



Make the Night Hideous: Four English-Canadian Charivaris, 1881-1940 (Canadian Social History Series)

Pauline Greenhill

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The charivari is a loud, late-night surprise house-visiting custom from members of a community, usually to a newlywed couple, accompanied by a *quête* (a request for a treat or money in exchange for the noisy performance) and/or pranks. Up to the first decades of the twentieth century, charivaris were for the most part enacted to express disapproval of the relationship that was their focus, such as those between individuals of different ages, races, or religions. While later charivaris maintained the same rituals, their meaning changed to a welcoming of the marriage.

Make the Night Hideous explores this mysterious transformation using four detailed case studies from different time periods and locations across English Canada, as well as first-person accounts of more recent charivari participants. Pauline Greenhill's unique and fascinating work explores the malleability of a tradition, its continuing value, and its contestation in a variety of discourses.

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