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## Review of *Standing on New Ground: Women in Alberta* Edited by Catherine A. Cavanaugh and Randi R. Warne

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*Standing on New Ground: Women in Alberta.* Edited by Catherine A. Cavanaugh and Randi R. Warne. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1993. Introduction, tables, black and white photographs. xxii + 202 pp. \$16.95 paper.

This intriguing collection of accessible essays focuses largely on aspects of the relationship that Alberta women have had with public institutions, both formal and informal, from 1904 to the present. While all the essays cover worthwhile topics, some have been developed in only rudimentary fashion, while others are comprehensive and contain sophisticated analyses.

Among the articles dealing with women's voluntary activities, the highlight is an essay by Michael Owen on the Methodist and United Church Women's Missionary Society's missions to Ukrainians in eastern Alberta between 1904 and 1940. Like many missionaries elsewhere, these women had their greatest successes, not in conversions, but in offering medical and educational services to people who lived in areas not yet covered by public institutions or by organizations run by their own ethnic communities. Owen's description of the WMS residential schools for Ukrainian girls opens the door for some interesting comparisons to residential schools for Native children in Canada.

Of the several articles on women in political life, Linda Trimble's treatment of female legislators in Alberta, 1972-1991, makes an especially useful contribution in its examination of the difference that women can make on the provincial level in a parliamentary system with its strong party discipline. She concludes that women legislators often cooperate across party lines and that women in opposition sometimes succeed in getting their male colleagues to adopt a feminist analysis of many issues.

The collection also includes two excellent essays on women at the University of Alberta. Elaine Chalus vividly traces the crucial decade of 1960-1970 on campus, arguing that

"[c]hange in women's roles entered Canadian society from the youth culture of the 1960s, and more specifically from the university culture. Female university students were the catalysts for change" (p. 119). Pat Rasmusen provides a searching analysis of the first ten years of the Women's Program and Resource Centre, a unit within the Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta that reflects the changes Chalus describes.

One of the few articles not focused on women's relation to institutions is an engaging piece by filmmaker Barbara Evans on the life of an Alberta farm woman in the early decades of this century as revealed in the photographs the woman took of everyday events and activities. This essay, like all others in the collection, deals with women of European origin. Patricia Roome's exhaustive and interesting literature review redresses the balance somewhat with her inclusion of recent writings by and about Native women in Alberta.

While the articles may not be of uniform accomplishment, the introduction by the editors is excellent. In it they tease out the implications of even the sketchiest of the essays, putting each into context and indicating the questions raised by its conclusions. This introduction and the ten essays that follow are an admirable introduction to the lives of women in Alberta.

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