David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot. *Learning Together: A History of Coeducation in American Public Schools.* New York and London: Yale University Press and the Russell Sage Foundation, 1990. Pp. x, 369.

With the recent and untimely death of Lawrence Cremin,there is little doubt, at least in the mind of this reviewer, that David Tyack is now the leading interpreter of American educational history. Unlike Cremin, Tyack has published many books and articles with co-authors. The book under review here, *Learning Together: A History of Coeducation in American Public Schools*, is the result of a collaboration between Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot. The same pair of authors produced the eminently successful history of American school administration, *Managers of Virtue*, in 1982. This volume turns their attention to the topic of coeducation, one that has heretofore gone almost unexamined by educational historians.

Tyack and Hansot's treatment of this topic exhibits many of the hallmarks that have made Tyack's other works so formidable: the resort to complexity in both analysis and explanation, the use of subtlety and hypothesis as opposed to simplistic and single-minded arguments, the invocation of irony and the exploration of unintended consequences of events and ideas, and the use of unusual sources, in this case photographs, to support the argument (along with an appendix that provides cautions to be considered in the use of photographic evidence). Careful readers will glean from this volume new insights into many topics of American educational history as well as a perspective on the issue of coeducation itself.

Tyack and Hansot proceed with their analysis chronologically, though not in a completely linear fashion. They state their concerns clearly in the "Introduction," when they begin with the question "Why coeducation?" as the frame for their work. They quickly expand the question to include the topic of how schools "look when viewed through the lens of gender" and how gender looks "when seen in an institutional context" (p. 2) to arrive at a larger question, "to what degree have femaleness and maleness mattered in the public schools, and why?" (p. 2).

For this reader at least, there was a bit of tension between the two questions in the book. Answering the question why coeducation? is a more limited task that would have meant a much shorter book than the one the authors produced here. Yet the title of the book and some of the writing point the reader to that question. Much of the material included, however, answers the second question of the significance of gender for the public schools while sometimes being tan-

gentially related to the topic of coeducation.

The analysis begins with a look at colonial education, which was not coeducational at its inception, that sets the stage for the later coeducation that did occur. Changes in the family and church are used to explain how the various types of schools employed by colonial Americans gradually moved in the direction of coeducation. Women, who became the backbone of the churchgoing population and the prime exemplars of parental concern for children, could not easily be excluded from education for a long time. Also, since the families and churches moved toward less separation in their treatment of men and women, it was relatively easy for the schools to follow suit. The major point is that coeducation came from a bottom-up process relying on social changes in the larger society that resulted in alteration in the educational configurations.

After a brief chapter on the eighteenth century that addresses the arguments for the education of girls, the authors turn to the common school period of the second third of the nineteenth century, where they devote two chapters to rural and urban schools respectively. In both of these chapters, the point is clearly made that coeducation was adopted locally, not imposed from the centre. The chapter on rural schools shows how coeducation came to be the "expedient and natural mode of schooling" (p. 48) in the rural school districts. Scarcity and scattering of rural populations meant that single-sex schools were impractical. The increasing use of female teachers, initially for reasons of economy but also as a way to upgrade the quality of the teaching force since women were the large majority of those who attended normal schools and normal classes, helped to make coeducation more prevalent and palatable, particularly with younger children.

Coeducation and women teachers in urban public schools often gave critics an occasion to voice their concerns loudly. While upper-class parents continued to prefer single-sex private schools for their offspring, parents of middle-class girls who attended urban public schools feared association with "riffraff boys" (p. 78) in coeducational settings. Coeducation won the day in most towns and cities, however, relying partially on arguments that linked it to an easier approach to discipline that, in turn, resulted in better decorum in the classroom. Women teachers were seen as protectors of young women in coeducational classrooms. Additionally, the easy adaptation of coeducation and women teachers to the large enrolments that were accompanied by hierarchical school bureaucracies proved decisive.

In two chapters on the high school in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Tyack and Hansot show how forces similar to those that influenced the lower schools in earlier years came into play and resulted in coeducational high schools. The vocal opposition to coeducational high schools from a few men such as the physician Edward H. Clarke and the psychologist G. Stanley Hall did little to change the already established prac-

tices of coeducation in the high schools.

The change in the Progressive Era away from a common elementary education to a differentiated curriculum in the high school through the addition of vocational studies, testing, and guidance might have meant a challenge to coeducation. By and large, however, this challenge, though it did occur to some extent, was unsuccessful. Whether couched in terms of the issue of the "boy problem" or what to do with boys who were less successful than girls in school, or the woman question of how to educate girls in the context of issues raised by the suffragist movement of the early twentieth century, the resolution of the problem was mainly, though not completely, to continue the coeducational patterns that were now firmly established at all levels of the public schools.

By the time a final chapter profiles the hidden injuries of coeducation discovered by the feminist scholars and activists of the late 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, the reader is well prepared for many of the findings. This is because Tyack and Hansot make it clear from the beginning of their book that coeducation in American public schools never meant equality in the workplace or other areas of life to most of its advocates. Coeducation coexisted quite nicely for two centuries with economic, social, and political attitudes that confined rather than liberated women.

There is a phenomenon in this chapter and in the book's conclusion for which neither the reader nor the authors are prepared, however. That is the argument of the feminists of the 1980s that women may need separate educational institutions rather than coeducational schools and colleges to achieve their rightful place in society. This argument is based on the analysis that coeducation as it is practised in American schools is hopelessly pervaded with sexism. The authors demur from approving that line of argument, without condemning its advocates, and conclude that the irony of contemporary feminists pushing for an outcome that would be seen by both advocates and opponents of coeducation in earlier periods as reactionary, is another in the line of unexpected outcomes that pervade the history of gender in the public schools. Their own tentative conclusion that coeducation is on the whole a laudable phenomenon in American public schools, one that needs to be improved upon by speaking to the concerns of contemporary feminists, is hard for this reader to dispute. Other readers, however, may feel differently.

This summary of major points cannot do justice to the textured and nuanced account in Tyack and Hansot's book. They are marvellous uncoverers of unusual data and interpreters of its meaning. If their account at times seems to deviate from the topic they have chosen to study and if they at times seem to repeat points made earlier in order to make a slightly different point, these are minor flaws that are compensated for more than fully by the book's many strengths.

One troublesome aspect of the book, however, is the leap in time in the discussion of gender in the public schools from the Progressive Era to the

present (and most recent past). The reader wonders if there is an unstated conclusion that little or nothing changed in the coeducational public schools from the 1920s to the late 1960s. While this may be true, it is not demonstrated; instead, it seems simply to be assumed in this volume. The labour market dislocations of World War II and the educational boom touched off in its aftermath seem to be one area that might have had consequences for gender issues in the public schools, even if they did not alter the coeducational configuration in those schools.

The only cross-national foray made in the book is in the conclusion when the authors allude to the spread of coeducation through many parts of the world in the post-World War II years. They discuss Japan and Britain specifically as nations that have moved in the direction of coeducation in the period. Though Canada is not mentioned, Canadian readers might use this book as a springboard to an examination of their own experience with coeducation. If that examination uncovers trends that differ significantly from those in the USA, authors who are as supple and undogmatic in describing their own nation's experience as Tyack and Hansot should have left their readers prepared to search for an explanation of those differences that casts light on the situation in both nations.

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Paul Axelrod. *Making a Middle Class: Student Life in English Canada during the Thirties*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990. Pp. 269. $34.95.

Building on his study of Dalhousie student life in the 1930s, which appeared in *Acadiensis* in 1985, Paul Axelrod has expanded his decadal snapshot of university culture, in this concise, readable account, to sample evidence from a representative selection of English-speaking campuses across Canada. The book also incorporates his essay on student politics published in 1989 in *Youth, University, and Canadian Society*. The focus on the 1930s is rather artificial since most developments of that decade require explanations which centre on the early twentieth century as a whole. Nonetheless, he is interested in gauging the impact which the first large-scale economic crisis imposed upon university life and fledgling careers, as well as assessing the student response to the prospects for a new social order for which the interwar years provide a unique laboratory. Axelrod chooses four subjects for scrutiny: the composition of the student body, the traditional and professional curricula, extracurricular activities, including student activism, and the career paths of 1930s graduates. The interpretation centres on students as products of the middle class (in a schema which postulates a three-class society), whose short-term prospects were interrupted by the depression but who benefited in the long term from the institutional em-