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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

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

2nd 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”