

to the Canadian high school. He argues that the growth and function of these schools was determined by the spread of suburbia, in which many were built. Ostensibly catering for all children regardless of ability or social origin, the comprehensives, Lowe suggests, in fact became a mechanism for sifting pupils from different social backgrounds; the children of upwardly-mobile, lower-middle-class parents filled the academic streams, and those of the working-class the non-academic streams. In this way the schools confirmed life-chances rather than changed them. The advance of comprehensive education was thus distorted by having to take place "within, and as part of, a deeply divided educational system rather than as its replacement." Similarly, the new universities, despite aping Oxbridge's liberal-humanist ethos, never achieved parity of esteem with the old universities, and remained largely the preserve of provincial grammar school students. Oxford and Cambridge continued to absorb the bulk of their intake from the largely upper-class public schools.

A brief review cannot do justice to the clarity and intricacy of Lowe's argument; deftly blending economic and demographic data with statements from governments, political parties, public bodies, and the educational press, he has written a forceful narrative which is a pleasure to read. My one reserve is that he sometimes veers towards economic and demographic determinism in his depiction of educational expansion. Was the growth of comprehensive schools, for instance, "predetermined" by the increase in

numbers of upwardly-mobile suburbanites? Or was it largely due to the hard-fought political battles by the labour movement (whose ideal of secondary education for all went back to the nineteenth century) and progressive teachers and educationists? On the whole, however, Lowe is correct in showing how the deeply ingrained educational heritage of elite education, and the solidly based class structure, proved resistant to the democratisation of the educational system in a period of expansion. Histories of education too often present educational progress as occurring in a social vacuum; this book is a model of how to integrate the growth of schooling with socio-economic developments. Canadian educators and teachers may be surprised at the extent to which educational provision in England is conditioned by social stratification, but this may be one of the best reasons for including *Education in the Post-War Years* in bibliographies of courses in the history and sociology of education.

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Lee Stewart. *"It's Up to You": Women at UBC in the Early Years*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990. Pp. 176, illus. Cloth \$29.95, paper \$19.95.

At the time that I registered in Victoria College (then affiliated with the University of British Columbia) in 1958, a sexist joke captured the prevailing attitude to female students, called coeds in those days: they might take a B.A. or B.Ed., but the degree they were really after was the M.R.S. Lee Stewart's valuable book about women at UBC from 1915 into the 1950s provides ample evidence of this attitude and others associated with it. She also discusses the ways in which women tried to establish space for themselves in an environment that merely tolerated them.

No researcher of university history in Canada can fail to notice the essential masculinity of almost all institutions far into the second half of the twentieth century. (Women's institutions like Smith or Bryn Mawr in the United States scarcely got off the ground in this country.) Governing boards, senates, teaching staffs, and student bodies were overwhelmingly male. Every bit as important, the prevailing assumptions and attitudes of the academy reflected and reinforced the reality of male dominance. There were women around, but as governors and faculty they were very few, and as students, although more numerous, they were not regarded as central to the purposes of the institution. As office and other support staff, women went virtually unnoticed.

Stewart, whose book is based on an M.A. thesis completed in 1986, has chosen a somewhat deceptive title. The women she writes about are students; she is interested in other women primarily as they affected the place of women students at UBC. This limita-

tion is regrettable. We do learn a lot about two members of the Senate and Board, Evelyn Farris and Anne Jameson, and two deans of women, Mary Bollert and Dorothy Mawdsley. But a full examination and analysis of the careers of the relatively few women faculty would have added to the value of Stewart's book. Two examples: Sylvia Thrupp's sojourn at UBC before she departed for greener pastures, and the experiences of Margaret Ormsby, who was favoured by the president if not her department head, provide good insight into the way UBC worked against (and sometimes for) women. It seems strange, too, that Stewart says next to nothing about all those typists, assistant librarians, teaching assistants, and other women without whom the university would have found it very hard to function. The circumscription of the subject makes sense in a thesis, less so in a book.

In spite of the self-imposed limitations of Stewart's study, it does make a significant contribution to the fields of women's and university history. In her introductory chapter, Stewart discusses the questions surrounding the higher education of women. The province's University Act made it a right, but that right was not acknowledged by everyone. Whether they got university degrees or not, women were expected to marry and raise children. Those who used their education to support themselves were often thought to have failed as women. "However, university education that yielded no visible economic or social return on the taxpayer's investment was seen as a waste of money. In this social

climate, the purpose of educating women was unclear and women on campus were tolerated more than encouraged in their academic endeavours" (p. 8).

The truth, as Stewart notes repeatedly, is that during most of UBC's first forty years the institution suffered from the provincial government's unwillingness or inability, sometimes both, to fund the institution adequately. Indeed, UBC was a high priority for few British Columbians. This affected everyone connected with the university, but women students most of all. The first programme for women to be established, the Department of Nursing in 1919, owed something to the enhanced status of nurses as the result of the Great War as well as to the province's demonstrable need for nurses (the "Spanish" influenza epidemic of 1918 played a role in this). But very probably nothing would have happened had not the Vancouver General Hospital borne the cost.

A quarter-century passed before a second programme of particular interest to women, home economics, took its place in the curriculum. Stewart offers a fascinating discussion not only of the vicissitudes of this programme but also of the differences of opinion among women as to the appropriateness of its inclusion. Evelyn Farris, longtime member of the Senate and the Board, opposed it: a champion of the liberal arts and an opponent of the educational segregation of women, she "clearly meant to dissociate women's education from the prevailing acceptance of the sexual division of labour, and the assumption that

women's interests were overwhelmingly domestic" (p. 46). But Stewart realizes that Farris's opposition mattered less than the fact that, unlike nursing, which was clearly seen to be of interest to society as a whole, home economics was essentially a women's issue. This made the programme a matter of great importance neither to UBC nor to the politicians who influenced the university's direction.

The appointment of a Dean of Women in 1921 was "a symbolic manifestation that the university was willing to accept its significant minority of female students" (p. 67). It was also a cheap way of teaching the segregated sections in English that were established after the 1914-18 war. Garnet Sedgewick, UBC's legendary professor of English literature, did not care to teach women! They continued to be separated into sections of their own, not just in English but in mathematics, into the 1940s. Deans Bollert and Mawdsley, both of whom taught English, tried to control the comportment of the students nominally in their charge, but without great success. This was unsurprising: the university had invested little authority in the position they held. This chapter tells us a fair amount about the place of women faculty at UBC into the 1950s, that is, well below the salt.

Compared with most Canadian universities, UBC was late in building women's residences. Not until 1951 did the first permanent women's residences open. Lack of money was primarily responsible for this. One result was that for several decades out-of-town female students were comparatively few. The expense of

boarding off campus was high, although Stewart, if she is right in asserting that the costs of room and board escalated in the 1930s, needs to explain how this happened during a period of deflation.

Two of the book's chapters deal with the "boys' rules" that governed a masculine institution and how these were seen to apply to women, and the "girls' rules" whereby women accommodated themselves to the female reality of subservience. A basic problem was that "it was difficult to be both attractive to men and taken seriously" as students (p. 103). Some did not let this bother them and distinguished themselves academically. Others lived down to male expectations. Many, one suspects, lived with a constant ambivalence.

In her concluding chapter, Stewart warns against the view that conditions have changed completely since the 1950s. There are more women on campus than ever, but "women still struggle to win academic recognition and parity" (p. 129). Her assessment of the future is cautiously optimistic: major changes are taking place. Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in the faculties of law and medicine, where women now constitute roughly half of the student body.

Last year, when I was working in the UBC Archives and got tired of looking at microfilm, I got out some yearbooks of the early 1960s in order to see how many of my former high school and college classmates I could locate. In Law and Medicine women's faces were rare; in Commerce or Engineering, rarer still. That old reality seems hard to recapture today. Lee

Stewart has shown herself capable not only of recapturing it, but of making it understandable.

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T.C. Byrne. *Athabasca University: The Evolution of Distance Education*. Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 1989. Pp. 137.

Athabasca University, in Alberta, is one of a new breed of "open" universities—where conventional admissions criteria do not apply, and where teaching and learning occur mainly or wholly at a distance, using a variety of sophisticated print, audiovisual, and telecommunications media. Their quality, standards, and outcomes are a far cry from many correspondence programmes of yore.

In Canada, one of the earliest correspondence study programmes was initiated by Queen's University in the 1890s. Such programmes remained small and marginalized until the early 1970s. The number of conventional universities and colleges teaching at a distance has since increased enormously, as have their programmes and student numbers. In addition, there have been created several educational broadcasting systems, and three specialist distance education institutions—Athabasca University (1970), the Télé-Université de Québec (1972),