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Manitoba Women and Higher Education: Momentum to Stay the Course

Carolyn Crippen
John R. McCarthy

Her education is the same as that of a man . . . she is able to unfold and exercise her mental powers and faculties. She chooses her occupation in such a way as corresponds with her wishes, inclinations and natural abilities, and she works under conditions identical with man's. Even if engaged as a practical working woman on some field or other, at other times of the day she may be educator, teacher, or nurse, as yet others she may exercise herself in art, or cultivate some branch of science, and yet others may be filling some demonstrative function. She joins in studies, enjoyments or social intercourse with either her sisters or with men, as she may please or occasion may serve. (Bebel cited in Kinnear, 1995, p. 5)

Introduction

More than a century has passed since the German, August Bebel (cited in Kinnear, 1995), championed the social emancipation of women and predicted their success. Have women in higher education realized that prediction today? The progress and the reality faced by women in their quest for a place in higher education is documented sparsely. This study addressed middle class women and higher education. Consideration was given to women as students, as faculty, and as administrators. This research was restricted to Manitoba, Canada, and its largest city, Winnipeg.

Although large in area, Manitoba has a sparse population of 1.1 million people. The majority live in the capital city, Winnipeg, located in southern Manitoba, about one hour from the U. S. border. To the east of Manitoba is the densely populated, industrial province of Ontario. To the west of Manitoba are the wheat fields of Saskatchewan, another sparsely populated province. To the north is the territory of Nunavut. Along the southern Manitoba border are the states of North Dakota and a small portion of north western Minnesota.

An historical accounting of women's education in Manitoba provides a foundation for studying Manitoba women in higher education. Organized schooling in the province was introduced in the early 1800s. Cultural and societal issues often challenged their learning journey. A chronology of provincial education¹ establishes the paths and influences that guided women² in their learning, on the types of content available, and the eventual opportunities for involvement in higher education, particularly at the University of Manitoba. The Manitoba historical perspective covers (a) Education and Pioneer Women: c.1825-1850, (b) Higher Education Begins: 1850-1900, (c) Building Momentum: 1900-1960, (d) Maintaining Momentum and More: 1960-1990, and (e) Progress and Reality In Higher Education: 1990- 2000.

Education and Pioneer Women: c. 1825-1850

In the early 1800s, Scottish settlers, under the leadership of Lord Selkirk, established the Red River colony at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers in a small corner of Rupert's Land,

in what would later be the province of Manitoba (Healy, 1987). Included among the settlers were women immigrants traveling with and without families: domestics, schoolmistresses, seamstresses, shopkeepers, midwives, farmwives, missionaries, and the spouses of military men posted to the area (Prentice, Bourne, Brandt, Light, Mitchinson, & Black, 1996). All the Selkirk settlers were seeking a new life in the new country. On both sides of the Red River, women organized schools and taught in them.

Historically, women actually had been school teachers in Rupert's Land *before* the province of Manitoba existed. In the English-speaking settlements on the west bank of the Red River, girls could attend schools run by women who emphasized social graces as well as elementary skills. It was relatively easy for women to teach because most schools were domestic affairs. The schoolmistress advertised her skills in the instruction of reading and writing, or sewing, or languages and fine arts (skills and learning that were acceptable to the community), and waited at home for her pupils (as did the vast majority of schoolmasters). When the teacher moved, so did her school. Students attended on an irregular basis when they were not needed at home (Bruno-Jofre & Mitchell, 1998-1999; Prentice et al., 1996). These domestic or private schools taught large numbers of children and were an important educational resource in the communities and sources of income for the schoolmistress and her family. Armstrong (2000) stated,

Women's formal role in education for Manitoba children began with Angelique and Marguerite Nolin. These sisters were pressed into service as teachers by Lord Selkirk and Bishop Provencher, who opened a French language Roman Catholic school, the first for girls, in 1829. (p. vi)

They taught in St. Boniface on the east side, and they worked as teachers in nearby locations during the next 20 years (Bumsted, 1999; Healy, 1987). French-Roman Catholic mixed-blood (Metis) families settled in the region as well; thus, religious orders of women soon followed. A contingent of Grey Nuns from France arrived in St. Boniface in 1844 to establish the first women's religious community in the Canadian West. They taught children at the elementary and secondary levels (Armstrong, 2000; Prentice et al., 1996).

The environment of Protestant Academies and/or Roman Catholic convent schools created a female culture that valued learning and that provided forums where women (students and teachers), separated from the outside public world, could exercise power. By the 1850s, curriculum was much expanded from what was available to most women of previous generations. Weiss and Rinear (2002) emphasized, "the literacy rate for women began to increase and the gap between the education offered to women and men narrowed" (p. 197). Women began to campaign for equal access to all levels of education (Prentice et al., 1996), "Those women who were aware of the growing international agitation for female 'improvement' believed that a more advanced education was essential to fit women for their vital and enhanced educational role as mothers and teachers" (p. 94).

Osborne (1993) explained that Manitoba education was impacted by five often inter-related forces at work and driven by nationalists, businessmen, ruling elites, progressives, and reformers. These forces were: "(1) the need for national unity; (2) the need for a suitably trained and disciplined work force; (3) the need to instill a sense of citizenship in the population; (4) the opportunity to spread enlightenment; and (5) the possibility for social change" (p. 10). Britain intended to spread and reinforce a strong British influence and loyalty to the British crown through normal school graduates and their teachings.³ The government established co-educational

public “normal schools” in nearly every British North American colony during the 1840s and 1850s.

The first colleges and universities, intended for boys and men, put girls and women at a disadvantage. Advanced formal education replaced apprenticeships for men who were preparing for professional roles. What was the opportunity for women? Higher education was not welcoming to women students. Canadian medical schools in the 1830s and 40s refused to admit women as did law schools and the ministry. Although prohibited from formal higher education, literate women of British North America were involved in writing for publication. Weiss and Rinear (2002) stated,

Writing had always been an acceptable way for a middle-class woman to earn money because she could do it in the privacy of her own home (not in the male, public sphere) and could meet her domestic responsibilities at the same time. During the nineteenth century, which had its share of depression and panics, more women than ever turned to writing to help support their families. Single women, too, felt the need to earn money to support themselves. (p. 232)

Many women published under a man’s name; several women did publish journals using their own names, but these publications struggled to survive. Formal writing gave women writers self-sufficiency and self-determination. Prentice et al. (1996) explained,

Through these writings, educated women sought influence in the worlds outside their families and familiar communities. To the extent that they were successful in getting their words into print, they introduced the idea of women’s voice- and women’s authority- into the realm of public discourse. (p. 96)

Higher Education Begins: 1850-1900

The province of Manitoba entered the Confederation in 1870 with a population of 12,000. However, the population in Canada grew from approximately 3.6 million people in 1871 to nearly nine million in 1921 (Friesen, 1987). Many of the immigrants were attracted by the promise of free land west of Ontario. Between 1851 and 1891, young men flocked to the prairies in search of great economic development. Although many Canadians moved to the rural areas, especially the British immigrants, “women continued to shift the population by moving into the cities for employment opportunities” (Prentice et al., 1996, p. 113). In Manitoba, between 1881 and 1891, population grew from 62,000 to 153,000 (Friesen, 1987). Thus, women outnumbered men in the cities.

The Victorian Era (1837-1901) was confining to women in Manitoba and worldwide. Middle class females were responsible for the children while their husbands attended to making a living. However, secretarial opportunities for women emerged in the late nineteenth century in the City of Winnipeg. The work encouraged women to seek additional training and skill development in typing, shorthand, and bookkeeping. Young (1999) suggested that for women clerical workers, “the typewriter, the ledger, and the shorthand writer’s pad were instruments not of oppression, but of liberation” (p. 129).

The idea of an educated woman was often ridiculed. In 1872, Dominion statistician, George Johnson, announced that the decline in the birth rate was the result of women

who became educated and worked outside the home, showing little interest in marriage. “A Christian Guardian journalist wrote during the same time that, very intellectual women are seldom beautiful. Their features, and in particular their foreheads, are more or less masculine” (Prentice et al., 1996, p. 173). The “woman question or woman problem” became important during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Education was considered the key to improving the condition of women. Two different avenues were suggested: 1. improve home conditions by practical training—the precursor of the domestic science movement (renamed home economics, and initially included cooking, sewing, and housekeeping). 2. access to higher education which led to small numbers of women entering university. (Prentice et al., 1996, p.156)

The latter caused concern. Were women abandoning their responsibility for motherhood and children? Male religious and medical leaders emphasized that woman’s place was in the home, raising children and providing a solace for husbands (Prentice et al., 1996).

The majority of institutions that provided post secondary education were founded by various churches in Winnipeg (Kinnear, 1995). The chronology of the secondary institutions in Winnipeg follows:

1849	St. John’s College	founded by Anglican Church.
1854	St. Boniface College	founded by Roman Catholic Church.
1871	Manitoba College	founded by Presbyterian Church.
1873	Wesley College	founded by Methodist Church.
1877	University of Manitoba	established.
1888	Wesley College	became affiliated with the University of Manitoba.
1938	United College	founded by United Church
1938	Red River College	established
1968	University of Winnipeg	established

The Colleges of St. John’s, St. Boniface, and Manitoba, in 1877, formed the University of Manitoba; its original function was to examine candidates and award degrees. No curricula were provided until 1904.

Dr. Mary Kinnear, historian at St. John’s College, University of Manitoba, has written extensively about the progress of women in higher education in Manitoba and the writers are indebted to Kinnear for much of the information cited in this paper. Formal higher education began for women with teacher training at Manitoba Normal School. Manitoba Normal School was established by the provincial government in 1882. Early in 1886, four women applied for admission to higher education at Manitoba College. Immediate opposition to the requests occurred. Archbishops Machray (St. John’s College) and Tache (St. Boniface College) were the chief objectors. Only one of the four women eventually enrolled in the fall session at Manitoba College. By 1890, the Anglican St. John’s had joined the Presbyterian and Methodist Colleges in admitting women, and the first woman instructor at the university level lectured in the French department at St. John’s, 1893-1900. In 1883 the Manitoba Medical College was established to offer instruction leading to a degree at the University of Manitoba. “Although the Manitoba Medical College was in theory, co-educational from the beginning, no woman was admitted until 1890” (Kinnear, 1995, p.20).

Building Momentum: 1900-1960

By 1905, Manitoba had elementary school attendance requirements, but home responsibilities dictated the frequency of attendance. By 1911, Canadian boys and girls spent eight years in classrooms and Manitoba “made school attendance compulsory until age fourteen” (Osborne, 1998-1999, p. 3). Only 44% of 15 year old girls were attending school. The percentage of boys (who were needed to help with the seeding, bailing and harvesting on the farms) was lower. Many girls helped with the maintenance of the home and childcare. Girls in rural Manitoba were particularly affected by these responsibilities while the mother helped with the farming in the fields. Attendance varied according to race, ethnicity, and class. The Provincial government of Manitoba recognized the influx of large numbers of immigrants to the province and Bruno-Jofre and Mitchell (1998-1999) noted that, “in 1918 the Honorable Dr. Thornton, Minister of Education, identified the need to bring newcomers quickly into Canadian life and life of the province. Forty-two percent of the population was represented by 38 nationalities in 1916” (p. 27). Manitoba was an early example of true cultural diversity.

The separation of boys and girls was strictly maintained in urban schools. The entrances and playground areas for boys and girls were separate. Gym classes were separate. Boys took Industrial Arts and girls took Home Economics.⁴ Secondary curricula was similarly defined. Boys were encouraged to take the classics. Health and gym classes were segregated. Gym classes encouraged calisthenics for girls; boys participated in the rougher masculine sports of football and hockey and even joined the school military cadet corps. “And, in response to the rapidly changing commercial workplace in the early 1900s, boys were steered into accounting and girls into typing and stenography” (Prentice et al., 1996, p. 171). The government reinforced and spread the predominant Victorian message of the time (a woman’s place was in the home) to farms and urban communities through lectures and flyers; young girls and women teachers received the same message in school through the home economics curriculum. Manitoba historian, Dr. Sybil Shack (1993a), was not impressed with her home economics classes,

I now understand how much better qualified than my teachers were my grandmother and my mother to teach me the more practical virtues the home-making course was supposed to instill. At school my schoolmates and I were being taught to use washing machines and electronic irons, while in most of our homes the washing was done on scrubbing boards and the ironing with sad irons heated on kitchen stove. Not many families could afford either washing machines or electric irons. (p. 433-434)

By 1900, women formed 11% of the student population enrolled in universities and colleges; this grew to 13.9% by 1920. Until 1904, all university level instruction in Manitoba was offered by church colleges to men. In 1904, the University of Manitoba⁵ (located in Winnipeg) departed from simply examining students and expanded into teaching science by establishing the Faculty of Science. In 1910, the chairs for English, History, and Political Economy at the University of Manitoba were established. In 1910, women were appointed to the Manitoba Agricultural College, University of Manitoba, to teach Home Economics. Kinnear (1995) reported that, “there was an increase in the number of women employed at the University of Manitoba by 1920, however, those with advanced degrees occupied lower-paid and less prestigious jobs of instructor or demonstrator” (p. 24). After World War I (1914-1918), the University of Manitoba provided the majority of all higher education teaching.

The Law Society of Manitoba was by statute in 1877 accorded the authority to control legal education and admission to the profession.

The first application from a woman for admission as a student in law came in 1911 and was unsuccessful. Legislation in 1912 enabled women to practice as barristers on the same terms as men and two women were admitted to the Manitoba Bar in 1915. (Kinnear, 1995, p. 21)

Women reluctantly admitted to university scholarship proved capable of higher learning. Bigotry remained. Prentice et al. (1996) related the story of a Roman Catholic cleric who “believed that higher education was the road to destruction for young women” (p. 175). He preached that, “they would no longer be the devoted companions of men, but rather, their rivals” (p. 175).

The new century heralded a written report (National Council of Women of Canada, 1900), *Women of Canada: Their Life and Work*. It was funded by the federal government and was written by the National Council of Women.⁶ This document gave additional credence to the critical role that women played in Canadian society and to the issues that were important to them. World War I (1914-1918) brought a social crisis to Canada and ill feelings toward foreigners. Manitoba advocated that public schools were agencies to develop national unity, teach English, and educate all in the Canadian manner. This was the theme of the National Conference on Character Education in Relation to Canadian Citizenship that was held in Winnipeg and sponsored by the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba and the Rotary Clubs of Canada in 1919. Teachers played powerful roles in transmitting ideology of Anglo-conformity, assimilation, and social stability. A good citizen was not one urging radical change. Educational historian, Rosa Bruno-Jofre (1996), confirmed, “in 1919 the Independent Order of the Daughters of the Empire (IODE) saw foreign women as part of the general imperative to make our new Canadians one hundred percent British in language, thought, feeling, and impulse” (p. 77).

The 1901 Canadian census indicated there were 857 professors in Canada. Only 47 were women.⁷ Morton (1998) stated that the role of the academic community was “to hold a mirror to our society, allowing neither a flattering self-portrait nor an outsider’s caricature, but reality” (p. 52). Kinnear (1995) recorded the names of several female higher education pioneers in Manitoba who were successful in joining the ranks of the academic community. The first woman to teach at the University of Manitoba was Maude Bissett, in Classics, who taught from 1914-1920. Three other females joined in 1919; Emma Pope taught English and Mile Haynard and Celine Ballu taught French. Eileen Bulman was appointed to the Science Department in Zoology 1920-25. In 1928, Doris Saunders joined the faculty and taught English until her retirement in 1967. Saunders and Ballu remained the only women on the university staff except for a female chemist, Jessie Roberts (1932-33), who left because she could not get a salary increase (Kinnear, 1995).

For most of the 1920s and 1930s there were sessional appointments. Sessionals were instructors appointed for a session at a time, not on a continuing basis, and included lecturers, lab assistants and demonstrators who were usually senior undergraduate students. Kinnear (1995) identified Lucy Chapman as “the first female sessional appointment listed for one year in 1917 in the English department” (p. 33). Anna Jones, a sessional in German remained in that role for 16 years, and Margaret Dudley, a student demonstrator in Botany, remained after she had earned her Ph.D. During the late 1930s,⁸ when fewer sessionals were employed by all faculties, the proportion of women was generally higher. There were more women among casual academic

employees at the university than among the full-time, even though they were still in a small minority there (Kinnear, 1995).⁹

Until the end of World War II (1939-1945), the majority of female university teachers were located in the home economics department of the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Manitoba. Students were taught practical training in home and family management, and were supervised in housekeeping and child rearing. This training was provided in specially built houses on the university campus. By 1946, women university teachers in home economics (domestic science) constituted half of all the women on the university faculty.

Beginning in 1938, new programs were established that provided opportunities for more women instructors. A program of interior design was introduced in 1938, and from the outset, women were appointed as instructors, first as sessionals, and after 1942, as full time instructors. Social work was initiated in 1943 with two full-time instructors, one a woman. Nursing was introduced in 1947. After 1950 there was an increase in women faculty at the University of Manitoba due to the introduction of new programs for which women were hired: interior design, social work, and nursing. By the mid 1950s women had taken over all the full-time positions in those programs.

Two full-time women were appointed in Science during the 1920s and 1930s and no more women were appointed in Science until 1950. By 1970, the 11 women in science comprised 6% of the total science faculty. The highest overall proportion of female university teachers in all the faculties existed between 1945-1955 when the average percentages hovered around 16-17%, and the Faculty of Arts included 25% women in 1947. Among the early women teachers, Doris Saunders, who was in the Faculty of Arts for 39 years at the University of Manitoba, expressed her support for well rounded student development similar to the British model, "Universities should seek to cultivate also, the emotional, the aesthetic, and the spiritual life of the individual. If more time could be devoted to personnel work with students I believe the whole University and the community would be benefited thereby" (Kinnear, 1995, p. 42).

Maintaining Momentum and More: 1960-1990

During the 1960s, 76% of the social work faculty were women.¹⁰ The provision of other course options to women students caused a reduction in the number of women registered in home economics at the University of Manitoba (from an 80% high in the 1930s down to 26% in 1965). Kinnear (1995) suggested, "the best estimate of the total number of women who taught full time between 1914 (when the first woman was appointed) and 1970 was 376" (p. 35). In the 1960s, American feminist Betty Frieden (2001) revealed the growing dissatisfaction of middle class women. Women wanted to use their talents and education outside the home. Kinnear (1982) and Weiss and Rinear (2002) cite as significant the impact Frieden's book had on creating a momentum for women to return to university or college, to search for challenging jobs, and to fuel the women's movement.

The United College and St. John's College continued to offer courses and employment until the late 1960s to women and men. The University of Winnipeg was founded in 1968 from the United College, forcing a restructuring of courses and faculties throughout the city.¹¹ Until the late 1960s, each college offered instruction in theology as well as arts and the lower levels of science. The Roman Catholic French-speaking College, St. Boniface, was directed by Jesuits and no woman taught there on a permanent basis before 1970.

Kinnear (1995) concluded that “women university instructors were not a numerous group. Over a period from 1933 to 1970 there was really little significant growth” (p. 38-40). Women who taught at the University of Manitoba, in Kinnear interviews, described “circuitous routes” to their final niche of university teaching. Women in the Faculty of Education often began as school teachers in the public schools. Others worked as practitioners in the field (i.e., home economics, social work, and health professionals). As late as the 1960s, appropriate female career opportunities were limited to teaching, nursing, office work, and marriage. Some were diverted from their original hopes by the financial problems of the Depression. Others were side-tracked by service in the armed forces. Several went into graduate training as a way to maintain or improve a variety of future options while deferring a decision on a career. Most said they went into graduate work because they liked it and were good at it. Almost all university women interviewed by Kinnear spoke of the emotional, and in many cases, the material support given them by their parents, especially their fathers. Several mentioned the sacrifices their mothers made, particularly those who had been single parents.

While a woman’s initial predisposition towards higher education may have been regarded with little concern, she was less likely to find external support thereafter. Many noted that they had to contend with indifference and even hostility. In disciplines such as mathematics and English, women students were met with the ingrained conservative assumption that the scholar was recognizable only as a man. Only the persistent, determined, and possibly naive female, remained to fight the battle in the more male-dominated subject areas. (Kinnear, 1995, p. 38)

At the University of Manitoba, academic qualifications were not so significant in the faculties that offered more of a vocational training (i.e., engineering, medicine, law). The concept of clinical training rather than research was emphasized in medicine and law. A teacher from the field could give practical instruction valued by a new recruit, who wanted to know *how* rather than *why* to practice her trade. Home Economics and Education and Nursing recruited from institutions, schools and hospitals.

Practicality in the field seemed quite sensible to many women . . . [but] a master’s degree in the first half of the twentieth century was necessary training for the university teacher, and even though the doctorate was not the almost universal prerequisite it became after 1970, it was a useful degree to have. (Kinnear, 1995, p.39-40).

The shift towards a greater emphasis on research, accompanied by a higher proportion of male appointees, occurred in the Faculties of Social Work and Education. During the 1960s, the proportion of women faculty was reduced. By 1965, possession of a graduate degree counted for more than service in the field. For a variety of reasons, (e.g., parental obligations, family responsibilities, lack of funds, lack of motivation to do research or publish, lack of encouragement) women were slower to prepare themselves with this qualification and their numbers declined. New male academic administrators introduced new demands and expectations for research into the staff, which caused considerable anxiety. Some female teachers were inspired by the project. But, there was no reduction in the teaching load. The new approach to research was considered by some as a way for men to enforce the rules to keep women out. Home Economics hired a male director. The Dean of Agriculture was male.

In 1971, a Manitoba volunteer committee coordinated women's groups in presenting a joint brief to the Royal Commission and four months after the report was tabled, it became the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women. Sybil Shack (1993b), in reflecting on the ongoing inequities in the academic world, stated "in spite of the Status of Women committees, the educational hierarchy during the 1960's and '70's remained resolutely and overwhelmingly male" (p. 504). Feminists during the 1970s referred to themselves as socialist feminists. They focused on the ways in which capitalism and patriarchy were related and acted as systems of oppression for women. Radical feminists believed in the asserting of uniqueness of women and tended to obliterate gender roles. Both socialist and radical feminists had a major impact on Women's Studies in Canada and Manitoba.¹² Prentice et al. (1996) wrote about such programs in the 1980s:

By the 1980s, Women's Studies were well established in a large number of Canadian Universities (including Manitoba) supported by three journals and by five regional Women's Studies Chairs endowed by the Department of the Secretary of State. Many of the first generation of instructors were women's movement activists. But integrating women's experiences and perceptions into existing academic disciplines was a painfully slow process." (p. 426)

On April 17, 1982, the Canadian Charter of Right and Freedoms was established. The Guide to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Canadian Heritage, 1997) states, "The Charter sets out those rights and freedoms that Canadians believe are necessary in a free and democratic society. Some of the rights and freedoms contained in the Charter are:

- freedom of expression
- the right to a democratic government
- the right to live and to seek employment anywhere in Canada
- the right to equality, including the equality of men and women" (p. 1).

The rights enshrined in the Charter further fuelled the desire by women for equality of opportunity and gave greater profile to women's issues at the university level (i.e., sexism, racism, inclusionary language, and even female representation in faculties) (Prentice et al., 1996).

Until after W.W.II, it was rare to find a married woman employed as a full-time university teacher at the University of Manitoba. In the 1940s and 1950s, single women (either those who had never married or those who were widowed) were still more common than married women. Many returning ex-service women used Canadian veterans bursary programs to obtain a university education. In the 1940s, 2600 woman had succeeded with this program. In opposition to progress in higher education K-12 guidelines continued to stress the role of women in the home as forming the nucleus of the family unit. The Roman Catholic Church still stated that women belonged in the home or the convent. "One Oblate priest told a girls' graduating class at a convent that a woman achieves greatness on her knees" (Prentice et al., 1996, p. 396). Women fought for maternity rights of female teachers in Winnipeg and the right for women to teach beyond elementary school. Secondary school teachers required a university degree (Shack, 1993b). As women moved up the educational ladder, their numbers decreased.

There was a distinct difference between women employed at the university before and after 1960s. Those of the older generation who were married were expected to run the household and look after their husbands, but they tended to be childless. When a university professor was also a mother, the tendency was for other people (and for her, too) to consider that this was very much her own personal business.

Before 1970, the women in the faculties had very little to do with one another. There was no overt solidarity, political, or social. There were no formal or informal associations beyond the gathering of a few friends. Many had children and heavy home responsibilities and felt they had little time for socializing. The apparent ambition and self-sacrifice of the professional had to be subordinated to the self-sacrifice of the wife and mother. (Kinnear, 1995, p. 47)

After 1970, many women no longer accepted the necessity of choice between marriage or a profession. A typical remark was, "You learn to make a lot of compromises" (Kinnear, 1995, p. 50). Women involved in higher education had very few women mentors to guide them in their careers. Doris Saunders stated the difference between her attitude and that of males in the faculty, "They look after themselves. I try to help others" (Kinnear, 1995, p. 45). The uninviting atmosphere of the Faculty Club discouraged and excluded females. Conversations were cut short or topics were changed if women ventured near the men's tables. Much university business was conducted in the club and networking worked in men's favor.¹³ Caplan (1995) emphasized the same point: "Academics function to a great extent through colleague or networking systems through which the formal and unwritten rules of the profession are disseminated and insider information shared" (p. 202).

Progress and Reality in Higher Education: 1900-2000

In 1991, women represented 21% of the total university faculty, with the highest number of 30% in education. In 1992, women students constituted 69% of those registered in education and health related programs. However, women students had 17% representation in engineering and 28% in math that year (Prentice et al., 1996). Shack (1993b) stated her opinion of those in the education field. "But 17 years after my retirement the way ahead is still rough and many of the obstacles of 1976 still block it for my successors in our honourable profession" (p. 508).

Epp (1995) reported results from a survey of department heads and students in Canadian institutions granting M.Ed. degrees in Educational Administration. The presence of women in educational administration¹⁴ programs had challenged the discipline's male-oriented roots but failed to significantly alter program content or procedures. However, women students' comments reflected a significant conflict between female students and male professors, i.e., "One gave lower marks to young women because, he said 'they hadn't paid their dues' and so didn't deserve the same mark that an older male administrator would get" and, "The atmosphere that permeates the entire faculty of education is one of sexism and the power of the 'old boys network.' The problem goes beyond the Ed. Admin. program to the entire faculty and the entire university" (Epp, 1995, p. 19-23).

There was also difficulty when women chose to use feminist methodology or to use women's issues as part of their research. "A colleague wrote a paper on women's ways of knowing and received a very low mark. Her professor told her that the research she cited was just a bunch of crackpot theories and not worthy of serious consideration" (Epp, 1995, p. 23).

In a section designated “For Women” in a University of Manitoba handbook, instructors are reminded to ensure that their classes are gender inclusive and to be vigilant about tone of voice and mannerisms with female students that could have, “the effect of discouraging women students from achieving full potential” (p. 127). It discourages interruptions of female students when they are speaking, and judging female students based upon their appearance. Issues of sexist language, sexist jokes, and sexual harassment are discussed. It supports the need for appropriate and inclusive language and the need for equal attention to females and males in discussions.

Caplan (1995) reported on the genuine, gender-based inequities that characterize most Canadian academic settings today. She listed the following seven inequities:

1. The academic funnel: the proportion of women drops at each step from undergraduate to master’s to doctorate programs and right up the academic ladder. She adds that the same pattern exists with tenure and promotion.
2. Part-time vs. full-time: Women are disproportionately likely to be part-time students and faculty.
3. Women are severely under represented in administrative positions.
4. Women graduate students in many fields are disproportionately unlikely to receive financial support.
5. Faculty salaries tend to be lower for women than for men.
6. Women are disproportionately likely to work in lower-status institutions.
7. Women faculty tend to have heavier teaching loads and family responsibilities than do male faculty. (p. 23)

Conclusion

In the mid 1990s, a female from outside Manitoba became Dean of Education at the University of Manitoba. Unfortunately she did not complete her five-year appointment and left for another province. In the latter part of the decade, a capable female Associate Dean was appointed in the same faculty. This strong feminist mentored other women students and faculty and encouraged scholarliness through committee work, discussion groups, and educational projects. Before her term ended, she was appointed Dean of Education at a prestigious university in southern Ontario. When a wider lens was utilized, a rather unique situation was discovered to exist in Higher Education in the City of Winnipeg: the Presidents of the University of Manitoba, the University of Winnipeg and the Red River College were all female. This discovery was intriguing and suggested the need for further investigation.

As predicted by August Bebel in 1879, opportunities for women to receive the same education as men, is becoming a reality. That narrative suggested Manitoba women actively participated in higher education as students, as faculty, as sessionals, as faculty deans, and even university and college presidents. They have entered academic areas that were the domain of males and they continue in their journey into higher education. Today, women in academia must continue to tell their stories. Only through this sharing process and through future research will challenges identified by Caplan (1995), be addressed and possible solutions defined. The momentum established by Manitoba women pioneers in their quest for higher education must be maintained to stay the course for our present female students and women in academia, because the choice of educational opportunity provides hope for their future and that of the province.

These final words from Caplan (1995) add to this encouragement:

It is such an interesting time to be a woman in academia. In most departments and at most places, we are likely still to be in a gender minority- even those who are white, heterosexual, able-bodied, and 'just the right age'- but with little effort, we can probably find a woman in our department and discipline, or at least on our campus, with whom to share our feelings, experiences and our concerns. In the words of a woman dean, "Women are talking more, revealing more, empowering each other, and there are some enlightened men" (p. 28).

Endnotes

- ¹ Gosh and Ray (1995, p. 8) stated that Canada is the only western country with no federal office of education, no national educational policy, and neither adequate national data collection on schools nor a national mechanism for dissemination of educational information. Provinces co-operate through Council of Ministers of Education of Canada.
- ² Although the focus is upon immigrant women from European ancestry, it is important to note the significant role of aboriginal women, who were the first and original inhabitants of Manitoba. It is not the intent of this discussion to address their roles, but their unique/special experiences are hereby acknowledged.
- ³ Prentice et al. (1996, p. 94-95) suggested that the women who attended the normal schools were usually younger than the men. Many of the men had already been teaching and the women were less experienced in lesson preparation and instruction. Women were often streamed into lower levels of teacher certification and more closely supervised. Social interaction between males and females was strictly forbidden although they studied in the same building. It was common for women and men to be separated within the normal school and to study different curriculum.
- ⁴ Crippen remembered when she was in Grade 8 and teaching staff came to provide information about their programs at the large secondary school nearby. She raised her hand and asked the Industrial Arts teacher if she would be permitted to take Industrial Arts in secondary school. A huge roar of laughter went up in the gym and the secondary staff chuckled and shook their heads in amazement. Crippen could feel her face burning with humiliation. The teacher responded that girls were "not allowed" to take the course. Girls belonged in Home Economics, where they did cooking.
- ⁵ Darling and Gregor (1988, p. 5) stated that in general, the research-intense university in the United States is not an instrument of mass education. This is also true for England. The focus of the University of Manitoba is research; yet, the University of Manitoba draws heavily from the general population of the province for its students.
- ⁶ Prentice et al. (1996, p. 214-215). This was the first published national portrait of Canadian women. The report documented the status, roles and conditions. It also set an agenda for the future reform activities in the 20 years ahead. Within the book was a strong message of the confidence in organized activist women. It reviewed women's political and legal problems, trades and industries, education, literature, charitable and reform work and that of the churches.
- ⁷ Bruno-Jofre (1996, p. 77) discovered that the first woman to receive a full university professorship was Carie Derick in 1912. She had received a B.A. from McGill in 1880 and her M.A. in 1896. She studied in the United States, Great Britain and Germany. Her struggle initiated her involvement in the women's movement. Derick believed, the professions should

be open to men and women alike and that it was just a question of survival of the fittest. Manitoba was the first province to extend the vote to women in 1916.

- ⁸ Bruno-Jofre (1996, p. 89) wrote that during the 1920s and 1930s the curriculum and textbooks helped to maintain women's marginalization. The school curriculum was British in orientation at all levels. The French connection was neglected.
- ⁹ Bruno-Jofre (1996, p.87-94) found negative tones of patriarchy continued in the press, i.e., in 1929 the *Western Journal* argued that the feminization of secondary education would lead to deterioration in the moral tone of the male principal's virility and loss of power to deal successfully with men. The struggle for female equality within and in front of the class was ongoing in secondary schools while women also were trying to make inroads into higher education.
- ¹⁰ One cannot underestimate the revolution that gave freedom to women with the introduction of the birth control pill in the early 1960s. Women educators and women in general no longer needed to fear an unwanted pregnancy. Female students and female professors could now receive effective birth control, plus, they had a new found confidence in charting their future plans with the assurance that their studies and research would not be interrupted with childbirth or maternity issues.
- ¹¹ Women in the Voice of Women (VOW) movement demonstrated during the late 1960s against the Vietnam War. Other university women during this time became involved in causes such as, the environment, human rights, science policy and the status of women.
- ¹² Crippen was privileged to take a Women in Literature course from feminist Dr. Barbara Lecker, at Carleton University, Ottawa in 1970. It was a major turning point in her life and shaped many of her beliefs. Lecker was an excellent and articulate role model in higher education.
- ¹³ Crippen attended lunches 6 times in 1999-2000, at the Faculty Club at the University of Manitoba. Men, often in groups, were well represented, but it was discouraging to see that approximately 1/20 of the academics in the room were women.
- ¹⁴ When Crippen arrived in Manitoba as a Superintendent of Schools in 1995, she became the third female in the province of Manitoba out of a total of 53 superintendents to hold such a position. Six years later, the number of female superintendents remains the same.

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