

Being Shaped by and Shaping Canadian Culture:

The Margaret Eaton School Women (MES) 1901-1942

12 October 2017—Redeemer University College

8:00	Registration, refreshments, and peruse some MES archival materials
9:00am-9:45am	Welcome
	Redeemer Administration Dr. John Byl (conference host) Bob Young (great grandson of founding principal)
9:45am-10:45am	Women and Physical Education
	Dr. Patricia Vertinsky (25 minutes) Kelsey Blair (20 minutes) Discussion (15 minutes)
10:45am-11:00am	Break--refreshments
11:00am-12:00am	Women and Outdoor Education--with a significant focus on Camp Tanamakoon
	Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ReVQ17nk4Vc Dr. Anne Warner (25 minutes) Discussion (30 minutes)
12:00pm-1:00pm	Lunch and peruse some MES archival materials
1:00pm-2:00pm	Women and Theatre, Elocution, and Literature
	Dr. Heather Murray (25 minutes) Dr. Ben Faber (20 minutes) Discussion (15 minutes)
2:00pm-2:15pm	Break--refreshments
2:15pm-3:15pm	Women and Post-Secondary Education
	Dr. Catherine Gidney (25 minutes) Thomas Fabian (20 minutes) Discussion (15 minutes)
3:15pm-3:20pm	Closing remarks

<http://libguides.redeemer.ca/MES>

Reception to follow at SouthCote 53

Dr. Patricia Vertinsky:

Presentation Title: A very special place: Locating the Margaret Eaton School in the world of physical culture and professional physical education.

Presentation Description:

The story of the Margaret Eaton School in Toronto, Canada over its 40-year history has been ably told by John Byl, Anna Lathrop and Dorothy Jackson (and many others) through the eyes of personal experience, student reflection, family contacts and industrious historical and institutional research. It is a remarkable story for the light it shines upon the Canadian history of body and physical cultures, feminist advances, institutional and professional developments, architecture, business and corporate affairs, the world of work and leisure pursuits as well as personal histories. It illuminates what was perceived to be an appropriate education for women of means in Toronto in the early decades of the twentieth century in the years between school and the responsibilities of marriage, but it also highlights the ways in which physical education was increasingly becoming viewed as a worthy career for women in a rapidly modernizing and industrializing society. More than this, however, it opens our eyes to the development and dissemination of an expressive, operative, therapeutic and transformative variety of movement practices, or body cultures, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that Hillel Schwartz (1992) has described as the new kinesthetic of modernism. They impacted the fortunes of the Margaret Eaton School in significant ways, though to follow these developments one needs to wander through a historical path that traverses both sides of the Atlantic.

By the turn of the twentieth century, an extended community of American and European actors, dancers, and physical culture teachers had created a spectrum of “body cultures” that responded and contributed to social modernity and artistic modernism. They built upon a diverse spectrum of women’s exercise in the ante-bellum era that attempted to provide ‘appropriate’ exercise for women and were taken up in numerous national arenas and a variety of institutions. Canadians were no exception to the trend. Their contribution to this spectrum of body cultures reflected emergent views concerning the nature of training in physical education and scientific as well as artistic developments around human movement. To this growing focus on the education and training of the body was added an expanding emphasis on gender-appropriate organized sport, along with a range of developments in the performing arts and modes of expression. All of them are reflected in the compelling history of the Margaret Eaton School between 1901 and 1942 and can be traced, as well, through the changing sources of financial and moral support, diverse leadership trajectories and the shifting architecture of the School’s structure in its three distinct stages of development. Even in relation to its buildings one can see how those spatial arrangements that we might call memory’s shadows provided images that illustrate how the academic (and professional and artistic) landscape of a group of determined women was articulated for learning, teaching and performing – whose knowledge was seen to be legitimate, and furthermore, who were seen to be most appropriate in organizing and disseminating it.

Bio:

Patricia Vertinsky is a Distinguished University Scholar and Professor of Kinesiology. She is a social and cultural historian working across the fields of women's and gender history with a special interest on physical culture, physical education and modern dance. Her work focuses on the study of normalizing disciplinary regimes in kinesiology and sport science and the social, political, and scientific context in which they have been conceived and promoted. She is particularly interested in regimes of risk and the gendered body in relation to patterns of physical culture and globalization in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Dr. Vertinsky is an International Fellow of the American Academy of Kinesiology, Past-President of the North American Society of Sport History, and past Vice-President of the International Society for Physical Education and Sport History. She is the author of numerous books and articles, including *Disciplining the Body in the Gymnasium: Memory, Monument and Modernism* (with Sherry McKay) 2004; *Physical Culture, Power and the Body* (with Jennifer Hargreaves) 2009, and *Female Traditions in Physical Education: Women First Reconsidered* (with David Kirk) 2016.



Kelsey Blair

Women's Basketball in Canada: Performance Studies, Embodied Knowledge, and the Margaret Eaton Archive

Presentation Description:

I intend to use the tools and language of performance studies to examine the relationship between women's sport history in Canada and the transmission of embodied knowledge as informed by the Margaret Eaton Archive.

Bio:

A PhD student in English with an emphasis in performance studies at Simon Fraser University. My dissertation examines sport through the lens of performance studies, and I have published two articles in *Canadian Theatre Review* on sport in Canada, one on the history of women's basketball. In addition, I am a former semi-professional basketball player, am the coach of several youth women's basketball teams, am the coach of the Vancouver Native Education Women's team, and am a board member for Basketball BC. I have also written three novels - *Pick and Roll* (2014), *Ugly Kicks* (2015), *Making the Team* (2016)- all published by Lorimer about girls' basketball.



Dr. Anne Warner

Presentation Title: A Hatchet in “Lily-White Hands:” The Intricacies of Femininity at Private Girls’ Camps in Early Twentieth Century Ontario

Presentation Description (a few sentences):

In 1925, Mary Hamilton, Director of Physical Education (and shortly thereafter Principal) at the Margaret Eaton School (MES) in Toronto, opened Camp Tanamakoon in rugged Algonquin Park. In September Tanamakoon was used as a training ground for MES physical education students and in July and August it was used as a girls’ summer camp.

This presentation examines the social construction of upper class white femininity at private Ontario girls’ camps in the 1920s and 1930s with a focus on physical activity at Camp Tanamakoon. Historically, prevailing social conceptions of what it means to be female has defined acceptable physical activity participation by girls. The daily life and activities at Tanamakoon elucidates details of how girls’ camp both challenged and embraced early twentieth century femininity.

Bio:



Anne Warner works at the Royal Bank of Canada in Corporate Social Responsibility. Anne has a PhD in the socio-cultural aspects of sport and physical activity from the University of Western Ontario. Her dissertation analyzed how physical activities at boy’s and girl’s private Ontario youth camps illustrates gender construction in the early twentieth century.

Dr. Heather Murray

Presentation Title: After 1926: Literature and Expression at the Margaret Eaton School

Presentation Description:

Following the resignation of Emma Scott Raff, the MES maintained one more year of intense and often avant-garde cultural activity before the School was reconstituted, with a different name, a downtown location, a significantly-altered financial situation, and a new and more-focused mandate, to provide a "two-year Normal [i.e. teacher-training] course of Physical Education." While voice training and public speaking were retained in the reorganization, and folk and aesthetic dancing also were offered, other aspects of instruction in the arts and in the humanities disappeared from the MES curriculum, at least initially, although literary studies and more dramatically-oriented vocal training eventually would be reinstated and the dance program considerably broadened. Significant cultural figures like the literary critic E.K. Brown, the pioneering woman scholar Mossie Mae Kirkwood, and the theatrical innovator Ernest Sterndale Bennett would teach at the School in its final phase, and individuals such as dean of women Adelaide Marriott provided links to Toronto's arts and studio crafts scenes. While the literary, dramatic, and elocutionary training offered in the first two incarnations of the School is by now quite well understood, along with the activities of the Associate Players and the role of the Greek Theatre in Toronto's cultural life, in this presentation I will try to reconstruct the cultural curriculum (both formal and informal) of the School in its final phase, and try to go some way to understanding how its staff and students oriented to literary, dramatic, and artistic production in Toronto in the latter half of the '20s and in the 30s.

Bio:

Heather Murray is a Professor in the Department of English, University of Toronto, as well as a faculty member in the Graduate Collaborative Program in Book History and Print Culture. She has published on a range of topics relating to English-Canadian literary, cultural, and intellectual history, with a special interest in the histories of literacy and reading, especially collaborative reading practices such as book clubs. Her two monograph publications are *Working in English: History, Institution, Resources* (1996) and *Come Bright Improvement: The Literary Societies of Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (2002). Her current research projects involve phonographic and spelling reform movements in early Canada, and the relationship of reading and nationalism.



Dr. Ben Faber

Presentation Title:

Responding to the Great War: Emma Scott Nasmith's *The Message*

Presentation Description (a few sentences):

Shortly after the Great War (1914-1918), Emma Scott Nasmith wrote a one-act play for the girls at the Mary Eaton School. As Paul Fussell argues in *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford, 1975), the psychological impact of the Great War transformed the way literature responds to traumatic events. Central to the Canadian experience of war for the parents, siblings, and friends of soldiers in France is the anticipation of news of their loved one's death in battle. *The Message* offers a means of transcending the distance, absence, and reality of death for women on the home front. Nasmith integrates psychic theory (Sir Oliver Lodge), literary spiritualism (Tennyson, Yeats, Conan Doyle), and popular occultism (Ouija Board) into Negro and Christian spirituality in order to heal the wound of distance and absence in death. The treatment of gender, race, and faith in *The Message* does not seem so peculiar in light of the cultural context of war and the social context of grief. Materials from the MES archive at Redeemer will help personalize the context of the writing and performing of *The Message*.

Bio:

Currently Assistant Professor, English (Redeemer University College). Graduated: B.A. Hons. (English, McMaster), D.Phil. (English, Oxford). Recent Scholarly Publications: on George Herbert (1593-1633) in *Christianity and Literature* (December 2016); on Andrew Marvell (1621-1678) in *Early Modern Literary Studies* (Summer 2016).



Dr. Catherine Gidney:

Presentation Title: Educating the New Woman: Postsecondary Education at the Turn of the 20th Century

Presentation Description:

The 1880s to the 1940s marked a period of profound change for middle-class women. They gained access to universities, they broke down barriers to various professions, they achieved the vote, they participated in a veritable revolution in dress reform. Physical expression and movement of the body became a key component in the education of the new woman and her perceived contribution to a new nation. This paper examines the educational context within which the Margaret Eaton School flourished and the ideals of femininity and modernity became interwoven with the practice of physical culture.

Bio:

Is Adjunct Research Professor in the Department of History at St. Thomas University. Her research focuses primarily on the history of education and youth culture in Canada, covering a range of topics such as health, religion, food, student protests, sport, sexuality, the 1960s, and war resistance. Most recently she has published *Tending the Student Body: Youth, Health and the Modern University* (University of Toronto Press, 2015).



Thomas Fabian

Presentation Title:

The American and Canadian influences on women's physical education in Toronto during the 1930s and 1940s

Presentation Description (a few sentences):

The year 1941 was a pivotal moment in the history of women's physical education in Canada. By amalgamating with the University of Toronto, the Margaret Eaton School (MES) helped facilitate the first Bachelor of Physical Education program in Canada. The 1930s and 1940s marked a period of changing influences on the growing number of women participating in physical or recreation activities, including exercise, sporting competitions, dance and gymnastics. However, these influences were not purely Canadian in origin, as the import of American physical educators also brought with them their differing philosophy from south of the border. The aim of this presentation is to contrast the American and Canadian philosophies of women's physical education before and after the MES-UofT union. Four case studies – split between Canadian and American values; as well as between MES and UofT faculty – of influential women in Toronto physical education will be used to emphasize the distinction between the two attitudes. First, Helen Bryans (American, UofT) was the Director of Physical Education at the Ontario College of Education (OCE), and through this role influenced much of the hiring in physical education throughout the province. Second, Florence Somers (American, MES) was the Director at the Margaret Eaton School and had written about the American philosophy on women's physical education. Third, Dorothy Jackson (Canadian, MES) taught at both institutions, eventually becoming the Director of Physical Education at the University of Toronto. And, fourth, Helen Gurney (Canadian, UofT), who graduated from the OCE the year prior to the amalgamation, went on to found a number of important athletic initiatives and organizations in Ontario. During the period surrounding the amalgamation of the Margaret Eaton School and the University of Toronto, these four women, although with differing backgrounds and perspectives on physical education philosophy, all contributed to the advancement of physical education for women in Canada.

Bio:



A PhD student at Western University studying the sociocultural history of sport. I recently finished my Master of Arts (Sports History and Culture) at De Montfort University in Leicester, England. The topic of my thesis research was Canadian university sport, and I briefly explored high school physical education, after interviewing Helen Gurney. She and I have spoken a number of times since to discuss her career pursuing the advancement of physical education reform for women. I am very interested in the history of physical culture movement and in presenting on women in physical education. I hope to contribute to the growing scholarship on the role of the Margaret Eaton School in the development of women's physical education in Canada.