

“It’s Up To You”: *Women at UBC in the Early Years*. LEE STEWART. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press for the UBC Academic Women’s Association, 1990. 176 p. ISBN 0-7748-0353-3.

Pioneering years for our country’s institutions of higher education were years of difficulty and conflict, demanding much determination from female students. In *“It’s Up To You”:* *Women at UBC in the Early Years*, Lee Stewart concentrates on the dynamics of the societal, institutional, and political forces which women advocates and reformers encountered from 1915 until past the Second World War at the University of British Columbia. Arguing that the literal translation of the University of British Columbia’s motto *Tuum Est* as “it is yours” more aptly applied to male students than female, she illustrates that the more popular rendering “it’s up to you” depicts the experiences of women at the University of British Columbia. Stewart’s work is a significant contribution to scholarship in many fields of Canadian history, but specifically strengthens the historiography of women and higher education during the early years in Canada.

The admission of women into the halls of academe was part of a broad phenomenon occurring in the late nineteenth century throughout Canada, the United States, Britain, and parts of Europe. During this period, the Victorian perception of femininity was challenged, and women, amidst these changing educational and social conditions, were able to expand their influence into the public sphere. As industrial capitalism grew, the discrepancy between the “haves” and the “have-nots” simultaneously increased. A woman, by virtue of her inherent maternal qualities, now met the qualifications set by the male population to nurse the ailing society. As a woman became increasingly involved in society, whether as a club woman or as a professional, her education became a matter of increasing importance. The political feminism that surfaced during the late nineteenth century fuelled the campaign for women’s access to higher education. Labelled as the era of maternal feminism by many historians, this era witnessed the emergence of women from the private sphere into the public world. The woman’s newfound education was often used as a vehicle to escape the private sphere, but her extension and mobility in the public domain were carefully monitored and limited to appropriate zones of the public sector. Many of the early graduates pursued careers as teachers, missionaries and librarians.

Grace Annie Lockhart, graduate of Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick in 1875 with a Bachelor of Science, was the first woman in the British Empire to receive a university degree. Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia was the second university in the British Empire to admit women, and opened its doors to co-education in 1880. Unlike many of the eastern provinces, British Columbia did not institutionalize its higher education until much later. Higher education prior to 1915 in BC was instituted in conjunction with McGill University in Montreal, and with high schools in Vancouver and Victoria. In 1899, a first-year arts course was established, and in 1902 the second-year curriculum was offered. Other British Columbia communities joined forces with the University of Toronto and McMaster University. A University Act was passed in 1891 in BC and later revised in 1908, but UBC was not established until 1915. Stewart’s analysis focuses on the women reformers and advocates during these early years, the institution’s reaction to the admission of women, and societal pressures. The early University Acts had not discriminated against the admission of women and provided that they would receive the same advantages as men. The author reveals, however, a constant struggle, where the women often seemed to be walking against the winds of cooperation to receive these “advantages.”

Stewart documents the women's efforts to establish programmes such as nursing and home economics, provide living accommodations, and establish the office of the Dean of Women. She devotes a chapter to each of these struggles and the resistance they encountered. Discussing these movements for change, Stewart brings to her work the efforts of such groups as the University Women's Club and the Local Council of Women, established in 1895 and 1907, respectively. These groups, devoted to social reform issues of the day, extended their support, encouragement, and influence to women in universities. Chronicling the women's struggle to expand their choices at the university and, consequently, UBC's curriculum, Stewart's account details the perseverance and fortitude of the early women reformers.

Conflicting societal pressures and expectations of the woman's "role" fostered attitudes and expectations which had to be hurdled during these years. The societal prescription for a woman's education included providing the woman with skills which would aid her "social usefulness" and encourage her nurturing capacity. Women, therefore, encountered strong resistance to their enrolment in programmes which might not lend themselves to the enhancement of femininity or social usefulness. Prior to 1919 at UBC, women enrolled predominantly in the arts faculty. The first woman to graduate in science, for example, received a degree in chemical engineering only in 1922. Although a woman in an obviously male field undoubtedly felt more pressure than a woman in the arts faculty, Stewart observes that even English classes were segregated and taught by junior female instructors. Traditional female fields, while perceived as certainly more suitable for a woman's academic ambitions, faced the reality of being lowest on the ladder of academic hierarchy.

Stewart chooses not to concentrate on women's experiences in the areas of the curriculum which were perceived as traditionally male spheres. Instead, she concentrates on the efforts of women to establish programmes which fit into the "women's sphere" by society's prescription at the turn of the century. Despite the usefulness of a nurse's role in society, the efforts to establish a degree programme in nursing were met with much resistance. The university endorsed a nursing programme in 1919 that would combine a university degree with hospital training, but the programme was established at no expense to the university. The salary of the instructor was paid by the Vancouver General Hospital and the university flatly denied the library's request for \$250 for books for the programme. Although there were changes during the 1920s, the nursing programme was often the first to feel the pressures of financial restraints. The home economics programme at UBC was not established until 1943 and the women lobbying for a home economics degree also met strong resistance.

Stewart uses these experiences of changing the curriculum to explore the complexities of the views of society's reactions to women and the differences of philosophy among the women themselves. Women, like men, were not a homogenous group politically or philosophically at the turn of the century and Stewart astutely brings this to the reader's attention. Women such as Evelyn (Kierstead) Farris, while arguing for the expansion of choices for women at the university, was also concerned that the separateness of women in programmes such as home economics worked against the perception of women as equals. In fact, when the university endorsed the position for an Advisor of Women, Farris voted against it. The women had been advocating for the position of the Dean of Women, and the Board of Governor's vote to establish an "adviser" rather than a Dean of Women undoubtedly was not an acceptable compromise for Farris. Stewart's

understanding of the complexity of these issues is well illustrated through her analysis. One of Stewart's conclusions is that the university was "open" to the admission of women, as long as they were administered as cheaply as possible and placed no financial responsibility on the institution. The perception of the woman as nurturer and protector of nature led to a rather utilitarian view of the programmes to be provided for the woman at the university. A thrifty attitude towards women's needs at the university dictated the preference for an "advisor" of women rather than a position salaried as "dean." The university would provide a woman with a serviceable and sensible education before she left school, destined to fulfil her stereotyped role.

Although Stewart does not discuss her research, she has apparently used a wide range of primary sources. Among these are many taped interviews, papers from the university's collection such as the Dean of Women's papers, the Department of Home Economics, Board of Governors and the Senate minutes, family papers, architectural records, University Women's Club minutes, and university newspapers. Most of the sources are located in the UBC Archives, Special Collections Division, and UBC Library. Stewart might have raised some issues concerning sources when writing a history of the early female experience at a Canadian university. The primary sources were frequently written by men and there is often great discrepancy between the public and private record. Stewart obviously recognizes this because she often speculates on issues, opinions, and facts which do not appear in "the record." For example, although Evlyn Farris voted against the position of the "Advisor of Women," her reasons for voting against the Board were not stated in the minutes. Speculation on Stewart's part provides the reader with a number of hypotheses why Farris may have voted as she did. The reconstruction of women's history and the understanding of the woman's role often requires much sleuth work because of the absence of "formal" sources. It is often the obviousness or subtlety of the unwritten, unspoken or understated which provides key information. Placing the female experience in the context of the male-recorded event can be a difficult challenge and it is one which Stewart has definitely met.

The breadth of the author's research has resulted in a book with a wider scope than the reader might have anticipated. While the research is to be commended, my only criticism might be that there is no sense of the "student" until one of the final chapters, which explores the student life, the women's backgrounds, degrees, and occupations after university. Stewart's profiles of the leading female reformers in the early years at UBC are important, yet their voices are not heard throughout the text. Some excerpts from the student newspaper provide the reader with a flavour for campus life, separate from the administrative reforms, which occurred from the top down. Nevertheless, one speculates how the form and content of this work would have varied had the use of the research differed. The emphasis on administration and curriculum revision, while important and certainly significant, leaves the reader distanced from the student for part of the book. Documenting the lives of the women within a university setting is arduous and perhaps this was one of Stewart's difficulties when faced with the sources. Recreating the early years of the "higher education experience" for women students from the grass-roots level based on a few records and the school newspapers might not have provided as complete a picture of the women's experiences as Stewart is able to draw.

Based on the primary and secondary sources she has selected, Stewart's analysis is excellent and the reader discovers much more than a history of women at the University of British Columbia. This book is the first history of UBC in more than thirty years.

The author's attention to the provincial economy, the Depression and the two world wars, and how these factors affected the university administration, is to be applauded. It is not an easy task to profile individual women working towards changes in education within the larger socio-economic and political setting. All in all, Stewart's work is interesting, challenging, and illuminates many areas of Canadian social and educational history.

Heather J. MacMillan
National Archives of Canada

Making Culture: English-Canadian Institutions and the Arts Before the Massey Commission. MARIA TIPPETT. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990. 252 p. ISBN 0-8020-2743-1 (bound), 0-8020-6784-0 (pbk.).

In a 1986 *Canadian Historical Review* article, Maria Tippett urged historians to take a greater interest in Canadian cultural history, an area of study traditionally dominated by literary critics, fine arts scholars, and practitioners in the arts. She argued that the historian's methods, skills and perspective were necessary to give the field coherence and to fit it into the broader context of Canadian history. *Making Culture* is Tippett's answer to her own challenge.

Tippett has written a scholarly historical survey of the arts in English Canada in the first half of the twentieth century. The scope of research required for such a large topic was all the larger due to the extensive sources available. Since supporters of culture tend to be well educated and articulate propagandists for their interests, Tippett was able to draw upon a wide array of published materials. By focusing on institutions and the arts, she also tapped into the records of the organizations, which were major sponsors of cultural activity across the country. Finally, many leading artists and patrons gained recognition in their lifetimes, ensuring that numerous collections of their private papers have survived. Tippett has mined these materials assiduously, and the result is a work based on an impressive depth and variety of sources.

In such a broad topic, deeply researched, there is always the risk of floundering in an overwhelming mass of detail. Tippett imposes order on her material by arranging her chapters thematically rather than chronologically. Themes such as the development of professionalism, the growth of arts education, the impact of foreign influences, and the role of patronage, private and public, organize the book. There is an inevitable trade-off in adopting such a design; a certain analytical clarity is gained, but the natural flow and thematic interplay of narrative is lost. On the whole, the structure of *Making Culture* makes it less compelling to read than it might have been, a book better suited to informing the specialist than entertaining the general reader.

It is, nonetheless, a provocative work. One interesting motif that emerges is the obsession among supporters of the arts with justifying their pursuits as something more than just the dallying of dilettantes. They defended their interests and solicited government support with a variety of standard arguments. Culture was promoted as a means of self-improvement, a higher form of education, an effective type of diplomacy, the basis of successful commercial design, the binding fabric of nationhood and the repository of the essential values of western liberal democracy. English Canadians rarely felt comfortable with the "art-for-art's sake" rationale for their hobbies.