

reputation as a taskmaster in the classroom" (pp. 133-35 and 144).

The larger point here is that the book could have given more attention to another sense of "struggle," that is, the struggle to develop curriculum and pedagogy best suited for the labour colleges. Was it simply the case that "the ideology of the labor colleges and the backgrounds of the students dictated the classroom pedagogy" (p. 132)? Did students in fact respond in the actual classroom in the participatory way that was desired? If not, did teachers tend to abandon the discussion method for the lecture format? Were creative curriculum materials readily available for non-traditional teaching? In his recent study of the Highlander Folk School (1932-62), John Glen informs us that the staff perceived Commonwealth College as too doctrinaire; were there no arguments within Commonwealth itself (besides those that emerged during a student strike in 1932) over the educational approach that was taken? These are important questions, I think, that could be addressed more clearly.

But such concerns should not serve to obscure my high regard for *Education for Struggle*. It is a wonderfully detailed, insightful and well-written account of a significant chapter in the histories of American education and American radicalism. It reminds us that the current debates about the canon are hardly new, that more than half a century ago groups of American workers and their supporters established their own labour colleges, extension programmes, and other educational activities to contest those

knowledges and values of American culture (including public schooling) that serve to reproduce the inequities of working-class life. Although they may not have been successful in attaining their goals, their efforts help us to clarify the political nature of education and to imagine the possible. Finally, it is important to remember, as Altenbaugh argues, that "while the outcome was disappointing, the cause was not" (p. 268).

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**Donald G. Wetherell with Irene Kmet. *Useful Pleasures: The Shaping of Leisure in Alberta 1896-1945*. Regina and Edmonton: Canadian Plains Research Centre/Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism, 1990. Pp. xxiv, 432, illus.**

For several years Western Canadian historians have known that a book on the history of leisure in Alberta was in preparation. This is it, and a one-word reaction to it is—"satisfactory." Students of the history of education will not discover in it very much information on their own subject. Still, they should find *Useful Pleasures* stimulating and, well, useful.

The authors waste little time defining their subject. They seem comfortable with a description of

leisure as "pleasurable non-work activity" (p. xvi). Aside from an Introduction and a Conclusion, there are eleven chapters. The first three make up Part One and they address the "technological, social, and institutional components of leisure" (p. xxiv). The last eight chapters are contained in Part Two, and they focus on particular leisure activities, with one chapter devoted to each of the following subjects: sports; hunting and fishing; outdoor recreations (camping, touring, visiting resorts); theatre and music; films; radio; agricultural fairs and rodeos; hanging around bars, pool-rooms, and cafés.

The volume is filled with interesting facts. Most of them reveal or suggest the growth in popularity of different activities. A few details can be mentioned here. In 1921, about 23% of farm families in Alberta owned a motor vehicle; in 1931, about 42%; in 1947, just over 90% (p. 17). In 1921 there were 118 licensed movie houses in Alberta; in 1930 there were 85; in 1940 there were 140 (pp. 252-53). Albertans owned about 2,800 radios in 1923-24, about 21,500 in 1929-30, about 81,200 in 1939 (pp. 281-82).

These facts and others are marshalled in such a way as to document the authors' main point. This is that from 1896 to 1945 Albertans frequently engaged in leisure activities, but they fully embraced only those which "refreshed" (p. 8) people so that they could work more effectively, and which fostered or reinforced the "virtues of industriousness, diligence, orderliness,...and Britishness" (p. 375). Leisure activities were supposed to be

enjoyable, yes, but they were also supposed to be useful.

The book is marred by three major shortcomings. The first is that the dates at which the story begins and ends are not well defended. The "philosophy" of leisure that prevailed between 1896 and 1945 was really brought to Alberta by British Protestants in the 1870s and 1880s, and when the authors say that "Protestant English-speaking settlers had established...their culture as the dominant one" by the "mid-1880s" (p. xvii) they nearly acknowledge that they should have begun their survey at least a decade before 1896. The terminal date, 1945, is justified more convincingly. The authors correctly point out that after World War Two a new Alberta emerged, one which compared to the old featured greater economic prosperity, more ethnic tolerance, larger urban centres, and greater receptivity to government expenditures on cultural and leisure activities. However, changes in attitude toward leisure after 1945 are only briefly identified and they are not explained. The authors argue that leisure behaviour between 1896 and 1945 was determined in a large part by a particular philosophy, so if behaviour changed after 1945 a new attitude must have appeared. The authors should reveal more about this new attitude.

The second shortcoming is that information on minority ethnic and religious groups is drawn from only a few basic sources, mainly the essays in the Palmers' *Peoples of Alberta*. One sympathizes with the authors here, because to carry out a thorough examination of leisure activities among

minority groups would require linguistic skills that few scholars possess. But near the beginning of the book in a confusing paragraph the authors seem to say that ethnicity was the "most important" factor in determining the "framework for leisure" in Alberta (p. 3). Some readers will not agree with this statement. Those who do agree with it will be disappointed with the brief discussions that follow of leisure among the Japanese, the Native peoples, and other groups, and with the failure even to mention Mormons or Mennonites.

The third major problem with the book is that it does not clearly suggest the ways in which Albertans' behaviour and attitudes were typical or unique. There should be more glances at what was happening in Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Montana, Eastern Canada, the United Kingdom. Evidently the lack of comparative information stems from the authors' unfamiliarity with important secondary sources on different leisure activities, an unfamiliarity that contrasts sharply with their thorough awareness of sources dealing specifically with Alberta. Their discussion of sportsmanship or etiquette among hunters, for example (pp. 165-80), would have benefited from the use of insights found in recent work by John M. MacKenzie, and their discussion of film censorship in the 1930s (pp. 265-66) would have been more complete and more accurate had they consulted *Banned Films* or other publications which suggest that in the mid-1930s Hollywood movies became "cleaner" than they had been earlier in the decade.

Despite these flaws, *Useful Pleasures* is a book well worth reading. It incorporates a convincing description of general attitudes and values in early twentieth-century Alberta, and one suspects that the same attitudes and values prevailed across Western Canada. These facts should mean that historians of education will find the book valuable even though developments in public schools are mentioned only briefly, and even though most of the information on educational institutions concerns the University of Alberta's Extension Department.

The publishers of this book deserve credit for an unusually attractive production. There are more than 100 illustrations, each one placed either in or very near the part of the text to which it relates. The painting reproduced on the cover is delightful.

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Jo Burr Margadant. *Madame le Professeur: Women Educators in the Third Republic*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Jo Burr Margadant's *Madame le Professeur: Women Educators in the Third Republic* is a history of the careers of 213 pioneering professional women, the first decade of graduates