

Tending the Student Body: Youth, Health, and the Modern University by Catherine Gidney

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Tending the Student Body

Youth, Health, and the Modern University

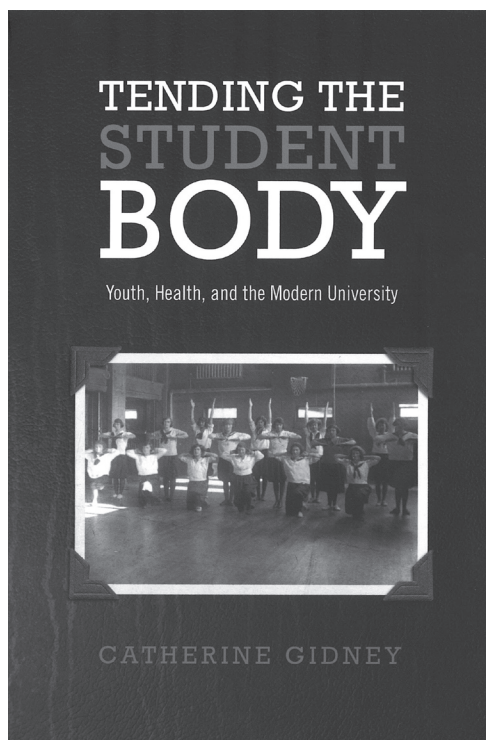
by Catherine Gidney

Toronto: University of Toronto Press,
2015. 304 pages. \$34.95 Soft Cover.

ISBN 9781442615960. \$75.00 Cloth ISBN
9781442647879. \$34.95 ebook (EPUB format) ISBN
9781442669437. (<http://www.utppublishing.com>)

Catherine Gidney's *Tending the Student Body* is one of her many works on the history of youth culture and education in Canada. This book in particular explores the history of medicine, the history of education, and the history of youth through an examination of the establishment and evolution of university health programs in Canada from the turn of the twentieth century to the 1960s. Gidney uses the history of physical activity, athletics, and university health services to examine "the changing ideals of student formation as well as the nature of the university itself" (13). In doing so, she uses age, class, and gender in her analysis of how notions of morality and citizenship shaped the development of health programs on Canadian campuses.

Gidney's book is divided into two sections, separated chronologically and topically. The first section, which includes the first five chapters of the book, focuses on the establishment of student health systems from the early twentieth century to the 1940s and investigates the ideologies that influenced such systems. In her first and second chapters, Gidney introduces the development and increasing importance of student health programs. First she tracks evolution of such health programs to the 1940s when most Canadian universities



either had already implemented, or were advocating for, health services and physical training. She argues that the increasing presence of health programs signify the conceptual link of students' health, students' morality, and students' success. In the second chapter she briefly describes the ailments and infectious diseases that occurred on campuses across Canada during the first half of the twentieth century, and explains that administrators' preoccupation with ailments and disease was indicative of their role as *in loco parentis* as well as their attempt to protect their university's resources and reputation as a healthy and safe institution.

The third and fourth chapters of the book analyze how post-secondary administrators conceptualized "health" from the 1920s to the 1950s. In Chapter Three Gidney argues that the creation of Physical

Training as part of university requirements played a significant role in imparting White middle-class gendered values and ideals on the student body, such as the masculine values of personal responsibility and development as well as the feminine selflessness and respect for authority. In Chapter Four Gidney examines the broader notion of health as it developed in the first half of the twentieth century and how these notions were implemented into university endeavours. For example, she explains that encouragement of healthy moral and physical practices for students such as hygiene, fitness, and premarital abstinence was deeply entwined with ideological fears of moral and racial degeneration.

The Fifth Chapter discusses the increase in work opportunities for women as dietitians, nurses, physical training instructors, and deans of women that came with the growing concern of students' health. Gidney focuses on the experiences of women professionals at Victoria College, University of Toronto in this chapter. She recognizes that while women still faced much discrimination in these new positions, the women at Victoria College used these professional opportunities to carve out a significant space for women within their own university.

The second section of the book examines how the systems for student health and the ideologies behind them developed from the 1930s to the 1960s. Thus, the last three chapters of the book examine the institutional changes around health services and physical training within the university as well as the way in which these developments paralleled organizational and ideological shifts in the universities themselves. In Chapter Six, Gidney traces the development of health services alongside the decline of physical training on post-secondary campuses from the 1930s to the

1960s. She argues, however, that despite this decline in mandatory physical training students' health remained strongly linked to morality and citizenship. Chapter Seven delves deeper into the shifts occurring in post-secondary institutions, focusing on the specialization of knowledge and how this shift in particular influenced shifting health priorities. Gidney uses the examples of tuberculosis and mental health to outline the shift away from university administrators' attempt at broader social and health reform of the early twentieth century to the increasing focus on medical experts' promotion of preventative care and individual health from the 1940s to the 1960s. The Eighth Chapter discusses the discursive shift away from student health and character development to student health and personality and the individual development of students. Gidney argues that the focus on citizenship and morality remained, but by the 1960s students had increasing control over their own programs and were left to determine how their choices would influence their own citizenship.

Gidney acknowledges that, due to the abundance of archival material at their archives, Victoria College, University of Toronto, is featured prominently in the book. Her book begins and ends with the story of Dr. Edna Guest who wrote a report on the health of women students at Victoria College in 1931. She calls upon Guest's story and the Victoria College as examples frequently throughout the book. She also discusses programs at the University of Western Ontario and McMaster University. Additionally, she features a table of Physical Training at the University of Toronto in her Appendix that tracks male and female students' participation in physical training from 1921 to 1967.

Gidney's main purpose in *Tending the Student Body* is to illuminate how "concern

about student health led to the creation of new sites through which administrators could exert their moral vision of the university and shape the student body” (9). In doing so, Gidney expands the understanding of the historical relationships between youth’s health, citizenship, and morality. Her history of how university administrators tended the student body in the past also sheds light onto the ways universities

are tending the student body today. She exposes the current conceptualization of universities as moral communities where students are seen as “immature youth, to be guided to full adulthood” (190) and the university as their moral and intellectual guide.

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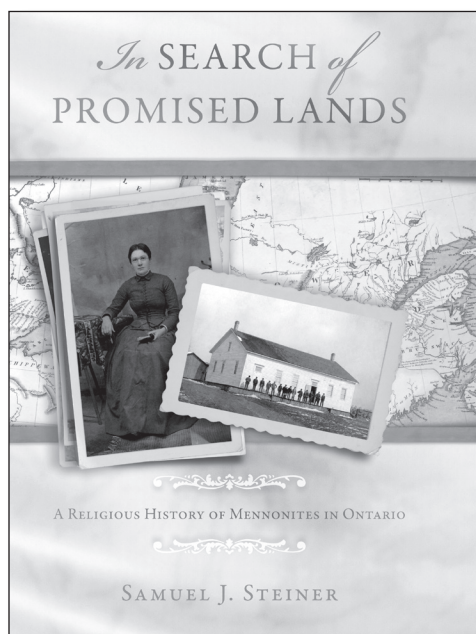
In Search of Promised Lands *A Religious History of Mennonites in Ontario*

by Samuel J. Steiner

Kitchener, Ontario: MennoMedia, 2015. 880 pages.
\$69.95 Hardback ISBN: 9780836199086. \$39.95
E-Pub. (www.mennomedia.org)

Samuel J. Steiner’s *The Search of Promised Lands: A Religious History of Mennonites in Ontario* is a comprehensive account of the rich past of one of the province’s early settler groups. Steiner’s archival record is voluminous, yet he weaves the evidence together into a rich, cogent, and accessible history of the Mennonites in Ontario. Drawing upon personal narratives, municipal records, the census, newspapers, and denominational records (to name a few), Steiner’s book explores the nuances of Mennonite origins in Upper Canada and follows those threads through to the near present. Steiner incorporates the themes of religiosity, assimilation, conflict, and identity politics throughout his book to trace the fragmentation and realignment that constantly occurred within the denomination in order to sketch the spectrum of Mennonite faith and practice in Ontario.

The Promised Lands of the title provide a rich metaphor for the way early



Mennonite, Amish and Quaker communities sought a new life in North America upon which to build their faith. This promise continued to animate settlement and emigration patterns as Mennonites from Pennsylvania traveled north to the Niagara region, the Grand River valley, and the Huron Shores of present-day Ontario, or when other Mennonite communities immigrated to Canada in the twentieth century from places like the USSR, Germany, Asia, or South America. Although not dissimilar from other immigration sto-