring the problems and concerns of their neighbors. Occasionally, however, these privileged, self-styled sojourners to a physically proximate, vaguely alien land moved beyond the boundaries they imposed upon themselves and others.

In multiple dimensions the members of the AWC occupied a position of hyper-privilege: as they interacted on apparent terms of ease and social equality with elite women of Calgary, they simultaneously embodied American presence and genteelly extended American power. Hosting Fourth of July galas and emblazoning their clubhouse door with an American eagle, these white-gloved expatriates daintily but deftly stuck the Stars and Stripes into the upper crust of Calgary. In small but telling ways, the

club's domestic dramas help to elucidate the complicated meanings and expressions of U.S. nationalism and, perhaps, cultural imperialism in the fifty years that came to constitute the "American Century."

AUTHOR'S NOTE

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NOTES

1. Anne Anderson Perry, "The American Woman in Canada," *Saturday Night*, 1 April 1922, 31.
2. Perry, "American Woman in Canada," 31.
3. See Kathleen E. Oliver, "Splendid Circles: Women's Clubs in Calgary, 1912-1939" (master's thesis, University of Calgary, 1992). See also two essays in *Standing on New Ground: Women in Alberta*, ed. Catherine A. Cavanaugh and Randi R. Warne (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1993): Nanci Langford, "'All That Glitters': The Political Apprenticeship of Alberta Women, 1916-1930," 71-85; and Catherine C. Cole and Ann Milovic, "Education, Community Service, and Social Life: The Alberta Women's Institutes and Rural Families, 1909-1945," 19-31.
4. See the announcement of the initial meeting, which included an open invitation for membership: "Organization of a Club for American Women," *Calgary News Telegram*, 26 March 1912; and also "First American Woman's Club Organized," *Calgary News Telegram*, 1 April 1912.

5. *Western Standard Illustrated Weekly*, Souvenir Edition “Opportunity Number,” (Calgary: Calgary Women’s Press Club, 12 June 1913), n. p.
6. On Calgary’s transformation see the *Western Standard* 1913 special issue, cited above; for more general information on the city’s economy, see David Bright, *The Limits of Labour: Class Formation and the Labour Movement in Calgary, 1883–1929* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998). On the transformation of agriculture in the area surrounding Calgary and elsewhere in the prairies, see Cecilia Danysk, *Hired Hands: Labour and the Development of the Prairie Agriculture, 1880–1930* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995), and more generally John Herd Thompson, *Forging the Prairie West: The Illustrated History of Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998), 43–104.
7. The stories of some of these immigrants and others who partook in the “opening of the West” are featured in chapter 12 of Dirk Hoerder, *Creating Societies: Immigrant Lives in Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999).
8. For a general overview, see R. H. Coates and M. C. Maclean, *The American-Born in Canada: A Statistical Interpretation* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1943), especially pages 16–17, 24, 50, 56, 59. Estimates vary; see the discussion in John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall, *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 79–82.
9. Howard Palmer with Tamara Palmer, *Alberta: A New History* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1990), 83. For a discussion of Americans migrating to the Canadian West before the 1890s see Simon Evans, “Tenderfoot to Rider: Learning ‘Cowboying’ on the Canadian Ranching Frontier,” in *Cowboys, Ranchers and the Cattle Business: Cross-Border Perspectives on Ranching History*, ed. Simon Evans, Sarah Carter, and Bill Yeo (Calgary: University of Calgary Press; Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2000), 61–80; on settlement patterns on both sides of the border see John W. Bennett and Seena B. Kohl, *Settling the Canadian-American West, 1890–1915* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995); and on the recruitment of Americans see Harold Martin Troper, *Only Farmers Need Apply: Canadian Government Encouragement of Immigration from the U.S., 1896–1911* (Toronto: Griffin, 1972); and also Michael B. Percy and Tamara Woroby, “American Homesteaders and the Canadian Prairies, 1899 and 1909,” *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History* 24 (1987): 77–100, which offers a succinct overview of the historiography on this topic. There is a small but growing literature on migrations across the U.S.-Canada border. The classic work is Marcus L. Hansen and John Bartlett Brebner, *The Mingling of the Canadian and American Peoples* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1940). On migration from Canada to the United States see two important recent studies by Canadian scholars: Bruno Ramirez, *Crossing the 49th Parallel: Migration from Canada to the United States, 1900–1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001) and Randy William Widdis, *With Scarcely a Ripple: Anglo-Canadian Migration into the United States and Western Canada, 1880–1920* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1998). Increased scholarly interest on migration in this borderlands is attested to by special issues of two U.S. scholarly journals: John J. Bukowczyk and David R. Smith, eds., “Canadian Migration in the Great Lakes Region,” Special issue, *Mid-America* 80 (Fall 1998): 208–34; and Donna R. Gabaccia, ed., “Migration and the Making of North America,” Special issue, *Journal of American Ethnic History* 20 (Spring 2001): 3–132. See also Erika Lee,

- “Enforcing the Borders: Chinese Exclusion along the U.S. Borders with Canada and Mexico, 1882–1924,” *Journal of American History* 89 (June 2002): 54–86. For a regional approach applied to the Great Lakes Basin see Nora Faires, “Leaving the ‘Land of the Second Chance’: Migration from Ontario to the Great Lakes States in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” in *Permeable Border: The Great Lakes Basin as Transnational Region, 1650–1990*, ed. John J. Bukowczyk, Nora Faires, David R. Smith, and Randy William Widdis (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005).
10. Ten years later the number of Americans exceeded 5,000, remaining near this level through 1941, but dipping to 6 percent of the city’s growing population. These figures calculated from Max Foran, *Calgary: An Illustrated History* (Toronto: James Lorimar, 1978), tables VII and VIII.
 11. Palmer and Palmer, *Alberta*, 125.
 12. Evans, “Tenderfoot to Rider,” 70–72, 76–79; Foran, *Calgary: An Illustrated History*, 86–88; and Paul Voisey, “In Search of Wealth and Status: An Economic and Social Study of Entrepreneurs in Early Calgary,” in *Frontier Calgary: Town, City, and Region, 1875–1914*, ed. Anthony W. Rasporich and Henry C. Klassen (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, McClelland and Stewart West, 1975), 221–41.
 13. The General Federation of Women’s Clubs was founded in 1890; see the organization’s official history, Mary B. Wood, *The History of the General Federation of Women’s Clubs for the First Twenty-Two Years of Its Organization* (New York: General Federation of Women’s Clubs, 1912). The Calgary Local Council of Women was established in 1896; see Marjorie Norris, *A Leaven of Ladies: A History of the Calgary Local Council of Women* (Calgary: Detselig, 1995). The period of the late nineteenth century through the 1920s was the heyday for the founding and consolidation of such women’s societies, the literature on which is, of course, voluminous. For a comprehensive synthesis on U.S. societies from the nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century see Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women’s Associations in American History* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1991). Scott’s carefully researched overview is generally admiring of these associations, de-emphasizing conflicts within and among such groups. An influential examination of divisions within such organizations is Nancy Hewitt, “Beyond the Search for Sisterhood: American Women’s History in the 1980s,” *Social History* 10 (October 1985): 299–321. For a sense of the historiography regarding the significance of these institutions’ gender separatism see two contributions by Estelle Freedman: “Separatism as Strategy: Female Institution Building and American Feminism, 1870–1930,” *Feminist Studies* 5 (Fall 1979): 512–20; and “Separatism Revisited: Women’s Institutions, Social Reform and the Career of Miriam Van Waters,” in *U.S. History as Women’s History: New Feminist Essays*, ed. Linda K. Kerber, Kathryn Kish Sklar, and Alice Kessler-Harris (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1995). A recent contribution stresses the impact of activist women and their clubs in shaping urban politics, even before suffrage; see Maureen A. Flanagan, *Seeing with Their Hearts: Chicago Women and the Vision of the Good City, 1871–1933* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002).
 14. Norris, *Leaven of Ladies*, 13, 63–72.
 15. Elise A. Corbet, “Woman’s Canadian Club of Calgary,” *Alberta Historical Review* 28 (1977): 29–36; Oliver, “Splendid Circles,” 52–54. See also *The Calgary Club Woman’s Blue Book, 1916*

- (Calgary: Calgary Branch of the Canadian Woman's Press Club, 1916), 23–25 and *The Alberta Club Woman's Blue Book, 1917* (Calgary: Calgary Branch of the Canadian Women's Press Club, 1917), 67, 69. Unlike the AWC, which had no male counterpart, there was also a Men's Canadian Club, with which the women's organization regularly participated.
16. *Calgary Club Woman's Blue Book, 1916*, 25.
 17. Oliver, "Splendid Circles," 49–52; Norris, *Leaven of Ladies*, 69–70. The Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire began in part to broaden support for the British effort during the Boer War (1899–1902); the Calgary branch began in 1909.
 18. In the first half of the twentieth century, as in more recent years, tariff issues raged between the United States and Canada, with tremendous consequences for Albertans. On the "reciprocity debate" see, for example, Ross Hawthorne Bayard, "Anti-Americanism in Canada and the Abortive Reciprocity Agreement of 1911" (PhD diss., University of South Carolina, 1971); and for a good discussion of the impact of high U.S. tariffs on Albertan ranchers in the 1920s see Max Foran, "Fighting a Losing Battle: Canadian Stockmen and the American Tariffs, 1920–1930," *Alberta History* 74, no. 4 (Fall 2000): 775–98. For an overall discussion see Thompson and Randall, *Canada and the United States*, 86–92; Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook, *A Nation Transformed: Canada, 1896–1921*, The Canadian Centenary Series (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 162–87; and L. E. Ellis, *Reciprocity 1911: A Study in Canadian-American Relations* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1939).
 19. James H. Gray, *R. B. Bennett: The Calgary Years* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 116–19.
 20. "Two Greatest Dangers," *Calgary News Telegram*, 12 March 1912. The controversy over this speech continued for several weeks, with Bennett claiming he had been misquoted, to the benefit of his Liberal opponents; see "R. B. Bennett Is Willing To Resign And Run Again If Electors Of Calgary Demand That He Do So," *Calgary News Telegram*, 25 March 1912.
 21. See Gray, *Bennett*, 120–22, and P. B. Waite, *The Loner: Three Sketches of the Life and Ideas of R. B. Bennett, 1870–1947*, The 1991 Joanne Goodman Lectures (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 42–60. Bennett's nationalist vision is discussed in Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970). Vociferously anti-Chinese, throughout his career Bennett regarded foreigners as subjects for assimilation. As Conservative leader Bennett launched another noisy anti-American campaign during the election of 1930; see John Herd Thompson with Allen Seager, *Decades of Discord: Canada, 1922–1939*, The Canadian Centenary Series (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), 201–05.
 22. *Glimpses of the Past*, American Woman's Club of Calgary, Golden Anniversary booklet, 1962, p. 4, American Woman's Club Records, Account Number 5979 (hereafter cited as AWC Records), Box 7, File 36, Glenbow Archives, Calgary, AB. This area featured middle- and upper-middle-class housing built in the boom decade after the turn of the century. One frequent address for AWC members was "The Devenish," located in the 900 block of 17th Ave. S. W., an elegant brick apartment building erected by investor and contractor O. G. Devenish, whose wife was an AWC member. (Occupational data from *Henderson's Calgary City Directory, 1915*). Between April 1914 and November 1918 at least ten

- club members resided at The Devenish, with three sequentially occupying the same apartment. Addresses of club members are given on application forms filed between 1912 and 1942; see the alphabetical card index to applications, AWC Records, Box 6, File 27. For a description of the development of Mount Royal as a site for substantial and costly single family residences see the first-person account of an early home buyer in *Western Standard*, Special Issue, 12 June 1913.
23. General Meeting Minutes, 1934–1938, Report of the Annual May Luncheon, 1938, ledger, p. 19, AWC Records, Box 1, File 5. The clubhouse is located at 1010 14th Avenue S. W.
 24. “Organization of a Club for American Women,” *Calgary News Telegram*, 26 March 1912.
 25. The total number is 488. The percentage married may be an underestimate. Of the twenty-five members who did not list themselves as “Mrs” only nine called themselves “Miss,” the remaining sixteen using their names without a title; for the purposes of this discussion I have included them among those not married. Marital status could and did change. Some who joined as single subsequently married, and some may have been or later became widowed or divorced. These data derive from the alphabetical card index of application forms (1912–1942), AWC Records, Box 6, File 27.
 26. Of the seventy-five founding members, *Henderson’s Calgary City Directory*, 1912, provided information on fifty-two husbands’ occupations. Of these, six held professions (one as an attorney in R. B. Bennett’s firm); nineteen were executives or managers of large businesses, including oil, lumber, flour milling, and agricultural implement concerns; another twelve were bankers or entrepreneurs in real estate and allied businesses; twelve more worked in middle-level managerial and sales positions for an array of enterprises; three had craft jobs; and one was a farmer. These data confirm references in *Glimpses of the Past* and in Kate Gunn, “The American Woman’s Club of Calgary, 1912–1921: ‘A Home Away From Home,’” *Fort Calgary Quarterly* 4 (Winter 1983): 8–11.
 27. See Thompson, *Decades of Discord*, 186–87.
 28. Data on all but two of these members are from *Henderson’s Calgary City Directory*, 1912; on McNeill, information derives from the obituary of Walter Floyd McNeill, undated clipping, Newspaper Clipping Files, Glenbow Library, Calgary, AB; and on McKillop from the obituary of Archie McKillop, (Calgary) *Daily Herald*, 25 April 1921, Newspaper Clipping Files, Glenbow Library.
 29. These data are fragmentary and derive from an analysis of the occupations of sixty-seven members or their husbands from 1913 to 1945, as listed in volumes of *Henderson’s Calgary City Directory*.
 30. On Mrs E. P. (Georgina) Newhall, see Norris, *Leaven of Ladies*, 187–96, and photograph p. 128.
 31. See “Women Who Make News Include Club Leader” (stamped 4 April 1942) and “Woman Appointed to Hospital Board” (stamped 24 October 1963), in Clipping File Local History Collection, Castell Central Library, Calgary Public Library, Calgary, AB (hereafter, Local History Collection, Castell, CPL).
 32. “80 Years of Calgary Local Council of Women, 1912–1992—In Honor of Calgary’s Centennial, 1994,” Scrapbook, Local History Collection, Castell, CPL; Norris, *Leaven of Ladies*, 263.

33. Norris, *Leaven of Ladies*, 163–73, photograph p. 125; “Alberta Women We Should Know—Alice Jamieson,” in *Pioneer Women of Western Canada*, ed. Margot Smith and Carol Pasternak, researched and compiled by Men and Women Unlimited, Calgary, Alberta, as part of an Opportunities for Youth Project (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1978), 50–54. Jamieson arrived in Calgary with her husband, R. R. Jamieson, in 1902; he later served as Calgary’s mayor. See Jean Leslie, “Reuben R. Jamieson, Mayor 1909–1910,” in *Past and Present: People and Events in Calgary—Accounts by Calgary Authors* (Calgary: Century Calgary Publications, 1975).
34. Data on place of birth rely on evidence for one hundred forty members; the information derives from the alphabetical card index of membership application forms filed between 1912 and 1942, AWC Records, Box 6, File 27.
35. The figure is 57.1 percent. Of the fourteen states extending along the international divide from Maine to Washington, only New Hampshire and, surprisingly, Idaho had no representatives among the AWC’s membership.
36. *Glimpses of the Past*; Gunn, “American Woman’s Club,” 8.
37. General Meeting Minutes, 1925–1930, minutes for meeting of 7 January 1930, ledger pp. 171–72, AWC Records, Box 1, File 4.
38. “Beavers Tales: The Man Who Catered to Stampede Appetites,” *Albertan Sunday Tab*, 8 July 1979, Clipping File—Biography, Local History Collection, Castell, CPL. Mrs Beavers’ sister also lived in Calgary for more than sixty years, but seems not to have joined the AWC. See Minutes, 1951–1975, Hospital and Memorial Minutes, n. p., AWC Records, Box 6, File 23, obituary clippings.
39. Information on all these members are from obituaries pasted into Minutes, 1951–1975, Hospital and Memorial Minutes, n. p., AWC Records, Box 6, File 23, obituary clippings.
40. See General Meeting Minutes, 1930–1934, minutes of meeting of 3 September 1934 at which a report is provided of that year’s Decoration Day service at Calgary’s Union Cemetery for “11 departed members.” AWC Records, Box 1, File 4a.
41. American Woman’s Club 60th Anniversary, 1912–1972—Lake Bonavista Inn, oversize, AWC Records.
42. *The Bluebird Cookbook*, American Woman’s Club of Calgary, (yellow book), c. 1960, p. 3, Cookbooks Collection, Box 2, Glenbow Library, Calgary, AB.
43. Norris, *Leaven of Ladies*, 86–89. Before the war the Local Council, in cooperation with its constituent member, the Women’s Canadian Club, had been active in efforts to Canadianize southern and eastern European immigrants, singling out those from the Ukraine as in special need of acculturation; this view infused some of their war-time activities. See more generally Frances Swyripa and John Herd Thompson, eds., *Loyalties in Conflict: Ukrainians in Canada during the First World War* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 1983).
44. Palmer, *Alberta*, 171–73; P. Whitney Lackenbauer, “Under Siege: The CEF Attack on the RNWMP Barracks in Calgary, October 1916,” *Alberta History* 49 (Summer 2001): 3.
45. On men born in the United States who served in the Calgary-based 50th Battalion (1914–1915) and the 3rd, 12th, and 13th Regiments Canadian Mounted Rifles, Canadian Expeditionary Force, see “Alberta Family Histories Societies, Canadian Expeditionary Force, Nominal Rolls,” available at <http://www.afhs.ab.ca/data/rolls/index.html>. For an

- overview see Fred Gaffen, *Cross-Border Warriors: Canadians in American Forces, Americans in Canadian Forces from the Civil War to the Gulf* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1995), 13–16.
46. Of the approximately 45,000 men from Alberta who served in the war, over 6,000 perished. Palmer, *Alberta*, 167.
 47. I base this view on discussions of AWC activities in the *Calgary Club Woman's Blue Book*, 1915 (Calgary: Calgary Branch of the Canadian Women's Press Club, 1915), 26–27 and the *Calgary Club Woman's Blue Book*, 1916, 25–28. Unfortunately club minutes are available only beginning in August 1916, and these records are partial until December 1917; see Executive Board Minutes, 1916–1921, AWC Records, Box 3, File 14; and General Meeting Minutes, 1917–1925, AWC Records, Box 1, File 3.
 48. On the speaker, see *Calgary Club Woman's Blue Book*, 1915, 27. The concert is reported on at the meeting of 28 August 1916, the first meeting for the initial extant minute book; see Executive Board Minutes, AWC Records, Box 3, File 14. Serbian relief received substantial support in Calgary, especially from the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire; see *Alberta Club Woman's Blue Book*, 1917, 98–99.
 49. *Glimpses of Our Past*, 8; *Alberta Club Woman's Blue Book*, 1917, 72.
 50. Executive Board Minutes, minutes for meeting of 27 October 1916, AWC Records, Box 3, File 14.
 51. Lackenbauer, “The CEF under Siege.”
 52. On the planning of the event see Executive Board Minutes, 26 January 1917, AWC Records, Box 3, File 14; see also *Alberta Club Woman's Blue Book*, 1917, 72.
 53. *Alberta Club Woman's Blue Book*, 1917, 73.
 54. The totals for May 1917 to May 1918 were 203 articles to the U.S. Navy League and 16,880 to the Canadian Red Cross; June 1918 to December 1918, 320 and 20,507 articles, respectively. *Glimpses of Our Past*, 8–9. On totals for each month see, for example, General Meeting Minutes, 1917–1925, minutes for meeting of 7 May 1918, ledger pp. 18–19, AWC Records, Box 1, File 3.
 55. General Meeting Minutes, 1917–1925, minutes for meeting of 4 February 1919, ledger p. 34, AWC Records, Box 1, File 3.
 56. *Daughters of the Allies Conservation Cook Book: A Collection of Tested Recipes Compiled by the Friday Unit* (Calgary: n.p., June 1918), 5, Cookbooks Collection, Box 2, Glenbow Library, Calgary, AB.
 57. Executive Board Minutes, 1916–1926, meeting of 29 December 1916, AWC Records, Box 3, File 14.
 58. General Meeting Minutes, 1917–1925, meeting of 7 November 1919, ledger p. 56, AWC Records, Box 1, File 2; Executive Board Meeting Minutes, 1916–1926, minutes for meeting of 29 March 1923, Box 3, File 14; and General Meeting Minutes, 1917–1925, meeting of 2 September 1924, ledger pp. 249–50, Box 1, File 2.
 59. General Meeting Minutes, 1917–1925, meetings of 3 December 1918, ledger p. 27 and 7 January 1919, ledger p. 32, AWC Records, Box 1, File 2; General Meeting Minutes, 1930–1934, meeting of 2 January 1934, ledger p. 165, AWC Records, Box 1, File 4a.
 60. Executive Board Meeting Minutes, 1916–1926, minutes for meetings of March 1920 (n. d.), 6 May 1924, and 28 August 1925, AWC Records, Box 3, File 14.
 61. On economic conditions during the early 1920s see Bright, *Limits of Labor*, 120–44.

62. H. H. McKinney is listed as “agency manager for South Alberta, Northern Life Assurance Co. of Canada” in *Henderson’s Calgary City Directory, 1919*.
63. General Meeting Minutes, 1917–1925, ledger pp. 128–29, AWC Records, Box 1, File 3.
64. For example, see General Meeting Minutes, 1925–1930, minutes of meetings of 6 November 1928, ledger p. 123, and 5 November 1929, ledger pp. 158–60, AWC Records, Box 1, File 4. Such talks often were held to mark Armistice Day.
65. General Meeting Minutes, 1934–1938, minutes of meeting of 3 April 1934, ledger p. 183, AWC Records, Box 1, File 5.
66. General Meeting Minutes, 1934–1938, minutes of meeting of November 1935 (n. d.), ledger pp. 67–72, quote p. 72, AWC Records, Box 1, File 5.
67. General Meeting Minutes, 1934–1938, minutes of meetings of April 1936 (n. d.), ledger p. 107; February 1937 (n. d.), ledger pp. 150–51; October 1937, ledger p. 185, AWC Records, Box 1, File 5; and General Meeting Minutes, 1938–1942, minutes of meeting of 1 April 1938, ledger p. 12, AWC Records, Box 1, File 6.
68. General Meeting Minutes, 1934–1938, minutes of meeting of 4 December 1934, ledger p. 15, AWC Records, Box 1, File 5.
69. General Meeting Minutes, 1925–1930, minutes of meeting of 4 March 1930, ledger p. 181, AWC Records, Box 1, File 4; General Meeting Minutes, 1934–1938, minutes of meetings of 2 December 1930, ledger p. 13; 7 January 1933, ledger p. 107; and 7 February 1933, ledger p. 114, AWC Records, Box 1, File 5.
70. See, for example, General Meeting Minutes, 1934–1938, minutes of meetings of 7 March 1933, ledger p. 24, and 2 January 1934, ledger p. 160, 165, AWC Records, Box 1, File 5. On the impact of the Depression see Thompson, *Decades of Discord, 193–276*, and especially on relief camps, 269–72.
71. General Meeting Minutes, 1938–1942, minutes of meeting of 6 February 1940, ledger pp. 97–98, AWC Records, Box 1, File 6.
72. General Meeting Minutes, 1938–1942, minutes of meeting of 5 September 1939, ledger p. 75, AWC Records, Box 1, File 6.
73. American Woman’s Club of Calgary, Calendar, Season of 1940–1941, pp. 2–3, AWC Records, Box 7, File 35.
74. American Woman’s Club of Calgary, Calendar, Season of 1940–1941, p. 5, AWC Records, Box 7, File 35. The attribution for this poem provided in the club’s calendar is “Courtesy of the *New York Times*.”
75. Notably the club apparently had reproduced this poem once before, in its yearbook for 1934–1935. At that point the AWC was still affiliated with the Local Council and was becoming more active in the Peace Council. See General Meeting Minutes, 1930–1934, minutes of meeting of 3 September 1934, ledger p. 191, AWC Records, Box 1, File 4a.
76. The Spitfire would become a legendary British fighter plane. General Meeting Minutes, 1938–1942, minutes of meeting of 5 November 1940, ledger pp. 124–25, AWC Records, Box 1, File 6. At the same meeting they set up twice-weekly sewing sessions of “layettes and clothing for [the] British homeless.”
77. American Woman’s Club of Calgary Guest Book, 1940–1964, signatures for 17 November, 11 December, and 15 December 1940 and 26 January, 9 February, 23 February, and 9 March 1941, AWC Records, Box 7, File 34.

78. General Meeting Minutes, 1938–1942, minutes of meeting of 4 February 1941, ledger p. 138, AWC Records, Box 1, File 6.
79. On Canadian troops and the conduct of the war, see, for example, Donald Creighton, *The Forked Road: Canada, 1939–1957*, The Canadian Centenary Series (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), 62–109.
80. Cochrane and Area Historical Society, *Big Hill Country: Cochrane and Area* (Cochrane, AB: Cochrane and Area Historical Society, 1977), 296.
81. General Meeting Minutes, 1938–1942, minutes of meeting of 2 September 1941, ledger p. 160, and Annual Report, 1941/1942 (filed April 1942), ledger pp. 156, 163, AWC Records, Box 1, File 6.
82. American Woman's Club of Calgary Guest Book, 1940–1964, 9 March 1941, AWC Records, Box 7, File 34.
83. Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2000), 6.
84. The Travel Committee reports are in General Meeting Minutes, 1942–1946, minutes of meeting of 6 April 1943, ledger p. 45, AWC Records, Box 2, File 7; and Minutes, 1941–1967, Arts and Crafts Department, minutes of meeting of 17 November 1942, ledger p. 31, AWC Records, Box 5, File 21.
85. General Meeting Minutes, 1942–1946, minutes of meeting of 1 May 1942, ledger p. 5, AWC Records, Box 2, File 7.
86. Minutes, 1941–1967, Arts and Crafts Department, minutes of meeting of 16 February 1941, ledger pp. 6–8, AWC Records, Box 5, File 21.
87. General Meeting Minutes, 1942–1946, minutes of meetings of 6 September 1943, ledger p. 58, and 1 February 1944, ledger p. 75, AWC Records, Box 2, File 7. The minute taker made two errors in the notes for these meetings. The ship should be listed as the “corvette *Calgary*,” referring the HMCS *Calgary*, K-231, launched in 1941. See <http://www.marine.forces.ca/calgary/about/ship—about—e.asp?category=70>. Regarding the ship, the minute taker probably meant HMCS *la Malbaie*, a Flower class corvette, K-273. See <http://uboat.net.allies/warships/ship/870.html>. My thanks to John Herd Thompson for calling these mistakes to my attention and providing these corrections.
88. See “About the United Nations—History,” available at the official website of the United Nations, <http://www.un.org/aboutun/history/html>. Roosevelt first used this phrase a month after the U.S. entry into the war, at a meeting on 1 January 1942 with representatives from twenty-five other nations, including Canada, fighting the Axis.
89. This photograph appeared in the *Calgary Herald*, 30 September 1942; see the accompanying article “United Nations Tea Attracts More than Four Hundred.”