Basements and Attics, Closets and Cyberspace

Morra, Linda M.

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Letters to the Woman’s Page Editor: Reading Francis Marion Beynon’s “The Country Homemakers” and the Public Culture for Women
Katja Thieme

Research on women’s suffrage constitutes an increasingly diverse academic field, producing studies not only on the history and politics of different national suffrage movements but also on suffrage theatre (e.g., Stowell), literature (Green; Petty), marketing (Finnegan; Morrisson), sexuality (Kent), and fashion (Behling). Although some attention has been paid to suffrage debates in non-European countries (including China, Japan, and South America),¹ by far the greatest degree of English-speaking scholarship continues to concentrate on British and American suffragists. This focus is the result of the fact that these were powerful countries and influential cultures, and is also a reflection of the diversity of archived material available for the study of the suffrage movements in them. Both movements left behind considerable records, including pamphlets, correspondence, minutes, yearbooks of regional and national suffrage organizations, and a rich record of print runs of various suffrage magazines.² By comparison, scholarship on Canadian suffrage has been less prolific, partly a result of the relative absence of documents. Canada did not have the same breadth
and intensity of suffrage activities, nor did it have, therefore, the same level of newspaper reporting or courtroom documentation. Of the organizations that were formed and the campaign activities that were carried out, relatively few documents remain. Aside from a very small number of magazines, the Canadian suffrage movement produced very few of its own printed documents. The most extensive record that remains can be found in the various woman’s pages of local newspapers, a number of them edited by outspoken suffragists, and in the suffrage commentary that was published in newspapers and magazines.

In spite of the paucity of archival materials or archives, we can find useful ways of approaching what we have preserved for the benefit of the cultural and historical record on women’s political interventions. Indeed, the very lack of such documentation demands that we find new ways of reading to compensate for gaps in the record. Although the documents on Canadian suffrage might not support the same degree and diversity of study that is being produced about other national suffrage movements, researchers can nevertheless take a range of approaches that may illuminate and challenge what we already know about Canadian suffrage debates. From a rhetorical perspective, for example, the women’s suffrage movement gives us insight into the discursive formation of new subject positions and the rhetorical process of social and political change. One site where women shaped increasingly public and political subject positions for themselves was the woman’s pages, especially those where readers played a large role by sending in letters and reports. My essay focuses on the woman’s page in the Grain Growers’ Guide, edited between 1912 and 1917 by Francis Marion Beynon. I approach this material with questions that have become prominent in rhetorical studies of women’s writing. How were women called forth to speak, and what were their motivations to participate in public debate? How did woman’s page editors shape the conditions under which they themselves and other women could articulate their concerns? Following from that, how did suffragist editors like Beynon create the situations in which they and other women could speak publicly and politically about issues such as women’s suffrage?

Recent rhetorical scholarship provides particularly useful ways in approaching suffrage discussions in Canadian newspapers and magazines. Rhetorical research looks with great interest at texts that literary study might deem ephemeral or supplementary. These are the kinds of texts that are often the only record of activities by marginalized or historically forgotten persons and groups: personal and professional correspondence, petitions, minutes of meetings, reports of various associations, the technical documents produced in various trades and professions, ledgers, inven-
tories, and scrapbooks. Rhetorical scholars look at these texts differently, and asks different questions than those conducting historical or sociological investigation. For instance, scholars of rhetoric are interested in the sense of need or motive that calls people to speak in certain situations, in the kinds of speech and textual forms—the genres—that are produced by recurring motives and situations, the way speakers address and constitute their audiences, and the kinds of action that different forms of speech perform. By examining the conditions and actions of different types of speech, rhetorical study has moved beyond the notion that “rhetorical” describes exceptional speech samples. Most of us no longer search for particularly successful or elegant specimens of persuasion, but instead consider all speech as rhetorical, and thus worthy of rhetorical analysis. As a result, a much wider variety of material has become the subject of rhetorical study. In feminist approaches to rhetoric, this shift away from “outstanding” speech samples has been particularly important.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, feminist scholars such as Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Andrea Lunsford, and Cheryl Glenn turned their attention to women’s rhetoric and attempted to foreground great women who had been lost from rhetorical history. Other studies followed, focusing on influential women speakers and analyzing how they managed to deliver speeches and garner public attention at times when women’s public speaking was not encouraged and was often met with hostility. Such research has taught us about American women speakers such as Methodist minister and suffragist Anna Howard Shaw (Linkugel and Solomon) or moral reformer and abolitionist Angelina Grimké (Browne). In the Canadian context, feminist research that focuses on texts and speeches by single figures has expanded our knowledge of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century writers such as Agnes Maule Machar (Fiamengo), Pauline Johnson (Strong-Boag and Gerson), Sara Jeannette Duncan (Dean; Fiamengo), Kit Coleman (Freeman; Fiamengo), and Nellie McClung (Devereux).

For the most part, research that investigates the texts of individual women is, as Robin Jensen calls it, “product-oriented”: it focuses on the texts and opinions of prominent women and does not usually analyze the speech productions of a wide group of participants. There is also recent work, which is more “process-oriented” in that it analyzes collective rhetoric by women. Often, these are women who were not publicly celebrated or even publicly recognized at the time. How are we to analyze the texts of these women? What can we learn about a movement’s genres and the actions these genres perform? Researchers interested in the collective rhetoric of groups of women focus, for instance, on American women’s suffrage journals (Solomon), nineteenth-century temperance activists
(Mattingly), U.S. women’s anti-slavery petitions (Zaeske), or writing- and speech-intensive education programs for women (Hollis). Jensen observes that these projects “broaden our sense of what rhetoric is” (101). They teach us how speech creates a diverse range of subject positions, and how these subject positions are enacted through genre.

Such a shift in rhetoric’s attention is particularly fruitful when studying the discourse of marginal and disadvantaged groups. The often uneven record that we have of women’s involvement in historical events and movements rarely allows us to tell seamless narratives, even in the case of the most prominent women. More typically, the historical material provides us with momentary glimpses of a flurry of activities, which are carried out by a score of women, most of whom remain largely unknowable. Rhetorical study of these movements is interested all manner of speech situations, any kind of text, and all debate participants. This kind of approach locates these texts and analyzes their development and the work they do.

My work is very much influenced by what Jensen calls “process-oriented” approaches to rhetoric, even if, on the surface, my topic here seems somewhat “product-oriented” in its focus on one central figure. While I concentrate on one editor, Francis Marion Beynon, I look at her work with an eye to collective processes. The process of increasing women’s opportunity to speak required collective effort. At the same time, however, some women were better placed and in more powerful positions to affect this process. Woman’s page editors were among these powerfully positioned women, and editors like Beynon were in a privileged position to foster a sense of collectivity among Anglo-Canadian women.

Francis Marion Beynon was the editor of the woman’s page in the *Grain Growers’ Guide* from 1912 to 1917, calling her page “The Country Homemakers.” The journal as a whole ran from 1908 to 1928 and had its offices in Winnipeg. It was published by the Grain Growers’ Grain Company—a co-operative of Prairie farmers—and by the grain growers’ associations of Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. I accessed the microfilm version available at the University of British Columbia library. The *Guide* had had several woman’s page editors before Beynon, but she was the first to work full time. As Anne Hicks explains, along with editing “The Country Homemakers,” Beynon edited and wrote “The Sunshine Guild” pages, secured space for the reports of the women’s auxiliaries of the grain growers’ associations, wrote a biweekly column called “Country Girl’s Ideas,” and managed the children’s page. Her sister, Lillian Beynon Thomas, was woman’s editor of the *Manitoba Free Press*. Beynon was also a co-founder of the Winnipeg branch of the Canadian Women’s Press Club, and was involved in the Political Equality League of Manitoba. In January 1914, she
acted in the famous mock parliament at the Walker Theatre in Winnipeg. The event was organized by the Winnipeg Political Equality League and featured the organization’s key members in the positions of the provincial parliament at the time. Beynon and her sister, Lillian Thomas, acted as members of the opposition. Nellie McClung was the Premier, Kenneth Haig was the Attorney General, Isabel Graham the Speaker of the House, and Genevieve Lipsett-Skinner the Minister of Economy and Agriculture. In 1917, Beynon’s time at the Guide came to an end because she disagreed with Editor George Chipman about Canada’s involvement in the First World War. She was one of very few Canadian feminists who remained staunchly pacifist throughout the war (see Cook; Roberts). After she lost her position, she followed her sister Lillian to New York where, in 1919, she published her semi-autobiographical novel, Aleta Dey.

In her ground-breaking work on female journalists in Canada, Marjory Lang notes that woman’s page editors owed their jobs not only to an increasing interest in women’s commercial power because of their growing importance as targets for newspaper advertising but also to their own involvement in the burgeoning women’s club movement. Thus, while these editors were often stand-alone and idiosyncratic figures within a male-dominated newspaper scene, they were also representatives of a collective force of women. They were not just representatives, Lang notes, they were also prime movers in and promoters of these clubs. Such involvement in one’s journalistic subject matter was not unusual at the time; the idea of journalistic objectivity did not gain hold until after the women’s club movement had lost much of its political momentum. Lang describes this situation as an early stage in the ascendance of female journalists toward what later became two separate areas of activity: the independent journalism of the disengaged observer and the professional work of the public relations officer. For Lang, this later change in the role of the woman’s page editor is in tune with “the falling off of voluntarism and encroachment of professionalism in the arena served by women’s clubs” (217). Beynon wrote at exactly the time when the relation between woman’s page editors and the political ambitions of women’s clubs was most potent. She used her position quite actively to produce a collective debate on the newspaper page and to create other occasions when women could meet and debate with one another.

By the 1910s, letters to the editor were a genre of public debate in which Canadian women could occasionally participate. Like those sent today, letters sent to the editor-in-chief were visually set apart from the editorial pieces to which they responded. They were usually published on a different page and under a separate rubric than editorials and main articles.
The *Grain Growers’ Guide*, for instance, had a separate page for its letters called “The Mailbag.” I need to describe the layout of the “Mailbag” page briefly in order to better contrast this section to Beynon’s rhetorical efforts. During the years under consideration, letters published on the “Mailbag” page usually started with the address line “Editor, Guide,” creating a rather different tone than the more personal “Dear Miss Beynon.” “Mailbag” letters were usually signed with the letter writers’ first name, or initials and last name, along with their hometown and province. It was not common for these letter writers to use pen names. Although letter writers offered their thoughts and names on this page, the editor did not (during Beynon’s time, the editor was George Chipman). Only rarely did he respond to one of the letters; and if he did, it was done usually in order to swiftly “correct” what he saw as a writer’s false or mistaken claims. On the letter page, the most discernible presence of the editor was a routinely included brief titled “Notice to Correspondents,” which reminded them that they could “freely exchange views and derive from each other the benefits of experience and helpful suggestions,” and that “every letter must be signed by the name of the writer, though not necessarily for publication.”

On Beynon’s woman’s page, letters were often placed in the middle of the page, directly following her editorial piece (which she signed with her full name) and before brief articles on cooking, baking, or sewing. Quite frequently, they were printed with an immediate, short response by the editor herself, signed “F. M. B.” Most letter writers who contributed to the woman’s page edited by Beynon used pen names. Some of these letter writers might have included their real names with their addresses, for instance, when they asked for the books and pamphlets that the *Grain Growers’ Guide* was distributing among its readers; thus, their names would have been known to Beynon. It appears that Beynon kept careful record of the pen names since she occasionally modified someone’s choice of name when she noticed that it had already been used by someone else. Several readers published repeatedly under their chosen names. On the surface, the widespread use of pen names among Beynon’s readers made the discussion more anonymous—a few of the readers made critical note of that and then demonstratively signed their letters with full names. However, this anonymity also enabled discussion in relation to stories about hardship, poverty, and mistreatment (a point that is also taken up critically when a reader calls for more political and less personal writing). Clearly, letters to the woman’s page functioned differently than those sent to the main editor of the same periodical: they were of a different nature, constituted a substantial portion of the page, and provided readers with a role in shaping the woman’s page content.
The differences between letters to the main page editor and letters to the woman’s page were related to how women like Beynon conceived of their role. Beynon saw herself as actively fostering a sense of community among her readers. When women indicated in their letters that they were new to reading the page or writing public letters, she often made a point of welcoming them to the “circle” or “family.” Beynon’s community-minded approach to her editorship was not unusual among woman’s page editors. Lang highlights how these female editors differed from main page editors in their friendly and accommodating tone toward readers and letter writers. She notes that woman’s page editorials often took the form of an “‘over-the-fence’ chat, projecting the illusion of private communication into a public venue,” and that female editors provided a “surrogate friend” for the rural reader (Lang 10). In their writing on social and club activities, these editors were “active moulders of a culture of women,” in effect creating a “newspaper within the newspaper” where “women were the newsmakers” (10). Those journalists who were considered club reporters were particularly instrumental in creating this culture of women, as they simultaneously played the roles of club member, club advocate, and club reporter. As I mentioned, Beynon wrote at a time when women’s clubs were still surging in popularity and were becoming increasingly confident in their ability to address and change social conditions. The central space that was given to these letters by women was a crucial aspect of this Anglo-Canadian women’s culture which extended across a diverse range of clubs and charities, and in many cases included suffrage organizations.

In 1908, the Grain Growers’ Guide had declared that it supported women’s suffrage in the editorial of its very first issue. Beynon, too, left no doubt that she was in favour of women’s rights. However, her desire to promote women’s right to vote was sometimes trumped by her hope to foster discussion among women, including those that involved their right to vote. This attitude was particularly evident in the first year of her editorship, when she was most eager to establish a sense of community among her readership. In July 1912, she declared that she was so impressed with Olive Schreiner’s book Woman and Labor that she decided to summarize parts of it in consecutive columns. This summary begins with a piece entitled “The Woman’s Movement.” In the same issue, she also included a letter by “Albertan,” who first described wildflowers in order to provide “a breath of country air” and then advocated for Beynon’s page to concentrate on issues of motherhood and care of children.

And about your page, I think it should deal in the subjects most near and dear to the woman heart. How to care for our babies and economize our work, to give us more time and strength for our loved ones.
I am sorry to say, and yet I feel it true, that many of our women today are fighting against motherhood because it binds them at home, away from their good times, or because “John does not like babies.”

Can you not in your page to women show them what a great life work it is to train children to be true, honorable citizens? (9)

Along the same lines, Albertan also notes her opposition to women’s suffrage: “As to votes for women, I think if she does her duty by her children she has no time for votes, but I do think she should be protected so that her husband could not sell their home and leave her homeless” (9). Despite her earlier declaration of admiration for Schreiner’s book, Beynon did not directly respond to Albertan’s opinion about suffrage. Instead, she lauds her description of flowers and invites her to write again: “Your letter did indeed bring a breath of country air and as you described them I could fairly smell the wild flowers as they appeared one after another. Do come again, and soon” (“Harking Back” 9). Like a polite conversationalist, she highlights the most innocuous part of Albertan’s letter and sidesteps the more controversial points.

We might view this civil response as too timid, unwilling to risk opposition. But there are other ways of reading this exchange. We could note how differently resources are distributed in this situation: it is Beynon who has control over which letters will be chosen for print as well as whether or not, and how, she will respond to them. In full command of this power, she decided to print Albertan’s letter, to respond in an encouraging way, and to invite more letters like it. Her response is meant to indicate her openness to a variety of voices, including those that disagree with her on certain issues. Beynon takes on the role of a facilitator. The actual debate is, in this and in many following cases, carried out among her readers. For instance, a few issues later, Beynon published a letter by “Progress,” who spoke against Albertan’s views on suffrage. First, Progress also praises Albertan’s description of wildflowers, but then she notes,

I don’t quite agree with Albertan in her opinion on votes for women, however. I also am a farmer’s wife and as we have seven children (the eldest only nine years of age) and I do all my own work, I am kept just as busy as a bee from early morning until late at night and I am happy in my work. But if we only had woman’s suffrage I would find time to vote I can assure you…. I have always believed in woman’s suffrage, but since we have taken The Guide and have read of the splendid improvements that are going on in the four states of America, where women have the franchise, I have believed in it more than ever. My husband believes in woman’s suffrage too, I am glad to say. (12)
The discussion following Albertan’s letter was not the only instance when Beynon noticeably restrained her passion for the suffrage cause. In July 1912, she solicited ideas about the formation of women’s clubs associated with grain growers’ associations. Previous letters had already given her a sense of how welcome and useful such clubs could be, but Beynon wanted to be sure that all opinions were aired. “Do you like the idea?” she asked, and added, “If not, write and tell me why and I’ll print your letter as readily as those in favor of the project, which I own I rather like” (“Harking Back” 9). To clarify what such clubs could do, she suggested that they could cover subjects such as “the preparation and uses of foods, care of poultry, making and marketing of butter, care of children and sanitation” (9). She added that there was no reason why these gatherings could not also “consider municipal, Provincial and Dominion questions—homesteads for women, Direct Legislation, suffrage or any other matter of great moment” (9). Beynon leaves the field open for whatever individual women grain growers’ associations decide they want to tackle—everything from domestic to political issues, from issues related to farm life to provincial and federal legislation. In response to this list, Eva Sulman critiques Beynon’s recommendation of small, domestic matters such as food preparation, poultry care, and dairy production. Instead, her letter suggests,

> With regard to the proposed clubs it seems to me that it should be our aim to keep the big issues in the limelight, and when we can solve these, all smaller matters will automatically adjust themselves…. The most important subject to women at present is the franchise which we shall no doubt secure in time, and we should endeavour to educate ourselves in such a way that we shall know how to use it to the best advantage. (9)

Sulman follows up with detailed arguments about the value of women’s work and women’s knowledge of politics. In her response to this letter, Beynon indicates once again that personally she is very much in favour of Sulman’s advocacy for women’s rights. As the moderator of the discussion, however, she also expresses respect for those who think otherwise: “Yours is a delightful letter and I heartily approve of your ambition to take up the wider issues, but you and I must admit that there are many splendid women in the West who are not interested in or even in favor of these movements” (Sulman 9).

Because of these discussions among the readers, a pro-suffrage tenor begins to develop on the “Country Homemakers” page. Beynon’s own support of women’s suffrage helps this development along, but it is really the letter writers who make evident the community’s interest in women’s
rights. Increasingly, those who question the call for women’s suffrage could expect subsequent letters to challenge some of their claims. Pro-suffrage responses typically outnumbered suffrage-skeptical ones. After the first year of her editorship, Beynon, too, responded more directly and critically to the claims of some suffrage skeptics. However, she also continued to emphasize the points she agreed with, even when she wrote detailed rebuttals of their views. At the moments when she appeared to deny suffrage-skepticism a sufficient hearing, some of her readers usually came to the letter writer’s defence. For instance, in the fall of 1913, an extended debate develops in response to a female reader named “Wolf Willow.” When the first of Wolf Willow’s letters arrives, Beynon explains that she will immediately respond to it because this letter is “fair-minded, courteous and free from personalities which the editor of this department does not regard as argument” (“Answers to an Anti-Suffragist” 10). She believes that Wolf Willow is “honestly opposed to suffrage for very laudable reasons,” because she wants “children to be better cared for and a better race of men reared” (10). Beynon asserts that these are ideals that she also subscribes to, the difference being that she believes women who can vote are better able to take care of their children, because they can direct Parliaments toward more protective legislation. A vibrant debate ensues over the following two months. In that debate, other writers challenge not only Wolf Willow’s letters but also Beynon’s rebuttals. Even as the editor and many of her letter writers confidently assert their pro-suffrage stance, they also remind one another that the debate should continue to be open to varying viewpoints. As one pro-suffrage respondent put it, letters such as Wolf Willow’s “do a great deal of good, I think, as they bring out arguments for the suffrage movement for women which we otherwise would not know” (Pansy 10).

Especially at the beginning of her editorship, Beynon repeatedly encourages women to send letters. For instance, in November 1912, she issues a “cordial invitation to write to us on any of the questions that come up for discussion in this page or any others that are of interest to women” (“We Don’t Believe” 10). On another occasion, she declares very openly that, if anyone “care[s] to write to me on any matter of interest to women[,] I shall be glad to hear from you at any time and to give your letters publicity at the earliest possible opportunity” (“The New Year” 10). The discussions thus prompted her to address not only the formation of women’s clubs but also issues such as a wife’s access to the family’s income, and how to organize tours for women speakers. After initially describing these topics in her column, Beynon often returns in subsequent issues to tell her readers that she would like to see more responses. She urges them to share the valuable thoughts and ideas that they do not necessarily share with one another in
their letters. She notes, “if only the women could be brought to realize how much their letters interest our readers, we would be deluged with them” (“A Word” 23).

As a result of the central presence of the letters (in some issues there are as many as five of them, taking up almost the entire page) and Beynon’s repeated and open invitations, the readers are thoroughly engaged in a conversation with one another. Often they respond to one another’s letters instead of Beynon’s editorial pieces. They take issue with the conclusions drawn or evaluations made by other letter writers. They convey sympathy with the suffering expressed by some of the writers—related to the amount of farm and household work, health issues and care of children, lack of money, and the attitudes of husbands. Many of these writers note that they like the “Country Homemakers” page so much because of the letters printed there. Indeed, a surprising number of letter writers confess that they are writing their very first letter to an editor. They usually credit the discussion in the letters with having motivated them to do something unusual: taking a pen and writing something that they know will likely be published. Many writers say they are not sure of the genre’s conventions, and express concern about the length and style of their letters. In her responses to such concerns, Beynon reassures these women, tells them they have no reason to doubt their letter-writing ability, and asks to receive more of their views in subsequent missives.

What we can infer from the volume of letters is that the “Country Homemakers” page was creating a growing community of women. A good number of readers picked up their pens and voiced their thoughts publicly for the first time; this engagement renders the page increasingly diverse. However, it was still far from inclusive when it came to questions of race and ethnicity. The letter writers seem to form a primarily Anglo-Canadian group of women. Few women declare what their ethnic background is, but the ones who do are almost always from English-speaking backgrounds. Places of origin repeatedly mentioned are Scotland, the United States, Ireland, and England. At least two writers refer to themselves as “Salopian,” meaning they are from Shropshire. There are also allusions to the migration transpiring within the country when, for example, one woman signs herself “Halifax,” while another notes that she is now living in British Columbia. There is a chance that some writers who do not declare their ethnicity are from a First Nation, of Central or Eastern European descent, or of Asian background. But if they are, it is not a fact they are inclined to announce in their letters or through pen names. That tendency contrasts with the pride conveyed through phrases such as “lass from Scotland,” or “English lady.” There are only occasional and often indirect hints of family
heritages that are other than Anglo-Canadian. For instance, one woman who grew up in Canada (she refers to her father as “one of the best men in the West”) calls herself “Brun Kulla,” whereas another signs her letter with “Wife of Norwegian.”

The fluency of each letter also suggests that the writers were very familiar with written English. If there were any deviations from the grammatical norm in the original letters, they were corrected before going to print. In other words, either these women already wrote what would have been considered “proper” English at the time, or the editing that was done created the impression of an excellent command of English among all the letter writers. Even those who declare that they are responding for the first time to a newspaper and are not sure about their writing seem to produce well-written letters. The page must have conveyed to its readers that an excellent command of written English was a prerequisite for participating in the debate, effectively limiting potential letter writers to those who felt they possessed this skill. The women who felt confident enough to write likely had a formal education; many of them probably came from Anglo-Canadian rather than from other immigrant backgrounds. Even though the Prairies saw an influx of people from non-English-speaking backgrounds, the growing community of critically minded women that formed in the Grain Growers’ Guide’s woman’s page would have had a strongly Anglo-Canadian appearance.

Within that Anglo-Canadian community, however, Beynon’s management of the page seems to have been quite successful at inciting women to participate in the conversation. In fact, the page hails these women into public speech—for the first time, in many cases—and interpellates them as capable and valuable letter writers. Beynon’s page provides the women in that group with a speech situation in which their experiences and opinions carry great value. “The Country Homemakers” does this so well because it is open to a large variety of topics—women’s suffrage is one subject among and related to others, such as how a husband and wife can handle their finances in an equitable way, how children should learn about sexuality and reproduction, and how to manage the demands of farm life. It is not only Beynon’s repeated invitations that help to usher these women into public speech; instead, and perhaps even more significantly, it is the presence of other women speaking. Her management of the page shows how highly she values this presence, perhaps even more than she supports women’s suffrage in itself at times. Her desire to increase women’s political participation and respect their contributions is sometimes greater than her desire to champion suffrage as the topic of discussion. In other words, as my reading of the records that survive around the Grain Growers’ Guide shows,
she encourages female political participation in the widest sense, and that includes thorough debate about the very conditions of this participation.

Notes
1 See, for instance, Edwards, *Gender, Politics, and Democracy: Women’s Suffrage in China*; Matsukawa and Tachi, “Women’s Suffrage and Gender Politics in Japan”; and Lavrin, “Suffrage in South America: Arguing a Difficult Cause.”

2 A list of American suffrage journals includes the Boston *Una* (1853–55); *Sibyl* (1856–64), the journal of the National Dress Reform Association; Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s *Revolution* (1868–70); Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell’s *Woman’s Journal* (1870–1917), the chief periodical of the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA); the Oregon *New Northwest*, edited by Abigail Scott Duniway (1871–87); the *Ballot Box* (1876–81); the Denver *Queen Bee* (1879–96), edited by Caroline Nichols Churchill; the *Woman’s Column* (1888–1904); the Nebraska *Woman’s Tribune* (1883–1909); and the *New York Suffrage Newsletter* (1899–1913). Part of this list was taken from Tierney.

In Great Britain, there were suffrage magazines such as the *English Woman’s Journal* (1858–64), established by Barbara Boudichon and edited by Bessie Rayner Parkes and Matilda Hayes, and its successor, the *Englishwoman’s Review* (1866–1910); the *Victoria Magazine* edited by Emily Faithfull (1863–80); the *Women’s Suffrage Journal* (1870–90); the *Personal Rights Journal* (1881–1903), linked to the Women’s Franchise League and the Women’s Emancipation Union; *Jus Suffragii*, later retitled *International Woman Suffrage News* (1906–29) of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance; the *Women’s Franchise* (1907–11), edited by John E. Francis; *Suffragette*, renamed *Britannia* (1912–18), the official organ of the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU), with Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst among its editors; Emmeline and Frederick Pethick-Lawrence’s *Votes for Women* (1907–18), until the split between the Pethick-Lawrences and the Pankhursts; the *Conservative and Unionist Women’s Franchise Review* (1909–16); the *Common Cause* (1909–20), the journal of the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS); *Englishwoman* (1909–21), with Lady Frances Balfour, Lady Strachey, Cicely Hamilton, and Mary Lowndes on the editorial committee; *Vote* (1909–33), a periodical related to the Women’s Freedom League; Dora Marsden’s *Freewoman* (1911–12), the counter-publication to the WSPU, and Harriet Shaw Weaver’s *New Freewoman* (1913), later renamed the *Egoist* (1914–19); the *Church League for Women’s Suffrage* (1912–17); the *Catholic Suffragist* (1915–18); the *Coming Day* (1916–20), published by the Free Church League for Women’s Suffrage; and the *Women’s International League* (1916–52). For a more complete list, see Crawford.

3 The difference in print output between the British and American and the Canadian women’s rights movements is startling. Throughout the several decades of the movement, British and American publications are quite numerous and diverse (see previous footnote). In contrast, Canada had less than a handful: *Freyja* (1898–1910), an Icelandic-language women’s rights magazine (see Kinnear); *Woman’s Century* (1913–21), the journal of the National Council of Women of Canada; and *The Champion*, the publication of the Political Equality League of Victoria (1912–14).
Woman's page editors who were also women's rights advocates included Sarah Anne Curzon, associate and woman's page editor of the Canada Citizen (1882–84); Kate Simpson Hayes writing for the Manitoba Free Press (1899–1906); her successor at the Free Press, Lillian Beynon Thomas (1906–17); E. Cora Hind, the commercial and agricultural columnist for the Manitoba Free Press (1901–30), who also contributed to its woman's page; Flora MacDonald Denison, women's columnist for the Toronto Sunday World (1909–13); Francis Marion Beynon, woman's page editor at the Grain Growers' Guide (1912–17); and Violet MacNaughton, editor of the “Our Welfare Page” at the Saturday Press and Prairie Farm (1916–17) and later woman's page editor for the Western Producer (1925–50).


In her count of the professions and activities of 156 female suffrage leaders, Carol Lee Bacchi calculates that 25 percent of them were journalists and authors (6). Journalists thus made up the largest portion of Canada's suffrage organizers, followed by educators (15 percent) and doctors (12 percent).

For more information on Beynon's family background and pre-Guide history, see Hicks, “Francis Beynon and The Guide.”

This notice appeared well before Beynon started editing the women's page. See “Notice.”

In her anthology, Norah Lewis surveyed letters written to the woman's pages of six agricultural periodicals published between 1900 and 1920 (four of the magazines were from Winnipeg, one of which was the Grain Grower's Guide, and one each was published in Montréal and Saskatoon). Lewis finds that none of the writers indicated they were First Nations or Métis, only a few of the letters were written by men, and there didn't appear to be any from writers who were not fully literate in English.

Works Cited


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