

Stanley B. Frost. *McGill University for the Advancement of Learning*. Vol. II, 1895-1971. McGill-Queen's University Press. 1984. pp. xix & 493.

Michael Heyden. *Seeking a Balance: University of Saskatchewan 1907-1982*. University of British Columbia Press. 1983. pp. xix & 379.

John G. Reid. *Mount Allison University: a history to 1963*. University of Toronto Press. 1984, 2 vols. pp. 395 & 500.

Of all the universities in Canada, Saskatchewan has produced the largest number of general histories. The first to appear was Carlyle King's *The First Fifty: teaching, research and public service at the University of Saskatchewan* in 1959, which also saw the publication of A.S. Morton's *Saskatchewan: the making of a university*, a detailed account of the institution's founding and development to 1919. King extended his coverage with *Extending the Boundaries* in 1967 and in 1972 the developments in the 1960s were recorded in J.W.T. Spinks' *A Decade of Change: the University of Saskatchewan 1959-1970*. By this time a second interpretation of developments to 1959 had appeared, W.P. Thompson's *The University of Saskatchewan: a personal history*, in 1970. Two other accounts should be mentioned: James P. Thomson's *Festeryears at the University of Saskatchewan 1937-1949* (1969) and W.A. Riddell's *The First Decade: a history of the University of Saskatchewan Regina Campus* (1974).

The University's 75th anniversary occurred in 1983 and this was one justification for a new history. But the primary reason was Professor Heyden's conviction that the developments of the 1960s, culminating in 1974 in a revision of the charter and the establishment of a second university in the Province at Regina and characterized by the assumption of effectively complete control of the institution by the Government, placed the University in grave danger of being "destroyed":

unless the unique nature of the university is revived – unless it at least regains a surer sense of its mission and freedom to define and carry out that mission – the end of its special existence may be near. Since the passing of the revised University Act of 1974, the precedent of government dismissal and appointment of university officials has been established. Since 1971 a majority of the board's long term members have been appointed by the government, rather than a minority as provided in the original University Act. The machinery is thus in place to make the university a creature of the government of the day rather than the essentially independent but responsive and responsible institution it was. While no one has yet used the machinery it is quite likely, given human nature, only a matter of time until some government does, unless the machinery is dismantled to prevent government monopoly and to allow the council and senate to regain their former limited roles in university policy formation. (p. xviii)

The University of Saskatchewan's position as thus described is not really unique; with the development of provincial systems of higher education and with the expansion in size of most institutions well beyond the 5,000 full-time student mark, all universities are in difficulty with respect to defining and carrying out their mission. It is not only Saskatchewan that is seeking a balance.

The essence of the original University of Saskatchewan, as Heyden, here following A.S. Morton, conceives it, was that it was state supported but not state controlled. The respective authorities of the board of governors and Senate were as defined by the 1906 University of Toronto Act, which was also the model for the provision of financial support (33% of the annual provincial revenue from death duties, rather than 50%, but supplemented by an additional supplementary grant), but in contrast to Toronto, where all the appointed members of the board were named by the government, only three of the eight appointed members of the Saskatchewan board were government nominees, with five – a majority – being named by the Senate. As Heyden demonstrates in his first six chapters, the University operated on this basis for fifty years, essentially in control of its development, though with increased government intervention following an internal crisis in 1919 and in the face of the financial difficulties of the Depression years. But with the need to expand postsecondary education in the 1960s a new and continuing crisis emerged, the outcome of which was the assumption of effective control of the University's affairs by the government. These developments are described in great detail in Chapter 7, "From Conflict to Crisis 1959-1974". In effect Heyden's history terminates at 1974, though there is a brief concluding chapter reviewing the University's commitment to public service through teaching and research throughout the 75 year period.

Heyden's book is not a polemic; it is fully and carefully documented. But it does result in an incomplete (one is tempted to say *unbalanced*) picture of the University of Saskatchewan for the period since 1959. The concern is so exclusively with the interrelations of University and Government and with the politics of university administration that one tends to forget that teaching and research continued to be the University's mission and its *raison d'être*.

In contrast to Saskatchewan, very little has been written about Mount Allison. The nearest thing to a history prior to the publication of Professor Reid's volumes were special issues of student or alumni newspapers in 1884, 1904, 1940 and 1963 which for all practicable purposes could only be read in the Mount Allison library. This problem has now been disposed of, for we now have what can only be described as a definitive history of Mount Allison from its beginnings in the 1840s to 1963.

Reid's is not only a detailed account of a small but complex institution (actually a set of institutions, since in addition to the College/University the board was responsible for most of these years for male and female secondary schools) but also an admirably balanced one. As one reads, a sense of community is always present, a community composed, however, at any given time of vivid personalities – principal or president, ex-presidents, chairman of the board, other trustees, many faculty members, some alumni and students. In addition, the volumes constitute a mini-history of higher education in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and are a contribution to the intellectual history of the Maritime Provinces. Contained within them, for example, are substantial accounts of the University of Halifax, a little known institution that functioned from 1876 to 1881, and of the Carnegie

Corporation of New York's efforts in the 1920s to restructure higher education in the Maritime Provinces. Also of unusual interest in this year when a number of universities in Central Canada are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the admission of women to their classes is the story of women at Mount Allison, one which extends back some fifteen years before the granting of the first degree in 1875 and which continues to receive detailed attention through to 1963.

Reid has sound reasons for concluding his account at 1963: a new president (after 17 years) and chairman of the board (after 12); a revised charter, among other things reducing the United Church's representation on the board to less than 50% and providing for faculty representation on it; the retirement of all but one of the faculty members of the 1920s and the appointment in the late 1950s of a number of young staff members who would be influential figures during the next two decades; and the decision of the New Brunswick government to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission on higher education chaired by John J. Deutsch, which guaranteed that Mount Allison would receive substantial and continuing support to enable it to function as a recognized and integral part of a provincial system of higher education. This role, essentially what Mount Allison had been performing since the 1890s, was that of a liberal arts college, with a limited number of paraprofessional (engineering) and professional (fine art, music, home economics, teacher training) programs, in other words a small Canadian-type university.

Since 1957, Mount Allison had been actively debating what its role should be – a liberal arts college on the New England model, with high academic standards and an enrolment limited to just over 1,000; or a small university with perhaps 2,500 students in the 1980s, which would ensure that these professional programs as well as a solid B.A. would be available to the University's traditional constituency even if the applicant's academic qualifications would not gain him or her admittance to, say, Harvard College. As the new president, Lawrence Stagg, took office, the debate in effect was reopened. Clearly, Professor Reid has a basic theme for a third volume, the role of the small Canadian university in the changed and changing conditions of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

There have been two earlier histories of McGill, Cyrus Macmillan's *McGill and its Story, 1821–1921*, published on the occasion of the centenary of the original charter, and *McGill: the story of a university*, a thin volume of 100 pages of text and 20 of (admirable) illustrations, edited by Hugh McLennan in 1960. The bulk (220 of its 300 pages) of the Macmillan book is devoted to the founding of the institution and its early development (*non-development* is perhaps the better word) prior to the appointment of J.W. Dawson as principal in 1855. There follows a chapter on his 38-year principalship, appropriately subtitled, as Stanley Frost would be the first to agree, "the making of McGill" and much shorter ones on the admission of women and on the 25 year principalship of William Peterson, who succeeded Dawson after a two year interregnum in 1895. The 1960 volume consists of gracefully written essays on McGill's origins (by McLennan), the principalships of Dawson and Peterson (E.A. Collard), McGill between the Wars (David L. Thomson), and the post-world War II years (the then Principal, F. Cyril

James). It is a sketchy record. Fortunately, much has been written about McGill in the form of autobiographies, biographies and studies of particular faculties, colleges and other sub-units.

Stanley Frost's first volume, published in 1980, dealt with McGill's origins, foundation and the difficult early years in seven chapters and with Dawson's principalship in five an appropriate balance. Urbanelly written, devoid of the pedantic concern for legalistic detail that makes the reading of Macmillan a chore, and placing McGill's development firmly in the context of the realities of political, economic social and linguistic conditions in the Province of Quebec, it was at once recognized as of comparable quality as an institutional history to the first volumes of the new Queen's and McMaster histories written by Hilda Neatby and Charles M. Johnston. His second volume, like Johnston's and like Frederick W. Gibson's *Queen's University Volume II* maintains the standard, with the result that, with Reid's, there are now four Canadian university histories that are as good as any that have been written. Frost's achievement is in one respect the most remarkable, for where Gibson, Johnston, Neatby and Reid were concerned with a relatively small institution, he records the development of McGill as it makes the transition from university to multiversity. The problems of dealing with a university of 1,000 students and two or three faculties or of 5,000 and a half dozen are of a different order than those which face the historian of an institution with 10,000 or 20,000 and with 10 to 50 major sub-units: faculties, schools, colleges, departments, centres, institutes. In 1957, the terminal point of the McMaster study, it had 1,270 students registered in three faculties and a theological college. In 1961, when Professor Gibson concludes, Queen's had 3,400 students and six major sub-units. In 1963, Mount Allison enrolled 1,200 full-time students. In 1971, McGill had over 16,000 full-time students in 12 faculties, three theological colleges, and over a dozen centres and research institutes.

In 1960, the concluding point of Part I of Frost's second volume, McGill had about 8,000 students, an increase of less than 1,000 from 1950. The organizational pattern of Part I is the same as that of his first volume and of the Johnston, Neatby, Gibson and Reid volumes: a chronological account centering on the successive principalships and dealing with the relationship of the university to government (including the federal from 1951 on), internal organization, the expanding teaching and research program, and life on campus, particularly in terms of the student body. In dealing with the 1960s, however, Frost departs from the traditional script. Part II, "Faculties and Departments in the Post-War Years", has four chapters, concentrating on the teaching and research activities in, successively, the Humanities (including Music, Religion, the University Press, Extension and the Library system), the Social Sciences (including Law and the museums), Physical & Applied Sciences (including Engineering, Agriculture, Architecture and Food Science), and the Biological and Natural Sciences (including Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, and Physical and Occupational Therapy). In contrast, Part III, The University 1960-1971, considers McGill's overall development in two chapters.

The first of these, entitled "the Quiet Revolutions", places McGill in the context of the complete revision of the educational system of Quebec which followed the

report of the Parent Commission and of the changed financial situation occasioned by the decision of the Federal Government in 1966 to funnel all financial support of higher education other than for research through the provincial governments, and describes the altered academic and administrative structures which these changes and the dramatically increased enrolment necessitated. Included here, rather than under Social Sciences in Part II, is Education (Faculty and Institute) since developments in this teaching and research area were so intimately related to the new provincial educational system.

The second chapter of Part III is called "Turbulence and Celebration." Here the overall development of McGill is considered in the context of another revolution, the "world-wide phenomenon" (Frost's words) of student protest with respect to the organization and the objectives of universities. This is the turbulence, apparently as early as 1963 but particularly virulent at McGill in 1966, 1967 and 1968. By 1970, however, there was a return to normality: "even the national crises of October 1970 and the imposition of the War Measures Act did not disturb the new-found mood of confidence which permeated the university as it approached the celebration of its 160th anniversary in 1971." This celebration was climaxed by three members of the McGill Sky Club landing by parachute on the McGill campus, an event thus described by Frank R. Scott:

I stood by the Redpath Library
and watched the thousands of students
opening McGill's 150 year old House
students of all races and creeds
none of whom had fought on the Plains of Abraham
or at the Battle of Hastings
no two dressed alike
bright with colours as trees in October
all gazing upward
into the cool blue sky
cheering the girl and two boys who
dropped on red-and-white
parachutes
from 4000 feet
onto a small patch of green grass
missing the trees and tall buildings
with swinging skill
and speaking no language
save the language of motion.
As they floated down
we were all lifted up.

We, too, will be lifted up by this admirably conceived and beautifully written history of a great University.

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