



Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation (Heritage)

By Doug Owsram

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It is rare in history for people to link their identity with their generation, and even rarer when children and adolescents actually shape society and influence politics. Both phenomena aptly describe the generation born in the decade following the Second World War. These were the baby boomers, viewed by some as the spoiled, selfish generation that had it all, and by others as a shock wave that made love and peace into tangible ideals. In this book, Doug Owsram brings us the untold story of this famous generation as it played out its first twenty-five years in Canadian society.

Beginning with Dr Spock's dictate that this particular crop of babies must be treated gently, Owsram explores the myth and history surrounding this group, from its beginning at war's end to the close of the 1960s. The baby boomers wielded extraordinary power right from birth, Owsram points out, and laid their claim on history while still in diapers. He sees the generation's power and sense of self stemming from three factors: its size, its affluent circumstance, and its connection with the 1960s – the fabulous decade of free love, flower power, women's liberation, drugs, protest marches, and rock 'n' roll. From Davy Crockett hats and Barbie dolls to the civil-rights movement and the sexual revolution, the concerns of this single generation became predominant themes for all of society. Thus, Owsram's history of the baby-boomers is in many ways a history of the era.

Doug Owsram has written extensively on cultural icons, Utopian hopes, and the gap between realities and images – all powerful themes in the story of this idealistic generation. A well-researched, lucid, and humorous book, *Born at the Right Time* is the first Canadian history of the baby-boomers and the society they helped to shape.

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Editorial Review

Review

'Owrham shows in fascinating detail the massive impact this group had on everything from the baby food that was created to feed them, to the suburbs that were built to house them and the school system that sprung up to educate them.'*The Toronto Star*

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'[Owrham provides] some valuable insights into how this most privileged generation of the century got here and why we rebelled.'

(*The Globe and Mail*)

'A thorough and absorbing work which demonstrates how the baby-boomers, that demographic watermelon passing through the post-war snake, defined our times.'

(*The Vancouver Sun*)

'It is an extremely well-researched book, full of data tables and bar graphs. If you need to know how many copies of Elvis Presley's Hound Dog were sold in 1956, or the amount of sugar in Sugar Smacks, this is your book. Apart from his thoroughness, Owrham possesses two indispensable qualities: a sense of proportion and a sense of humor.'

(Bruce Taylor *The Montreal Gazette*)

'This first-rate scholarly product has the best elements of monograph, synthesis, and a good read. Historians of postwar North America should consider this book both for its innovative thesis linking the 1950s and the 1960s, and because it is a fine example of a well-constructed history.'

(J. Trent Alexander, Carnegie Mellon University *Journal of Social History*)

'Doug Owrham has done something amazing: he has written a book about the boomers entirely free of the clichés that ruin almost everything else written on the subject. ... *Born at the Right Time* is packed with ideas; every generalization is backed by evidence.'

(*Saturday Night*)

About the Author

Doug Owrham is Deputy Vice Chancellor and Principal at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan.

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