

Newlyweds on Tour: Honeymooning in Nineteenth-Century America (Becoming Modern: New Nineteenth-Century Studies)

Barbara Penner

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Newlyweds on Tour is the first historical study to trace the origins and growth of the American honeymoon between 1820 and 1900. Rather than treating the honeymoon as a simple by-product of the privatization of the family, this work argues that it was formed at the interstices between (and helped to articulate) a variety of narratives—patriotic, conjugal, sentimental, and sexual that were central to the modern American national identity. To track these narratives, Barbara Penner moves between primary accounts of newlywed experiences recorded in diaries and letters in addition to entries in a wide range of textual, visual, and architectural representations, matrimonial maps, engravings from the popular press, sensation novels, and palace hotel bridal chambers. Her wide-ranging interdisciplinary analysis demonstrates the specific ways in which newlyweds on tour prompted individual and collective feelings of attachment whether to the ideals of egalitarian marriage, domesticity, nation, or sentiment itself. Above all, she argues that the honeymoon was key to legitimizing the union of sentiment and commerce, a union that continues to thrive today.

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