

through transmission from mother to daughter.

David A. Gagan has taken much the same kind of approach in his useful little book of 1973 on the ultra-conservative Denison family of Toronto. There are other Family Connections in Canadian social and intellectual history—the Grants, Parkins, Masseys, Gordons, Creightons, McNaughts, to name a few—where patterns of continuity and change could similarly be drawn in. The difficulty, however, in tracing a historical profile of Canada's female pattern-makers is implicit in Elsie's formulation just quoted—"Ann and Jane and Emma and Helen"—as well as in Naomi Black's respectful reminder that "there are still MacGill women," by which she means the daughters of Helen Hughes, Elsie's elder sister. MacGill women, but without the MacGill name: each name-change at marriage obscures the family connection and leaves the achievements of these remarkable women vulnerable to involuntary dispersal among the chronicles of male relatives. We are fortunate that Elsie, the conscious legatee of four generations of MacGill women, had the wit to see that sharing a surname is less important to a family connection than sharing an outlook or belief.

Although unfailingly intelligent, informed and literate, *My Mother the Judge* was written without the documentation that a scholarly biographer would now provide. Elsie MacGill's sources are generally clear, however; newspaper and magazine articles, pamphlets, statutes and so on are often identified in the text, while family papers, anecdotes and personal memories make up the rest. Purists may on occasion question the attribution of feelings, motives, unspoken questionings to actors in the narrative, yet the net effect is one of judicious and reliable if affectionate portrayal.

Naomi Black provides a succinct, uncluttered introduction well suited to the reprinted

document, summing up the book's highlights and commenting on their significance for current feminist analysis. Remarking on the fact that Helen's most active years in public life followed her youngest children's entry into adolescence, Black explains that "for Helen, as for most feminists of the day, public service was an extension of family responsibilities and would never have been allowed to take precedence." (p. xvi). Black also answers those who criticize the stodgy conservatism of feminist thought in Canada. The vision of social reform espoused by the MacGill women is "not a conservative" one, she argues, despite its avowed gradualism, since the society where women and men could work with equal authority and effectiveness for humane goals has never existed in history. Black goes on to say that "relatively cautious reform techniques continue to be appropriate in the Canadian context." Where *realpolitik* is the cultural norm, the appeal to abstract rights and the expectation of radical change are equally out of place. In Black's view, "progress is made by a constant effort to exploit and expand existing constraints." Thus the MacGill women "represent a small part of a continuing tradition of changing a society by how one lives within it." (p. xxiii-xxiv). From this standpoint, *My Mother the Judge* serves as both record and blueprint.

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We Walked Very Warily: A History of Women at McGill. Margaret Gillett. *Montreal: Eden Press Women's Publications, 1981. Pp. 476.*

Some of the everyday experiences of the very first women who studied at McGill included being chaperoned by a Lady Superintendent who "sat with her knitting in the tiny labora-

tory where a young but circumspect lecturer directed the chemical experiments of unsophisticated freshwomen," being required to use separate entrances and stairways "designated for the use of women" and submitting to many other similar precautions deemed necessary by the McGill administration to ensure "that ladies be protected, even from gentlemen scholars". As Gillett demonstrates in her book, *We Walked Very Warily*, many of these early restrictions were, in effect, veiled opposition to co-education for women. Later years brought other forms of opposition to women at McGill. These included having "bloody spleens" thrown at them in an anatomy class, being belittled by male students on campus, having to take gym classes under "falling plaster" and a roof which "was so leaky that on rainy days the floor was covered with pools of water," having to contend with "generally accepted attitudes" which "predicted that concentrated study, examinations and the stress of competition with men would permanently disable women—their biological functions would be so affected that if higher education for women persisted for 50 years, wives would have to be imported," and, finally, having unjustified editing done by the Principal on a woman validictorian's address with the injunction that the address "was not to be delivered from the same rostrum that the men used." These were but a few of the discriminatory actions and attitudes that McGill women experienced at the student level. Throughout all this, women students were etching inroads into general university life. Despite the fact that for many years women were "excluded from the Students' Society," from "eligibility to the Presidency" of the Players' Club, and from membership in the Bridge Club, women at McGill demanded recognition and inclusion in the mainstream of University life by their excellent academic records and by their organized activities such as the Debating Club, the Literary Club and other lively social and intellectual groups.

At the professional level there was the administrative and faculty "hubbub" about the merits and de-merits of co-education, the heated opposition to entry into "male" faculties such as Law, Engineering and Medicine, and the contentious problem of academic credibility for "female" faculties such as Nursing and Education.

In her history of women at McGill, Gillett follows not only women students' struggles for full and equal participation in the university life, but also recounts the process of women professionals being accepted on faculty and their efforts to achieve equal status with male faculty. *We Walked Very Warily* is divided into four main parts: the early years of struggle for admission and experiences of the first "Donaldas"; the establishment of the Royal Victoria College in 1899, and its existence under the leadership of nine successive wardens of the college; professional faculties and the problems which beset women striving for full recognition and acceptance; and the final part devoted to "The Women's Movement on Campus" and an examination of problems that still exist for women at McGill today, such as, sexism in hiring policies, salary discrepancies and other forms of more subtle and overt discrimination.

Gillett's book is well written in a flowing, interesting style. Initially, it is hard to put the book down once it has been taken up. Gillett has done an inestimable amount of excellent research as the basis for her book. This is demonstrated by the meticulous documentation provided throughout the book. Particularly in the first half of the book, Gillett exhibits the rare quality of a good writer of history by presenting the social and intellectual climate of the period in such a way that the reader feels like an "insider" living the struggle of women for admittance to higher education. Although we come to know Principal J.W. Dawson, who dominated the early years of McGill, and other persons such as Dr.

Murray and Dr. Johnson who were deeply involved in the womens' debate, we also come to know intimately the early women involved in the struggle through the way Gillett manifests and presents their experiences as individuals and as a group. Gillett does more than merely describe changes and developments that took place in those early years. She succeeds in bringing to life, and explaining these changes by mining the experiences of the women involved. In the first half of her book Gillett indeed writes women into the history of McGill in a manner that feminists would heartily applaud. However, towards the end of Part 2, and throughout most of Part 3, Gillett's talent wanes, and the book tends to be somewhat boring in its recounting of innumerable facts, accomplishments and such. Perhaps the reason for this lies in the fact that Gillett's writing strengths seems to lie more in dealing with personalities that dominate areas of history and through them breathing life into the history of the period, than in handling events in periods which are devoid of dominating persons, as is the case in the less interesting sections of her book.

The extensive use of carefully selected photographs enhances the book by bringing an added dimension to the personalities and events encountered in the book. Very ample appendices to the book provide valuable information on such things as: female enrollment from 1880-1980, the involvement of non-academic women in campus affairs, honours and honorary degrees conferred on women, women's "firsts" at McGill, chancellors and principals of McGill, as well as Wardens of the Royal Victoria College. Although Gillett comes to the book with a feminist perspective, she does not come with an axe to grind. She cogently sums up situations, asks hard questions and makes insightful comments about the position and role of women in the course of McGill's history. Her interpretation throughout is clear, scholarly and adds life to the documentation.

All in all, this is an excellent book which the general reader will enjoy, which scholars interested in writing women into history will find valuable as a model and which professors of women studies will find as an excellent reference text, or as required reading for students.

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Pioneer and Gentlewomen of British North America, 1713-1867. (Documents in Canadian Women's History. Volume I). Beth Light and Alison Prentice, eds;. Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1980. Pp. 245.

Uphill all the Way. A Documentary History of Women in Australia. Kay Daniels and Mary Murnane, eds;. St. Lucia: Queensland, University of Queensland Press, 1980. Pp. 335.

These volumes have much in common: they are similar in format, and represent recent trends in feminist historical writing. They stem from the quest of women to recover and to re-define our past, and represent our efforts to discover and create materials to aid us in that quest. Yet there are differences in the approaches taken by the editors of the two collections, as well as differences in the historical experiences the works seek to represent. These differences make it difficult for me to discuss the books together, so I have chosen to describe and react to them sequentially. Let me begin by saying I liked them both very much and intend to introduce to them as many students and friends as possible. Yet I would use the two books rather differently: *Pioneer and Gentlewomen* I would hand out unhesitatingly to all comers, while *Uphill* I would wish to introduce, to qualify, and to hedge about with supplementary