

NOT JUST PIN MONEY

Selected Essays On The History Of Women's Work In British Columbia

Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro, Editors

Don't work for pin money.

-Dorise Nielsen

New Worlds For Women, 1944



Camosun College
Victoria, B.C.
1984

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Not Just Pin Money

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For
Sophia Sliwka
Mary Werhun
Beth Wigmore

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PREFACE

Not all books require extensive explanations, but this one does because little about it is conventional. To begin with, its audience is neither homogenous nor predictable. The essays in this collection are essentially the proceedings of the first Women's History in British Columbia Conference which was held in April 1984 at Camosun College. The enthusiastic support of well over two hundred people from around the province and a variety of provincial, federal and private financial resources guaranteed the success of the project. The scope and kind of the essays in this collection reflect the aspirations of the Conference to provide a forum for work being done on the subject of women in British Columbia, whether or not the researchers were lay historians in the province's historical societies, students in introductory history classes in the colleges and universities, students in graduate programs, historians in museums and archives, historians in unions, or, professors and instructors in the colleges and universities. The Conference succeeded in bringing these people together and their audience was even more diverse since it included the interested public and representatives from women's traditional organizations like the Women's Institute and the IODE. From the papers of the Conference, essays were chosen and edited for this volume. In fact, the essays range from the journalistic to the academic, from the 'great woman' tradition through the maternal feminist and socialist emphases to the 'compensatory' and the woman-centered.

The theme that unites the essays is women's work experience. In defining the nature of women's work, we have included the familiar areas of unpaid labour in the home and in the community, as well as labour performed for wages. Most of the essays readily fall into these categories. The few that do not are nevertheless included because they are excellent essays from the Conference or because implicitly they reflect ideas about women's work in their period. Another unifying characteristic, which would have been self-evident if we had been able to compile an index, is the extent of the overlap in organizations, personalities, issues and purposes. To provide a regional, but contrasting, perspective on women's British Columbia experience, Margaret Conrad from Acadia University in Nova Scotia, gave the Conference keynote address which begins this volume. Time and place in women's history, whether newly interpreted or conventionally used to identify women in traditional histories, are compelling subjects of research.

In part, this volume grew out of the demand for our earlier publication on women's history in British Columbia: *In Her Own Right*. Many people have used that book with interest but, because time marches on, the subjects that were once explored have given way to changes in substance and in approach. *Not Just Pin Money* does not replace the first volume; instead, it is a supplement to it. In part, it records the point to which we have come, and in part suggests future directions. It is also intended to act as a reference tool,

especially the essay on women MLAs. We had hoped to include a bibliography but production restrictions prevented that, despite the need.

Finally, the nature of this production needs explanation. This volume has been entirely produced by the Applied Communications Program (Print Division) of Camosun College. With the assistance of funding from Canada Works Summer Employment Program and COSEP (Career Oriented Summer Employment Program), three students were hired for typesetting, photography, design, paste-up and press work: these were all first year students. They have been trained on the job by a faculty member, Kerm Carlson, and his technical assistant, Dan Doherty, who both volunteered their summers to the project and were crucial to its success. Two other students were hired as research assistants under the same grants to compile the essay on MLAs. Dale Mosher, the divisional secretary of Liberal and Applied Arts, volunteered to produce clean copy for the typesetters as she typed and retyped most of the essays. Ultimately, she also assisted on the typesetter, as did Collene Ferguson. At the outset, the editors and research assistants did not foresee how involved they would ultimately be in the technical production. We learned how to typeset, opaque negatives, burn plates, "strip in" corrections, and use the cutter. Part of the proofreading and production process also included well-wishers among family, friends, faculty, students and staff: Joan Carr, Catherine Hagen, Pat Hartley, Allison Latham, Dennis Latham, Bonnie MacQueen, Suzanne Murphy, Juliette Proom, Jeff Rooke, Deborah Taylor, Rosemarie Thauberger, Marise Wickman, Judy Wigmore, and Barbara Wright.

Needless to say, there are many people whom we wish to thank. Every phone call and every step of the way has been expedited by women and men who have made things easier or more pleasant: Barbara Riley, Judy Liefshultz, Lila Harris, Jacques Lapointe, John Meagher, Mike Damant, Robin Drader, Susan Smedley, Barbara MacLennan, Wendy Merluk, Kay Paulin, the reference librarians of the BC Legislative Library, the women of the NDP Caucus office, and Nora Lupton. The unknown photographer of the portrait of Buda Brown MLA is also thanked!

Materially, our great debt is to Barrie Wigmore, who ensured, at a crucial moment, that the Conference would be held, and, then, assisted in the funding of the book, through the Barrie and Deedee Wigmore Foundation. The British Columbia Heritage Trust, Canadian Studies Bureau of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, and The Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation also assisted in paying our bills, as did a portion of the Canada Works grant.

Our greatest thanks go to the writers. They not only prepared their essays for the Conference, but also had them in final form very rapidly so that they could be part of this Summer '84 students' employment project.

I suppose an editor seldom thanks her co-editor, but "Rob" has been crucial to the success and pleasure of this undertaking. I would not have had the courage or energy to take it on without her assured, competent, equal participation; both of our thanks go to our Conference co-organizer and project manager, Eileen Daoust, who helped make every day of 1983-1984 a meaningful one.

Needless to say, the responsibility for the errors, and more especially, the compromises, is entirely mine. But, while I ask for your indulgence, you should know that the motto which has inspired this project through its most trying moments was Nellie's own: "Never apologize; never retract; never explain; get the thing done and let them howl."

September, 1984.

Barbara Latham with Roberta Pazdro

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