

Having said that, I repeat that *Duff: A Life in the Law* is a worthy addition to judicial biography — indeed, to Canadian legal history in general.

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- * *Growing Up British in British Columbia: Boys in Private School*, by Jean Barman. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press. Pp. 284; illus. \$29.95.

The social history of British Columbia is less and less a well-kept secret. A daunting and dubious emphasis on the thoughts and activities of major figures is finally giving way to an awareness of broader contextual developments. Researchers are looking behind official perceptions and pronouncements to view patterns of actual experience throughout the social structure. The early results of this research indicate a need for substantial revision of what have been considered definitive studies. Exciting debates are now taking shape about issues thought until recently to be well understood.

Nonetheless, the bulk of writing about British Columbia's history remains very traditional, despite the appearance of a few excellent books and a variety of stimulating journal articles. Only in undergraduate and graduate theses is a new approach becoming significant. Jean Barman's study began as a dissertation in the University of British Columbia's History of Education department, which during the past fifteen years has been a significant force in promoting fresh perspectives on the province's history. As social historians have discovered in other settings, schooling provides an excellent prism through which researchers can view a wide variety of historical processes. In this case, Barman examines the approximately sixty non-Catholic private boys' schools which enrolled up to 7,500 students between 1900 and 1950. Barman shows that these schools emerged at the turn of the century, flourished in the 1920s, and then never recovered from the downturn of the Depression. She argues that private schools must be understood in terms of cultural attachment and ambition. In this argument, an estimated 24,000 economically secure British immigrants, a colonial legacy of private elite education, and a late-Victorian British model of boys' schools all combined to produce a context within which elite schooling for young males became a significant

JN B.C. STUDIES, WINTER 1985-6
pp 66-7.
vol. 68

educational development in British Columbia. The ambition of schools such as Vernon Preparatory School and St. Michael's Preparatory School was to inculcate a British cultural perspective considered lacking in the province's public schools.

In approaching her topic, Jean Barman faced familiar problems but in unusual combinations. The most serious obstacle was a dearth of evidence, a phenomenon which social historians have often confronted but not one normally associated with the study of elite males. Barman's extensive research led to only a handful of student registers and similar evidence. As a result, Barman undertook extensive work in oral history, interviewing some 150 individuals. Their recollections as elicited by Barman are the major source for this book. Other evidence includes aggregate-level census data which are used to characterize the larger social context of the private schools.

Growing Up British in British Columbia has real appeal since the book demonstrates that a social history perspective can even be applied rewardingly to that most familiar of topics, the experience of elite WASP males. Jean Barman draws upon research strategies developed to study women, ethnic minorities and the working-class; she uses them to suggest how the individual lives of certain wealthy sons came together to form patterns within the social formation of twentieth-century British Columbia. The result is a book which bridges quite distinct historiographical interests. At the same time, and of importance to many middle class parents today, Barman's work should inspire further research on whether or not private schools have actually made a difference to the subsequent lives of their students. How do the cultural values of "Old Boys" differ from those of publicly schooled elite males? This question is most intriguing in the case of brothers with different schooling experience. Such situations suggest the possibility of systematically examining the actual implications of private schooling by comparing the attitudes and behaviour of individuals from the same family backgrounds but with different school experience. Similarly, has there been a connection between the personal educational background of politicians and their views on topics such as funding for private schools? The possibility of such connections further emphasizes the importance of longitudinal analyses of educational history and the value of examining private as well as public schooling.