

Mangan, J. A., and Park, Roberta J., eds. *From 'Fair Sex' to Feminism: Sport and the Socialization of Women in the Industrial and Post Industrial Eras*. London: Frank Cass, 1987. Pp. 312. Illustrations, index. \$29.50

Women have been excluded from most research on sport history, with the limited data now available concerning primarily middle and upper class women. *From 'Fair Sex' to Feminism* was designed to increase knowledge of this subject by presenting research on women, sport, and society in a cross-cultural perspective. The editors selected papers from several countries, and arranged them in four sections: Overview, British Perspectives, Commonwealth Perspectives, and American Perspectives. All but two of the papers concern the Victorian period, and all share a common theme: "It has been social convention, not biological potential, which has constrained women's participation in sports, active leisure pursuits, and even healthy exercise" (p. 7).

Although several of the papers have been published elsewhere during the past fifteen years, this is the first time a large body of such research has been included in a single volume. To provide continuity, the editors' introduction

covers the book itself, each section, and each paper. Black and white illustrations give additional insights into the subject. Also helpful are selected bibliographies for each chapter, and background material on each author.

Although not primarily identified with the area of women and sport, editors Mangan and Park are well known sport historians. Mangan was founding editor of *the International Journal of Sport History*, and authored the acclaimed book, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School*, while Park co-edited *Play, Games and Sports in Cultural Contexts*, and has published numerous articles in scholarly journals. Park also contributes an excellent chapter detailing the British Victorian influence on American concepts of sport and gender, and the interrelatedness of men's and women's sports in these cultures. The other eleven writers have published works relating to women and/or sport. Most notable are authors of three significant books: Sheila Fletcher, *Women First: The Female Tradition in English Physical Education 1880-1980*, Helen Lenskyj, *Out of Bounds: Women, Sport and Sexuality*, and Donald J. Mrozek, *Sport and American Mentality, 1880-1910*.

While *Fair Sex to Feminism* includes works by many important scholars, and brings a cross-cultural dimension to the subject, it does not greatly alleviate other gaps in research on women's sport. Here too, most of the articles concern upper and middle class, educated women. The book also shares problems common to many anthologies: uneven quality, repetitiveness, and lack of synthesis. Particularly disturbing is the numbing repetition of Victorian beliefs such as the Cult of True Womanhood, biological determinism, and women's separate spheres. This ideology is the major theme of five chapters, and is described in almost all of the others. By the end of the book, the reader will certainly be fully aware of the barriers to Victorian women's sports participation, but be little enlightened regarding what actual sporting experiences these women had, and what such experiences meant to the participants.

The emphasis on Victorianism also leaves the reader of Struna's paper, " 'Good Wives' and 'Gardners,' 'Spinners and Fearless Riders': Middle and Upper Rank Women in the Early American Sporting Culture," lost in a time warp. After two hundred plus pages of the nineteenth century, it is difficult to place the activities of Struna's colonial and early national women in their proper context.

Victorian medical and domestic ideology also lacks the excitement and dynamism one expects when reading about sport, and tends to make much of the book slow digging. Fortunately, there was action in schools for women in Britain and the Commonwealth. Kathleen McCrone's paper, "Play Up! Play Up! And Play the Game! Sport in the Late Victorian Girls' Public Schools," is both lively and informative, giving the reader insight into who played, why they played, and how sports in schools for women differed from those in schools for men. Fletcher's paper on women's physical education in England, and Ray Crawford's description of girls' games in Melbourne also take a more active approach. Lenskyj provides insight into Canadian games and players as she describes the influence of the media, another subject usually ignored by scholars.

The most readable and enjoyable chapter is the last one, which concludes the section on American Perspectives. In 'The Amazon and the American 'Lady': Sexual Fears of Women as Athletes,' Mrozek discusses among others, Jaguar-ma, 'Champion Amazon of the World,' Babe Didrikson Zaharias, Renee Richards, and Billie Jean Ring. Moving rapidly from Victorianism to sexual liberation, Mrozek uses the experiences of these women to illustrate the thesis that the expansion of female athletic opportunities is due in part to a reduction of sexual fears among men and women (p. 296). He also notes the contributions of working class women and the social outsiders who have been absent from the remainder of the volume.

After reading the book several times, this reviewer still feels the editors could have strengthened their work by providing a synthesizing essay rather than merely introducing the various sections and papers. McCrone's article, for example, leaves one wishing for some discussion of the obvious similarities between the games philosophy of British Public Schools for women, and the sport philosophy promoted by physical educators and the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation (NAAF) during the early twentieth century in the United States. Discussion of the similarities and differences between the educational institutions described by the various writers would also be enlightening. Possibly, arranging the book according to topic, rather than geography, would have led naturally to greater synthesis by both editors and readers.

Despite some problems, *Fair Sex to Feminism* represents a significant contribution, and brings together a large body of scholarship on women, sport, and society in different parts of the English speaking world. It should encourage greater use of cross-cultural comparisons in future research on the subject, and will be of great value to those engaged in studying, teaching or writing about women and/or sport.

The University of Texas at Austin

Mary Lou LeCompte