

The following is an abstract of: Rollwagen, K. (2014). Eaton's goes to school: Youth councils and the commodification of the teenaged consumer at Canada's largest department store, 1940-1960. *Histoire Sociale/Social History*, 47(95), 683-705. DOI: 10.1353/his.2014.0058

During the 1940s and 1950s Canada's dominant department store, the T. Eaton Company Ltd., made extensive efforts to establish a relationship with urban high school students. This article examines the company's attempts to validate teenagers' active participation in the retail marketplace as distinct consumers to be defined, catered to, and, ultimately, commodified in gendered ways. Eaton's saw these young, white and mostly middle-class high school boys and girls as a new market segment, and formed advisory councils in several stores as a way to solicit teenaged opinions, recruit employees, and access student peer networks. This extensive programme combined public relations with advertising and quasi-educational objectives. This analysis sheds light on the relationship between Eaton's and school authorities and demonstrates how retailers and educators saw market interactions as part of growing up in mid-century Canada.

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