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Sociological Remarks on Courtship and  
Dating.  
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What affects the matching process?

- Parental influence

Less important in secular, highly  
industrialized societies (U.S.).

Why?

Industrialization requires great  
mobility of labor: young adults move  
away from parents to find work.

## Exceptions:

the upper class;  
strong religious communities  
(e.g., Jewish communities, esp.  
Orthodox)

Still generally important in developing countries (e.g., Thailand).

## Courtship and Dating

Courtship: a publicly visible process of mate selection, organized around rules and rituals. Practiced during the 1800s.

Parents don't "pick" one's mate, but exert influence by closely watching over the process.

## Two phases of courtship

1<sup>st</sup> phase: out-of-home activities shared with others in a group (hayrides, sleighrides, church socials, dances and balls).

2<sup>nd</sup> phase: indoor, house visits. The parlor and porch as “courtship” sites.

## The end of “courtship” and the rise of dating: 1900-1960

- continued urbanization of the U.S., separating young adults from parents

## Working class:

- employment of young single women in cities (esp. immigrant, working class) led to “pocket money” for weekend recreation.
- 1900-1920: New sites for weekend amusement: movie theatre; amusement parks.

## Middle class: 1920-1960

- After WWI: the automobile allowed the young to escape from adult surveillance. Allowed for increased privacy.

“Motoring,” which led to “Parking”

? Some dating practices still socially monitored, but now by members of peer group.

“Petting parties”