

## Urban History Review Revue d'histoire urbaine

URBAN HISTORY REVIEW  
REVUE D'HISTOIRE URBAINE

Parr, Joy, ed. *Still Running...: Personal Stories by Queen's women celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Marty scholarship*. Kingston: Queen's University Alumnae Association, 1987. Pp. xix, 169. Photographs. \$12.98

Rooke, P.T. and Schnell, R.L. *No Bleeding Heart: Charlotte Whitton - A Feminist on the Right*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987. Pp. x, 243. \$26.95

Sandy Campbell

Volume 17, Number 1, June 1988

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1017712ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1017712ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (print)

1918-5138 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Campbell, S. (1988). Review of [Parr, Joy, ed. *Still Running...: Personal Stories by Queen's women celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Marty scholarship*. Kingston: Queen's University Alumnae Association, 1987. Pp. xix, 169. Photographs. \$12.98 / Rooke, P.T. and Schnell, R.L. *No Bleeding Heart: Charlotte Whitton - A Feminist on the Right*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987. Pp. x, 243. \$26.95]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 17(1), 57-59. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1017712ar>

All Rights Reserved © Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine, 1987

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

Parr, Joy, ed. *Still Running...: Personal Stories by Queen's women celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Marty scholarship*. Kingston: Queen's University Alumnae Association, 1987. Pp. xix, 169. Photographs. \$12.98.

Rooke, P.T. and Schnell, R.L. *No Bleeding Heart: Charlotte Whitton-A Feminist on the Right*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1987. Pp. x, 243. \$26.95.

"The intellect of man is forced to choose Perfection of the life or of the work..."

"The Choice"

Many women are convinced that Yeats meant to address these lines to them rather than to humanity at large. The couplet would have been a splendid epigraph for *Still Running*, a volume of memoirs by fifteen recipients of Queen's University's Marty Scholarship for Women in celebration of its fiftieth anniversary in 1987. It is a thoughtful fête. It is a truism in our society, educated women are not exempt from a "de facto" choice: the quest for perfection in either "life" or "work"; or half-life and part-time work. The hand that rocks the cradle may rule the world, but not usually from a university president's office or the executive suite at General Motors.

The Marty Scholarship has given Queen's best and brightest women graduates financial aid for post-graduate study, but the award, the account suggests, does not include exempt-status from female dilemmas, however fulfilling the alternatives. From the beginning essay by 1938 Marty laureate, Jeanne Le Caine Agnew, mathematician, teacher and mother of five, to that of painter Lee Kozlick, 1985 Scholar, the tension between intellectual activity and woman's role as daughter, mother, wife and ex-wife is a constant theme. Pauline Jewett (Marty 1949) rightly observes in her introduction that the theme of the potential of women that

emerges in the book is both heartwarming and chilling. Each of these women has done a great deal of horse-trading with life to accomplish career ambitions. And many of their ambitions were radically modified to accommodate domestic responsibilities.

*Still Running*, like *No Bleeding Heart*, also reminds us that in this century women students at the post-secondary level have had the most portentous career opportunities during the war and in its immediate aftermath when men were otherwise occupied. Many Marty-holders refer to work opportunities made possible in war-time and to foreshortened professional horizons in peace. (Even "Lottie" Whitton, that "woman-identified" woman", shone especially brightly in the Queen's of the Great war. Wrote Vice-Principal John Watson "...without the girls we might as well shut up the College.") When Marty Scholars began careers, however, marriage and motherhood frequently overpowered full-time work or extensive publication. Many memoirs chronicle how this bifurcation was reinforced by belittlement or discrimination of various sorts.

Another fact seems implicit in both books. The famous academic and bureaucratic network of "Queen's men" in mid-century - O.D. Skelton, Clifford Clark, John Deutsch etc. traced by historian Jack Granatstein in *Ottawa Men* - seldom inducted or exalted Queen's women. Anne Sedgewick Carver (1940) did well in Ottawa for a decade at the Tariff Board and elsewhere, but, she informs us, her primary entrée was family contacts not a tap by the tartan-patterned mandarin. To be sure, as Granatstein recounts, Charlotte Whitton received a call from R.B. Bennett about a job suggestion made by Skelton, but it was only to have her verify the credentials of the Queen's man who had been proposed for the position. Queen's academics like Wilhemina Gordon and Jean Royce did much for their outstanding students, but they themselves were a novelty, and after graduate school there was no comparable version of the old

boys' network to draw on. *Still Running...* makes it clear that "for better or worse" the future generally did not hold either well-rounded academic careers or self-generated financial success for Marty Scholars.

The Marty volume also suggests a certain evolution in professional women's attitudes towards marriage. The format of the book divides the memoirs between pre and post-1958 winners of the scholarship. While the career paths of single or childless women, such as Joyce Hemlow (1942) or Kathleen Butcher Whitehead (1943), were by no means rosy, the challenges faced by those who had large families, semi-supportive spouses or special children, such as Elspeth Baugh (1970) and Eleanor Clarke Hay (1941), were even more difficult. It is evident that during the 1940s and '50s husbands could be benign, but wives actually juggled schedules and cut corners. In recent decades, more Marty marriages have broken down as a result, in part, of strains related to academic and career absorption by the women. Lin Buckland (1978), with her credentials in sociology, and cultural and women's history, captures the disproportionate sacrifice and up-beat Queen's civility resonate in the volume as she marvels at "the capacity of women to pull a sense of pride and dignity out of experiences which they also recognise to be unjust" Lee Kozlik refers to her status as lecturer in art history at her alma mater for several years as that of "half-colleague." Kozlik for her part has abjured the roles of teacher, wife and stepmother to acknowledge the imperative that "only through full and concentrated activity can one produce a solid body of work." Dr. Jane E. Wright (1982), an entomologist, deserves the last word: "It is a sad commentary of our times that, in general, marriage assists men, but retards women, in their careers."

For her part, Charlotte Whitton, Queen's alumna, long-time trustee and early supporter of the Marty, exemplifies much of the Queen's tradition of service and intellect

echoed in *Still Running*. Whitton, a 1918 M.A. in history, english and philosophy and protegee of Dr. Wilhemina Gordon, experienced the thorny choices that were inescapable for a woman seeking a career while tempted by traditional roles. *No Bleeding Heart*, P.T. Rooke and R.L. Schnell's compelling and balanced study, establishes that Whitton's achievements were made possible by her life-long decision to embrace celibacy in favour of service and dedication to her career. Whitton was the product of an uneasy marriage, a father whose work took him out of the house for long periods of time and a mother of strong will who took in boarders to earn money. Her "Boston marriage" to the gentle and supportive Margaret Grier, her companion and housemate from about 1918 until Grier's death in 1947, did much to mitigate the loneliness and financial constraints of spinsterhood.

Rooke and Schnell trace "the intellectual odyssey of a promising Canadian professional woman who set high goals for herself in the heady, final days of the female suffrage campaign only to find that vistas apparently opening to women were largely illusions." The two major themes of *No Bleeding Heart* are feminism and female networks and political thought and institutional development in the life and work of Charlotte Whitton. The study is no eulogy. While the authors, both educators, recognize Whitton's formidable intelligence, energy and dedication, they do not shrink from the aspects of her darker side: racism, nativism, rigid Burkean conservatism, astonishing egoism, punitive moralising and lack of empathy for the disadvantaged. They chronicle her pungent style as a social policy administrator. On the evidence, it is regrettable that Whitton did not spend time doing actual settlement work before being wafted from Queen's to administrative and social policy tasks in 1918. Some of her published statements on social policy from this period, show Whitton as no the "bleeding heart" but rather unfeeling in her attitude towards the needy. In a 1923 newspaper

article dealing with the problem of treatment of the feeble-minded, for example, her assessment jumps off the page:

The old theory that parents used to have when they married Daft Mary to Simple Bob (will) have to be rooted out. We have got to grapple courageously with the feeble-minded problem.

Whitton is now chiefly remembered as a pioneering, colourful mayor of Ottawa in the 1950s. Ottawans still tell stories about her that have eluded this account - stories of her blistering tongue, magnificent will and imbrogios; of the large diaper pins that secured her grandiose chain of office to her shoulders on state occasions (visible in a photograph in the book); and of the sophomoric group of anti-Whitton mugwumps who during one campaign paid for full-page newspaper ads of the Kipling poem "The female of the species is more deadly than the male." (Boys will be boys.) Recent scholarship, however, has had a different focus. *No Fault of Their Own* (1983), James Struthers' study of unemployment and the Canadian welfare state, and Irving Abella and Harold Troper's *None to Many* (1982), an analysis of Canadian policy on Jewish immigration 1933-48, examines Whitton's active anti-semitism, as well as her rigid views about the proper administration and allocation of relief and unemployment measures, which, if implemented, would have increased human suffering during the Depression. Whitton, who addressed these subjects in studies commissioned by both the Bennett and King administrations, was one of the ideologues behind the Bennett Government's decision to establish military-style relief camps for single unemployed men in the early 1930s.

*No Bleeding Heart* paints a complete picture of the rationale behind her right-wing activism. In a detailed examination of Whitton's intellectual and social policies, veined with her conviction about "the inevitable chasm between advanced and

backward (i.e. non-Anglo-Saxon and/or poor) peoples", she is seen during the '20s and '30s vigorously advocating a ban on such "undesirable immigrants" as Central European peasants, British slum children and Jewish refugee children. As assistant secretary of the Social Services Council of Canada from 1918 to 1922, and then as administrative head of the Canadian Council on Child Welfare from 1922 until her stormy resignation in 1941, Whitton worked towards the reform of child welfare laws, juvenile justice, and for greater professionalization and larger role for social work in the administration of welfare budgets at all levels of government. (After all, she reasoned, was not municipal government the most prone to maladministration and the pork barrel?). She gained widespread acclaim in 1948 when the Alberta government charged her with criminal conspiracy for her role in the "Babies for Export" scandal. Whitton's charges of incompetence and negligence in provincial child welfare had brought the government into disrepute, and her subsequent vindication became the impetus for her career in municipal politics. Throughout her career, Whitton spoke out on women's rights and responsibilities, addressing many enduring issues, including wages for housework, daycare and old age.

Not the least of her causes, Whitton lobbied tirelessly for Whitton. Belligerent, prickly, imperious, with ten per cent of her personal library devoted to works about her anima, Elizabeth I, Whitton's chief interests were broader social and political issues. She was the consummate political animal. Her network of mentors, contacts and proteges in Canada, the United States and at the League of Nations, where she represented Canada on various social committees from 1926 to 1939, was formidable. Emily Murphy, the first woman magistrate in the British Empire, Helen Reid, director of the Social Service Department at McGill and three successive directors of the U.S. Children's Bureau, were all her boosters. Indeed, *No Bleeding Heart* traces years of maneuvering by Whitton

toward the creation of a federal Children's Bureau in Ottawa with herself as the putative head. She almost succeeded. Three principal factors defeated her: her own fatal lack of professional credentials in the field, her tendency to alienate influential colleagues through her resolute and Machiavellian tactics, and the intrigues of well-placed civil servants.

By the account of her chroniclers, Whitton's career in municipal politics was second-best. A popular and successful, if controversial, mayor from 1951 to 1956 and 1961 to 1964, she made some effort to improve health and housing facilities and balanced the budget, although she received criticism for having done it at the expense of education and public works. In 1958, Whitton failed in her bid to be elected to the House of Commons as Conservative candidate in the riding of Ottawa West. Despite her credentials and her steadfast Conservatism, the Conservative Party, especially during the Diefenbaker era, never made use of her talents in any permanent position at the federal level. This is surprising and suggests discrimination. It cannot reasonably be argued that she was simply too volatile or right-wing for the federal scene when other right-wing mavericks with tongues as voluble were accommodated. Despite her vigorous lobbying, nothing was forthcoming for Whitton.

Both of these books are valuable to the historian. *Still Running* would have benefitted from more exact chronology in some of the memoirs and a more analytical introduction by historian Joy Parr. *No Bleeding Heart* scants Whitton's municipal career somewhat, but for both Whitton and the authors her social welfare career is of primary importance. In that respect, it would have been desirable to have more detail about Whitton's relationship with some of her male associates: for example, John Shearer, who handpicked her for the SSCC in 1918; her "good friend" Frank Stapleford of the CWC; and, most of all, her long, confidential and unholy alliance with Frederick C. Blair of the

federal Department of Immigration, her twin in a resolve to restrict immigration to Anglo-Saxon desirables. The treatment of Whitton's important family relationships with her mother and with Kathleen and Frank Ryan, her sister and brother-in-law, is frustratingly spotty at times, perhaps to respect the privacy of the living. Nevertheless, both volumes represent valuable scholarly endeavours.

Sandy Campbell  
Department of English  
University of Ottawa

**Lapointe-Roy, Huguette *Charité bien ordonnée*. Montréal, Boréal Express, 1986. 330 p. Illustration. 21,95 \$**

L'ouvrage de Mme Lapointe-Roy nous éclaire bien sur une période et sur un aspect de l'historiographie des institutions sociales et sur des objets de leurs interventions trop souvent écartés. Un travail minutieux de dépouillement de sources manuscrites souvent obscures permet à l'auteure de reconstruire pour le lecteur le monde des oeuvres laïques et ecclésiastiques destinées au soulagement des misères du peuple à Montréal entre les années 1831 et 1871. Trop souvent relegué à l'ombre des balbutiements de l'État-providence, soit à titre de précurseur, soit comme dernier rempart de l'initiative privée, voici la charité livrée selon ses propres termes.

Les trois parties du livre nous présentent l'organisation des oeuvres de charité à Montréal entre les années 1831 et 1871. La première se consacre aux portraits des individus - supérieurs des ordres religieux et laïcs, clercs, religieuses, philanthropes, patronnes - impliqués dans la mise en place et dans la direction des oeuvres. Non seulement cette partie est-elle la plus considérable mais aussi fournit-elle la trame du livre entier. Car c'est à travers les témoignages des principaux intéressés que l'auteure nous livre son objet. Les seconde et dernière parties du texte traitent

respectivement des services en institution et des services à domicile des oeuvres de charité montréalaises. Puisé dans les archives des ordres, des institutions et des gouvernements, le livre demeure près des préoccupations de ceux et de celles ayant enregistré les faits. On retrouve la préoccupation constante du financement et du contrôle des dépenses, les soucis gestionnaires et les questions de rapports avec les autorités civiles et ecclésiastiques.

Il est de beaucoup d'ouvrages historiques que leurs plus grands mérites sont aussi sources de leurs déceptions. Il en est ainsi de *Charité bien ordonnée* ou l'admirable fidélité de l'auteure aux fondements que se sont donnés les acteurs de leurs propres actions tels qu'ils nous sont parvenus dans des sources manuscrites constitue aussi un formidable obstacle à l'analyse des significations du phénomène selon d'autres fondements. Résolument descriptif et résistant à toute tentation d'examiner son objet d'un regard externe aux témoignages recueillis, le livre laisse sur sa faim le lecteur avide de révélations quant à la place et à la signification des oeuvres charitables dans l'histoire de la constitution des problèmes sociaux et des initiatives diverses les visant. Il n'en reste qu'aucuns ne pourront désormais adresser ces questions sans s'y référer.

Ron Melchers,  
Criminologie  
Université d'Ottawa