

Given the example of the *Knight of the Holy Spirit*, it is obvious that the writing of psycho-history can not be left to the amateur. These studies need to be based upon analytical frameworks, using a thorough examination of all the documentation evidence. Joy Esbrey's *Knight of the Holy Spirit* shows what can result from such an approach. For the first time, we have a detailed examination of Mackenzie King's personality, and an explanation of the importance of his neurotic rituals, even if *Knight of the Holy Spirit* fails to add to our understanding of Mackenzie King's political behaviour. Its explanations of political events are too reliant upon childhood determinants and the documentary witnesses, independent of the diaries, are not used. Perhaps the real contribution of *Knight of the Holy Spirit* will be to show future historians how the Mackenzie King papers must be used.

William Smith  
 Planning and Program Evaluation  
 Public Archives of Canada

**A Woman with a Purpose; the Diaries of Elizabeth Smith, 1872-1884.** Edited by VERONICA STRONG-BOAG. Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1980. xxxviii, 298 p. illus. ISBN 0 8020 2360 6 bd. \$25.00, 0 8020 6397 7 pa. \$10.00.

Devotées of the diary will not find a tableau of brilliant society etched with the bite of perceptive wit in *Woman With A Purpose* — an edition of the diaries of Elizabeth Smith of Winona, sometime public school teacher, accomplished musician and aspiring physician. But if her society was not grand, her struggles common and her prose rather plain, Elizabeth Smith was a woman from us all. She has a mixture of humours and ambitions, recorded with disarming candour in diaries which she kept in a desultory fashion from 1872 to 1884. Although she remained true to the stern methodist precepts which nurtured her, Elizabeth loved life as much as God, sought worldly praise as much as God-given grace and, as often as not, revealed a fine pride in her competitive achievements. Elizabeth loved and was loved, she had her own fair share of pride and envy and as the diaries progress, she plainly becomes more determined to advance beyond the social and professional restrictions on women as teachers. Elizabeth's new purpose is to become a physician.

Encouraged by her mother and Dr. Jennie Trout, Elizabeth strives to overcome the considerable social and educational barriers to the medical education of women in Ontario. With the moral support of like-minded colleagues such as Alice McGillivray and the substantial assistance of sympathetic academics like Principal Grant of Queen's, Elizabeth does achieve her ostensible goal, graduating in the first class from the Kingston Womens' Medical College in 1883. Her deeper purpose, as revealed in the pages of her diary, seems to have been far more basic than the successful completion of a medical degree: it was, in her chosen occupation whether it be teacher or musician, to be outstanding in all endeavours, to compete in a mixed setting and above all, to win the competition. In *A Woman With A Purpose* we are presented with a true mirror image of Elizabeth Smith's personal development and professional struggle. As such, the volume is a welcome addition to the Social History of Canada series.

Although the Diaries have some independent claim for attention as items of Victorian life and letters, *A Woman With A Purpose* is particularly recommended to those interested in the history of education and medicine for the insights it gives into the emergent professionalisation of these two disciplines. Elizabeth's bitter-sweet experiences as a rural school teacher and her relentless pursuit of upgrading through an almost constant round of model school courses points to a far more graded and decentralized system of teacher education than exists today. Having cleared the considerable preliminary

hurdles to qualify for admittance as a medical student at Queen's, her candid accounts of clinical studentship and surgical attendance exposes rude equipment, ruder methods and a lack of systematic antiseptics in the practice of advanced medicine. Students of the Feminist Movement will find abundant raw material in the text as will those interested in the nature of family life and society in pre-industrial Ontario. Elizabeth demonstrates a preoccupation with religion typical of her time and class and lays bare the tissues of a complex social anatomy which at once nurtured and frustrated her as a woman.

Yet, the kaleidoscopic mass of personal reflection and social imagery which make the Diaries so fecund for scholars, has been shaped, perforce, by the hand of the editor who has prepared an often meandering personal record for public consumption by giving it coherence, some unity and above all an intellectual shape from a perspective in time. Placed in the context of recent feminist historiography, the editor's thoughtful introduction is in the form of an essay on Elizabeth Smith as exemplar of feminist struggles for independent education and unqualified acceptance as professionals in a male dominated world of work beyond the home. The Diaries have been trimmed of their "repetitious passages" which would nearly double its already lengthy 298 pages. The editor has carved up the expurgated text into convenient periods reflecting significant phases in the diarist's life and introduced each section with explanatory headnotes which bridge Elizabeth's frequent changes in venue. Once these tasks were completed, the editor restricted obvious intrusions and asides in the text in the interests of narrative, discarding most of the more elaborate editorial tools in favour of simple punctuation and laconic footnotes. Quick repeat reference is impeded by the lack of an index but given the nature of the book, an elaborate index would have been a difficult bibliographic undertaking and probably undesirable.

There is nonetheless some need to explain unfamiliar allusions and to maintain consistency of entry. Without compromising the flow of narrative, the editor might have indulged occasional discursive whims by giving the reader notes on individuals frequently mentioned in Elizabeth's diaries; she might well have been more expansive about those lesser known individuals who were important to Elizabeth's story. Indeed, certain influential individuals such as Archibald Patterson Knight, Registrar of the medical College and a firm supporter of women's medical education are not identified while John A. MacDonald and George Brown are accorded places, albeit laconic ones, in the footnote pantheon. These procedural criticisms aside, the editorial job has been handled with skill and restraint.

Ultimately, editors and publishers of documents have a responsibility to the creators of the record and to the potential mass audience created through publication, to reproduce the record of the past with uncompromising fidelity. Having thoroughly enjoyed this book, I was, after all, left curiously unsettled. Although well chosen photographs of Elizabeth add piquancy to the text, at no time is the reader directly confronted with a page of the diaries as document. A few reproductions of the text would have placed the reader in full contact with the original, illustrating the idiosyncracies of entry which make the editor's job more understandable and her considerable scholarly achievement more meaningful for what deservedly will be a growing group of readers of *A Woman With A Purpose*.

Barbara Lazenby Craig  
Archives of Ontario