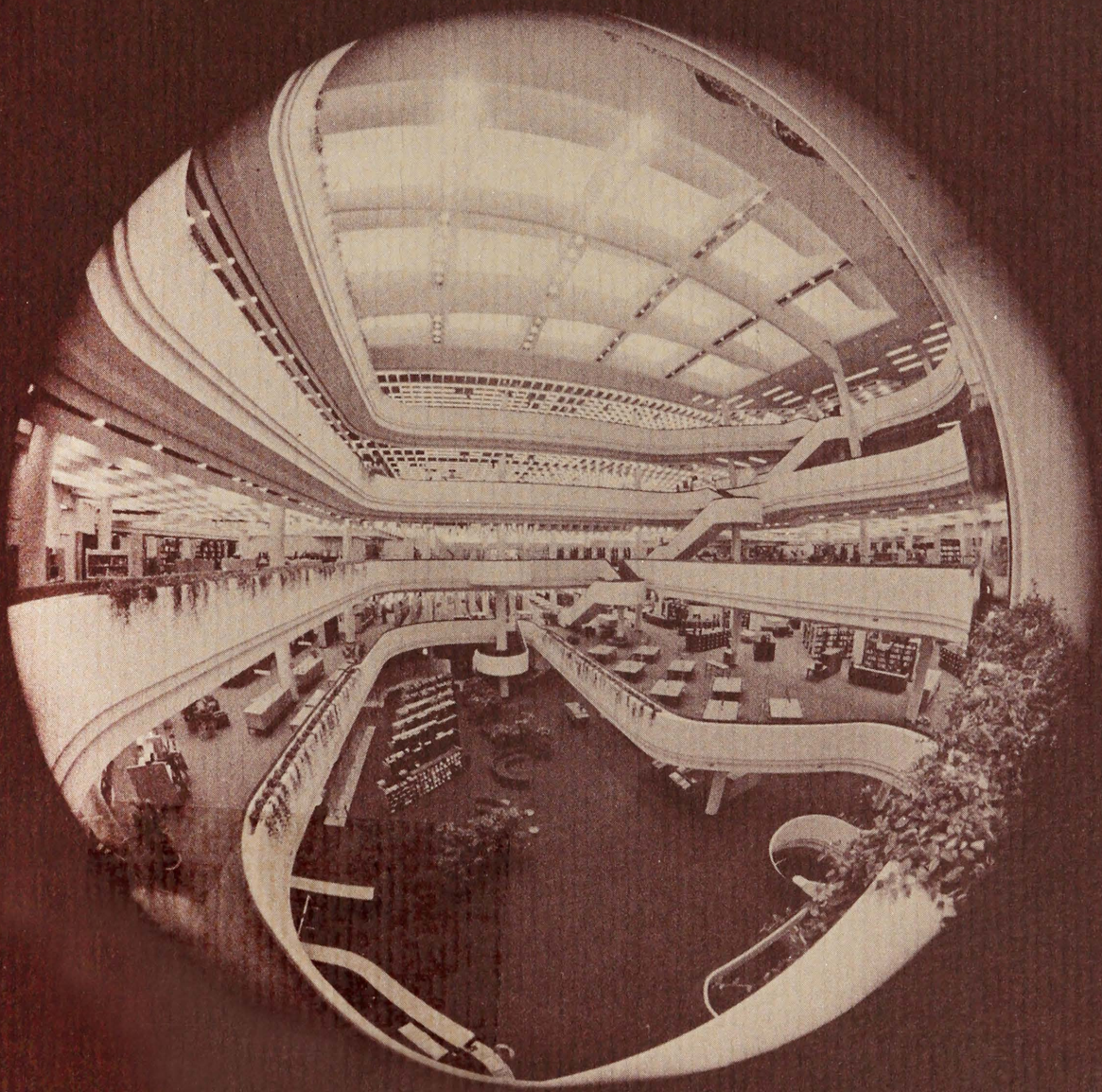

Metropolitan Toronto Library Board

Official Opening of Metropolitan Toronto Library

November 2, 1977





Official Opening of Metropolitan Toronto Library

Metropolitan Toronto Library Board

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*Staff of Toronto Public Library in the
Mechanics' Institute building 1909*

Metropolitan Toronto Library Board

The Metropolitan Toronto Library Board is one of the 14 regional library systems in Ontario. Six area library boards make up the region: East York, Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, Toronto and York. Each area board is autonomous and responsible to its municipal council. Each has its own chief librarian or director, administration, staff, collections, facilities and programs.

The Metropolitan Toronto Library Board is autonomous and responsible to the Metropolitan Toronto Council. It is the only regional board that directly operates its own library. In addition, it shares

with the other regional boards a responsibility to encourage cooperation and coordination and to provide back-up services throughout its region.

The Metropolitan Toronto Library Board is composed of the Chairman of the Metropolitan Council or his representative, one person appointed by each of the six area municipalities, one person appointed by the Metropolitan Toronto School Board, and one person appointed by the Metropolitan Toronto Separate School Board.

Members, Metropolitan Toronto Library Board

Site and Building Committee 1969-1977

Walter G. Cassels, Q.C., Chairman
 Thomas H. Goudge, Vice-Chairman
 Edward J. Canning
 William L. Archer, Q.C.
 John M. Bennett
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Metropolitan Toronto Library Board 1975-1977

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 Sheryl Taylor-Munro

Metropolitan Toronto Library: Collections and Services

The Metropolitan Toronto Library collection consists of twelve specialized departments with extensive collections in General Reference, Fine Art, Theatre, Music, Science and Technology, Social Sciences, Business, History, Canadian History, Literature, Languages, and Municipal Reference (which remains in its location at City Hall).

The Library also provides a Bibliographic Centre with inter-library loan facilities and houses other Library Board services to the residents of Metropolitan Toronto, such as support to other public libraries by Audio-Visual Services with its back-up collections of films and talking books, its Metro audio-visual equipment pool, coordination of services in languages other than English, gifts and exchanges operation and publications.

All these are assisted by an administrative unit and a technical services unit.

Rare Materials

Metro Library is the largest public library building in Canada and its collections are the most extensive of any public library in Canada. In it can be found materials to delight, excite and help the reader. Some materials are very rare and valuable and extra care is taken of them. They are stored in special rooms with climatic controls to ensure their preservation. Some are kept in boxes tailored to contain them. Both librarian and reader handle them protectively so that they may be used by as many generations yet to come as have already used them. There are rare books and materials in nearly every department—Canadian History, History, Social Sciences, Fine Art, Theatre and Music. Literature boasts the Arthur Conan Doyle Room with its collection of Sherlockiana, the finest available in the world for public use. One of the well-known gems in Canadian History is the John Ross Robertson collection of historical pictures and maps.

Metro Library serves the public in person, on the telephone and by mail. About 50,000 enquiries a month are answered by library staff.

Each of the departments is unique and some are in the “one-of-a-kind” bracket for Canadian libraries of any type, academic, public or special.

Highlights of the Collections

General Reference

This department provides quick reference and referral service based on encyclopedias, current reference books, surveys and extensive files of general periodicals, newspaper clippings and pamphlets. A large part of this department's service is handled over the telephone by experienced staff. Whether the desired information is specific or general, common or uncommon, staff are well-prepared to find answers or to give basic instruction in the use of reference books and other materials.

Of special importance are the collections of: periodicals; indexes, abstracts and loose-leaf services; Who's who, biographical dictionaries, encyclopedias; telephone directories; collections on museums and museum practice, libraries and information science.

Fine Art

This department contains books, periodicals and pamphlets in the fields of painting, sculpture, architecture, graphic arts, design, costume, typographic arts and technology, and photography. There is a large general collection on most aspects of the visual arts and recreation with special strengths in Canadian art, 19th and 20th century design, fashion, printing and chess. The resources of this department are frequently used by people who create products for others, such as graphic designers, artists, architects, illustrators, set designers, publishers, people in the communications industry, journalists, and students in these fields. At the same time, the collection is readily used by the general reader and layman.

Services and collections include: picture collections, Canadian artists files, index files, and private press and fine printing collection.

Music

The collection of this department represents significant composers, eras and cultures; musical forms; and performing media. It contains the principal encyclopedias and dictionaries, bibliographies and catalogues of composers' works, catalogues of other music collections, biographies, history and criticism, theory and technique, music in performance and musical instruments. This department tries to make classical music accessible

in Metro, both on phonograph records and in musical scores. However, there is a solid reference collection of books to provide information about the popular music scene, plus a good variety of folk, jazz and Canadian popular albums. Musicians, music students and all who enjoy listening to music can borrow musical scores, use turntables for in-Library listening, or read through scores in the studios equipped with pianos.

In addition to books, Music contains: periodicals, phonograph record catalogues, phonograph records, archives of concert programs, scores, picture files and files of clippings and other current data.

Theatre

Since its establishment in 1961 this department has grown extensively and rapidly into a collection covering all areas of the performing arts with the exception of music. It includes material on theatre and drama, moving pictures, dance, television and radio programming, circus, music hall, vaudeville, puppetry and pantomime. It provides services to the general public, to scholars, to researchers and to the Theatre community. The collection is international in scope and contains over 23,000 books and 150 current periodicals in a variety of languages. Extensive indexes are available for plays in collections, Canadian theatre productions, biographical and critical material and film reviews. The collection is particularly strong in materials relating to Canadian theatre history.

Special holdings in the collection are; vertical files, programs, photographs, posters, phonograph records, playbills, stage designs, engravings and manuscript material.

Science and Technology

This department provides the specialist, the student and the general public with information on all aspects of science, engineering and technology. Its collection, including over 78,000 books, is especially strong in chemistry, electrical and electronic engineering, geology, natural history, nursing, automobile repair, sports and recreation and cookery. The department gives high priority to materials on topics of current interest such as environmental pollution and alternative sources of energy.

Of importance are its collections of; books, periodicals, abstracts and indexes, standards, patents, shop, radio and television manuals, scientific and technical dictionaries and encyclopedias, conferences and papers, government documents, sports biographies and files of clippings and other current data.

Business

This department, since its early days as the Hallam Room, has served a wide clientele: business people, students, individuals doing personal research, librarians from special libraries and, increasingly, free-lance researchers. Present emphasis is on assistance to the business person who is starting and managing a small or new enterprise. The services offered are intended to give rapid, up-to-date information either through direct use of material in the library, or by telephone.

The collection covers economics, labour, management, business law, finance, natural resources, corporations, etc. Integrated into this collection are government documents from many countries and many documents from such organizations as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the International Labour Office. About 880 periodical subscriptions, with accompanying indexes, keep information current. Clipping and pamphlet files supplement the 55,000 books.

Three areas of the collection warrant special attention: the Business and Trade Directories, the Statistics Canada collection and the information files on Canadian corporate businesses.

Social Sciences

This department is responsible for the heterogeneous fields of sociology, political science, law, public administration, social welfare, philosophy, psychology, religion, education, customs and folklore, and anthropology. More than 144,000 volumes of books are supplemented by periodicals, government documents, files of clippings and other current data, phonograph records, tapes and microfilms. As in the other departments, it is strongest in the Canadian aspect of its subjects.

Particular areas of importance are: almanacs; Canadian congregational and denominational histories; women's collection; native peoples of Canada; immigration and ethnic groups in Canada; international relations and treaties; serials, abstracts and indexes; government documents, college and university calendars.

History

This department has about 115,000 books, receives about 500 current periodicals and has an extensive current pamphlet and clipping collection. It does not include works about Canada unless specifically stated. These will be found in the Canadian History Department.

History covers the following subjects: geography and travel, maps and atlases, archaeology and ancient history, general and cultural history, military history and theory, genealogy, heraldry and collective biography.

Canadian History

This department contains two related collections. The first consists of books and other materials about Canadian history, geography, travel, archaeology and military history and theory. The second is the Library's famous collection of rare Canadiana, housed in the Baldwin Room.

The Baldwin Room has the Library's collection of old and rare material relating to Canada. Use is as unrestricted as condition will permit. For some fragile items photocopies or microfilm are available.

As well as 20,000 pre-1868 books and other items about Canada, by Canadian authors, or printed in Canada, there are original letters, diaries, account-books, minute-books, legal documents and other written records extending from the 18th century to the present. Especially strong on Toronto, the collection includes the papers of ordinary citizens as well as of important people in the political, social, or business fields. The papers of several prominent members of the Family Compact are balanced by

Highlights of the Collections

those of the Honourable Robert Baldwin, the Father of Responsible Government, after whom the Baldwin Room is named.

A collection of broadsides, posters and printed ephemera is arranged by date and catalogued by subject. There is also a large picture collection and the notable John Ross Robertson historical picture collection.

Languages Centre

The Languages Centre has over 110,000 books in 70 languages, more than 250 periodicals and newspapers in 35 languages, plus a collection of 3,900 phonograph records and tapes. The Languages Centre staff provide multilingual or multicultural library services in 30 languages other than English for users interested in reading, listening to or studying various languages. Along with furnishing direct service to the public, the Centre sends out a large number of books requested through inter-library loan and is a regional resource in the development of multilingual collections and services.

Collections and services include: literature in 70 languages; North American Indian and Inuktitut (Eskimo) collection; children's literature; encyclopedias and dictionaries; language-learning materials: books, records and tapes in 65 languages; spoken word records; and periodicals and newspapers.

Literature

The collection contains over 110,000 books of and about world literature in seven different languages: English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Latin and ancient Greek. Included are novels, poetry, biographies, criticism, essays, quotations and rhetoric.

Topics of particular interest in this department are: Canadian literature, linguistics, the Maria Chapdelaine collection, variant editions of Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas* and the Sherlock Holmes collection.

Municipal Reference Library

Concerned with every aspect of municipal affairs, this department is located in the City Hall for the convenience of civic employees and politicians, members of citizen groups, local boards, students and the general public. Its collection of more than 40,000 books is supplemented by over 450 current subscriptions to periodicals, as well as pamphlets, scrapbooks, vertical (newspaper clipping) files, maps, microforms, slides, pictures and government documents. The library also receives 30 community newspapers from the Metro area.

One of Municipal's major aims is to make unique material on local government and urban affairs more accessible to the public.

The department collects material in the subject areas of: housing, municipal finance, municipal government, municipal services, pollution (urban), town planning, urban geography, urban sociology and urban transportation.

Services

Audio Visual Services

Audio Visual is an indirect regional service of the Metropolitan Toronto Library Board. As an indirect service, AVS works closely with library staff in the area public library systems and provides the 16mm film depot, the talking books service, AV technicians services, the Metro equipment pool, graphics services, and photography services.

Bibliographic Centre

The Bibliographic Centre provides service by telephone or on the premises to users who want to locate materials held by the seven public library systems in Metropolitan Toronto (Metropolitan Toronto, East York, Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, Toronto and York).

Through a teletype network with the National Library in Ottawa and other major libraries across Canada and abroad, locations are obtained and provided for materials held in other institutions.

The Bibliographic Centre contains about 3,500 volumes, used chiefly in bibliographic research. National bibliographies and general library catalogues are emphasized and include all Canadian titles, major American and British titles, and selected publications from Europe and other countries. Also collected are bibliographies, union lists of serials, and book trade directories.

The Bibliographic Centre maintains and operates the Union catalogue, inter-library loan services and the Canadian catalogue.

Languages Coordination

Increased immigration, advanced methods of multilingual services undertaken in libraries and greater public awareness of cultural pluralism have resulted in an ever greater call on the Metropolitan libraries to provide for the reading and information needs of the citizens of Metropolitan Toronto in languages other than English.

As a result, the Metropolitan Toronto Library Board offers the Languages Coordination office as an advisory and coordinating service that collects and disseminates to the Metro Toronto libraries information on library materials, sources of supply and selection tools such as bibliographies, catalogues, periodicals and reviews in languages other than English.

Assistance is given in the purchasing of books and library materials on behalf of, and in collaboration with, all the area library systems, while simultaneously a method of 'direct buying' from countries of origin is developed.

Gifts and Exchanges

This department acts as a clearing house to ensure that the best possible use is made of material donated to the Library. It acts also as a Metro-wide clearing house for the public library systems of the City and Boroughs to make certain that useful material surplus to one system is made available to others.

The Metropolitan Toronto Library Board is happy to accept gifts and bequests to enrich its collections. Donations may vary from books and periodicals to such non-book items as greeting cards, trade cards, scrapbooks, manuscripts, scores, theatre programs, broadsides and old catalogues. Throughout the years, donations such as these have played a very large part in the development of the collections.

Metro Information Service

The Community Information Centre of Metropolitan Toronto occupies an area conveniently located at ground level on the Yonge Street side of the building and provides information about current services available to the public from social agencies, community groups and government departments.

Metropolitan Toronto Library: Building Statistics

Location

789 Yonge Street (Bloor-Yonge Subway)

Book Capacity

- 1,220,750 volumes
- 28 miles or 45 km of shelves
- 1/3 of the collections on open shelves

People Capacity

- Reading tables/lounge chairs/
built-in seating 879
- Index tables 45
- Audio/microform carrels 136
- Meeting rooms 245
- Total 1,305

Size

- 364,000 square feet of floor space
- 119 feet in height
- Five 'double' stories
- 95 feet to the main roof line

Design Features

- Large atrium or well soaring up from ground level to a glassed roof and surrounded by balconies.
- Open and inviting atmosphere to make library users aware of the collections in the entire library.
- Nature objects such as plants and reflecting pools to create a pleasant environment as well as to control sound and security.
- Books and other materials on open shelves readily available to visitors.
- Complete accessibility for people in wheelchairs, on crutches, etc.

Environmental Features

- Heat reclamation system for the conservation of energy.
- Temperature in the public areas at 20° C (68° F), 35% relative humidity in winter; 22° C (72° F), 48% relative humidity in summer.
- Sloped reflecting windows bringing in natural light over much of the public areas.
- Two-tier artificial lighting concept throughout with overhead lighting and task-oriented lighting.
- Lighting fixtures and acoustic baffles integrated into an open ceiling system with superior acoustic properties.
- Fire protection system with automatic sprinklers throughout except for a halon gas installation in rare book areas, and with automatic smoke exhaust.

Building Materials

- Poured-in-place concrete with columns at 30 foot intervals.
- Warm-tone brick exterior finish; step-back walls on Yonge and Asquith Streets scaled to the height of surrounding buildings.
- Arcade sidewalk of brown-tone exposed aggregate continuing indoors along an 'internal street' with a hand-crafted red oak screen demarcating the library area.

Interior Finishes

- Coordinated colour range throughout
- Carpet tones from deep rust to golden-orange
- Red oak furniture
- Chocolate brown shelving and cabinets

Floor Load

- 150 pounds per square foot in the public areas
- 180 pounds per square foot in the main book storage (stack) areas
- 250 pounds per square foot in the compact storage area

Landscaping

- Extensive use of wooden planters, stained dark brown and supplemented by ash, walnut, locust, maple and crab-apple trees around Yonge and Asquith Streets.
- Landscaped amphitheatre on the east side.

Cost

- Site \$7 million
- Building \$23 million

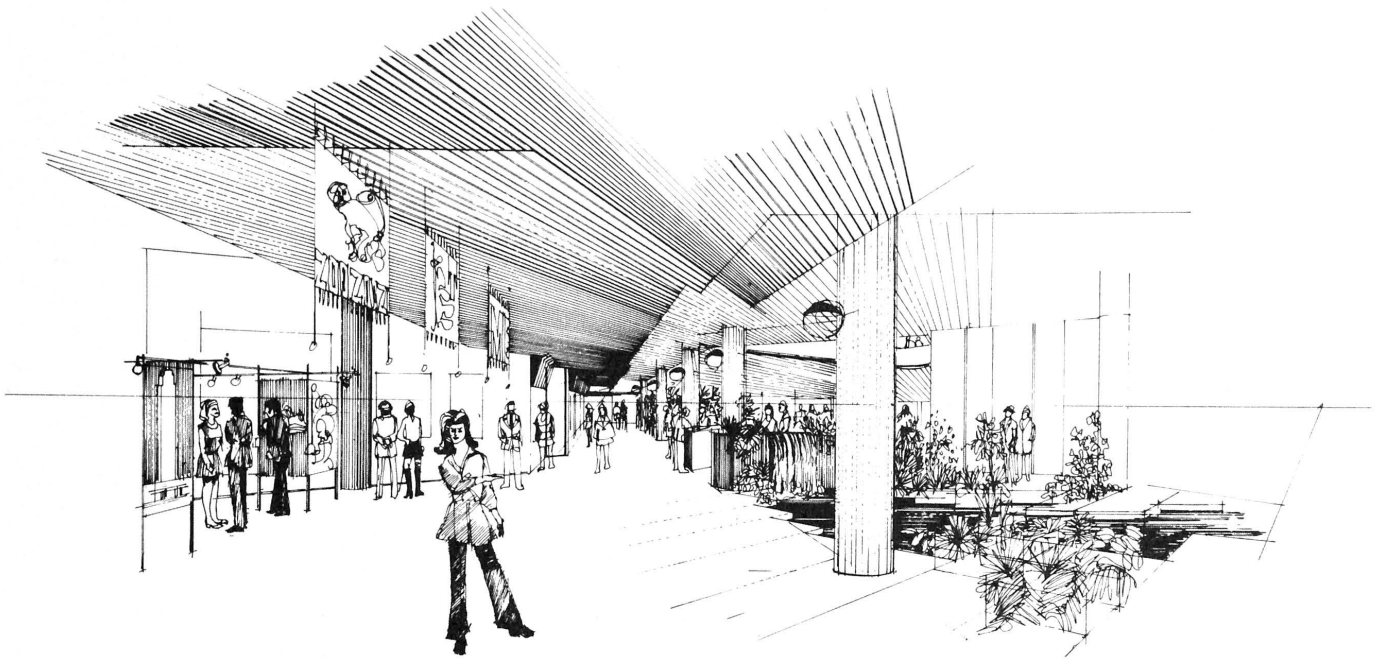
Architect

Raymond Moriyama, Architects and Planners

Construction Consultant

The Charles Nolan Company

Architect's Remarks



Introduction

The old concept of “the empty cup” is one that should have meaning for us all. Our society is fundamentally technological and materialistic. We tend to focus on the cup itself—its material, form, colour, size, and pattern—often forgetting that the essence of the cup is the emptiness inside. Without the need for this emptiness there is no need for the cup. In architecture, defined emptiness, furthermore, allows the observer, the user, to fill a space with himself, his thoughts and imagination. The perception and use of emptiness belong naturally and properly to the user. This central idea—together with the means, not only to reinforce this idea, but to allow the user to achieve personal peace and self-fulfillment—was the key to our design concept of the Metropolitan Toronto Library.

I find it difficult to express in words the evolutionary process, the seven years of moving from one thought to another thought, from one act to the next action, except to say that there was a thread of continuity in personal commitment and belief. Yet as in any healthy continuity, we did try to leave slack emptiness, or looseness, to accommodate new information and developments as well as readiness to shift or pull if need be.

The tendency in writing, for me at least, is toward a certain kind of definition, order and clarity. This can kill the joy, mystery and beauty of ambiguity that make up the experience and language of architecture. The building, now complete, must “speak” to the public in its own way. To be seen is to be heard. What follows then, is not a description of the building but my response to a request to set down the influences and ideas, thoughts and feelings, from which the architectural intent of defined emptiness and the form and functional organization of this library evolved. I am writing, I suppose, with some presumption, but perhaps more with a childish belief that our thoughts and actions are of general interest.

Process

During the seven-year period in which the needs of the Metro Library were scrutinized and determined, the location was sought and bought, and the building was designed and built, we “breathed in” the advice and opinions of thousands of people representing diverse outlooks and different organizations: librarians, library experts, library administrators, head librarians, the Library Board, the Site and Building Committee, ratepayers, the Bay-Bloor Businessmen's Association, private individuals, library users, non-users, politicians, planners, traffic engineers, meteorologists, building authorities, works engineers, systems analysts, manufacturers, suppliers, building trades, consultants in construction, vibration, acoustics, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, lighting, structure, fire prevention, costs and others.

In the beginning our office tried to abandon all preconceptions about reference libraries, to empty our heads. We listened and observed, soaking up information and whatever we could perceive like sponges on the ocean floor. As time went on we synthesized; squeezed the sponges. This produced

 Architect's Remarks

responses—additional comments, ideas and information—which we carried back to the “drawing board”. The process was repeated many times. We learned and refined with the client and librarians. In this sense, then, what stands is the result of contributions by many individuals. We are delighted that with the help of many people we were able to complete the library within the budget established by the Library Board in 1972.

Of course, I do accept responsibility for the basic architectural resolution. This, in many ways, is a resolution of contradictions: openness versus security, accessibility versus protection, personal interests versus group interests, public interest versus librarians’ interest, efficiency versus informal involvement, quality versus quantity. To this day, on individual issues I can argue both ways. The only conviction I held throughout was that the result, whatever the direction or form, must enhance the library’s human purpose and increase its value to the public. Most of the questions resolved into one: How do we impart a sense of humanity to a physically large institution housing unique materials (one of a kind in many cases) and special human resources? Or, to put it another way, what is the essence that should dictate our architectural intent?

The search for this essence included studies of the usual influences related to architectural design: microclimatic conditions, soil, the neighbourhood, traffic, noise, adjacent tall structures that cast shadows and redirect the wind, pedestrian patterns, building codes, underground services, budget and related time constraints.

Three specific elements, however, became the core influences:

*the material resources in the library;
the needs of librarians and staff; and
the needs of the users.*

There were, moreover, two other influences that governed our considerations. These were, first, the thoughts and aspirations of the Library Board and, second, the social context and consciousness of our time, including energy conservation. I will elaborate on these influences and try to indicate how they became integrated in the design process.



Inputs

The Material Resource in the Library

The dictionary definition of the word “library” is obsolete, or at least inadequate. Today, a library contains more than books. It holds films, records, photographs, paintings, and other information storage and retrieval systems. The future is bound to bring even more shifts and changes.

But some important things remain unchanged. I still recall, for example, the excitement of discovery among the stacks, nooks and crannies in the old library. The richness of the materials I found, materials that the public may

 Architect's Remarks

not know about, made me feel like a child seeing light, the sunrise, for the first time. It was a revelation for the mind, a joy for the spirit. How many people have experienced what I did? How many know the richness and depth of the collection? How many more can, if they have greater access to materials in the new library? Can we make the materials less defensible but still controllable? Can we give different and more useful meaning to materials if by architectural arrangements we can eliminate the ghetto image from the user's mind.

The Board's instruction to make the materials more accessible to the public was clearly understandable to me on that day. As objects, these materials are dead; as information they are alive.

Librarians and Staff

I was impressed from the start by the dedication, knowledge and quality of the librarians and staff.

Some, it is true, perceived themselves as guardians, protectors of materials. I detected a tone of cynicism, grounded perhaps in the frustrations of the old building. Others were hanging on to the past, preserving an image of libraries that no longer exists. But on the whole, I was extremely encouraged by the positive sense of service that permeated the librarians—the urge to give and share. How can we help?

The Board's desire to improve the library service has a clear relationship with the facilities but a much richer one with the librarians and staff—the living resources.

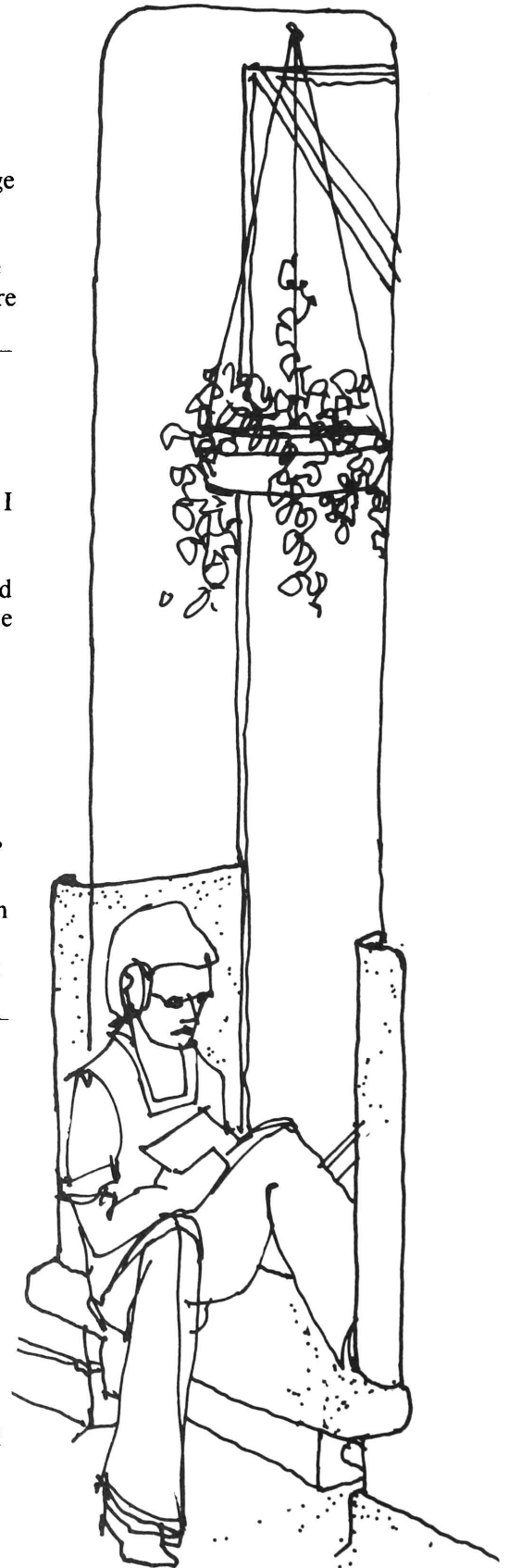
I was impressed also when the administration agreed, during the reprogramming stage before the final round of design, to accept the "worst" working space in the new building. The better spaces were assigned to staff members working directly with the public. Later, the executive area did turn out to be the windowless basement floor. I was greatly encouraged by this enlightened, unselfish attitude. It recognizes, among other things, that most administrative staff members have greater mobility than the others.

The Users—The Public

The users' survey, carried out during 1970-1971, told us a lot about public needs. The patrons of the old library were mainly purposeful (as distinct from casual, drop-in users), predominantly male, and older than suburban library patrons. Most were at senior occupation levels, often continuing studies while working. Most student users were at the post-secondary level.

The study showed 657,384 visits by between 155,000 and 165,000 different persons. Of these, 25,000 to 30,000 were not residents of Metro Toronto. Telephone enquiries numbered over 200,000. There were 34,636 teletype enquiries from other Metro libraries and 3,050 telex enquiries.

While the total number of visits represented nearly 30 per cent of the Metro population in 1970, only about 7 per cent of that population actually visited the old library once or more, some of them hundreds of times. If this



Architect's Remarks

proportion could be increased by just 3 or 4 percentage points—as it easily could with an accessible location and a comprehensive, people-oriented facility—the number of patron visits could double; the pattern of use and users could be broadened.

Obviously, there are many in our community who will never use the reference library. Others, the purposeful users will always find what they need, tolerating if they must the most complex situation or the most primitive condition. But why don't some people in the grey area between these extremes use the reference library? Will they?

We did conduct some informal surveys of non-users by simply buttonholing people. Answers ranged from “what for, I have no need, I buy my own books”, to “I want to but I'm intimidated by large libraries, I don't know the system, I don't know what questions to ask and librarians frighten me”.

Some of the people who do not use reference libraries have preconceptions of authoritarianism, images from the past which cause personal turbulence. Many shun arrangements which throw a large number of people into dependence on the decision of a few. This, they contend, reduces their potential for expanded awareness. The questions raised by such considerations were these:

How do we free people to explore for themselves without causing chaos for the librarians?

Can we improve access to materials without losing control?

Is the question of accessibility more than physical?

Does it involve freedom of mind?

As architects can we really help the library improve its service?

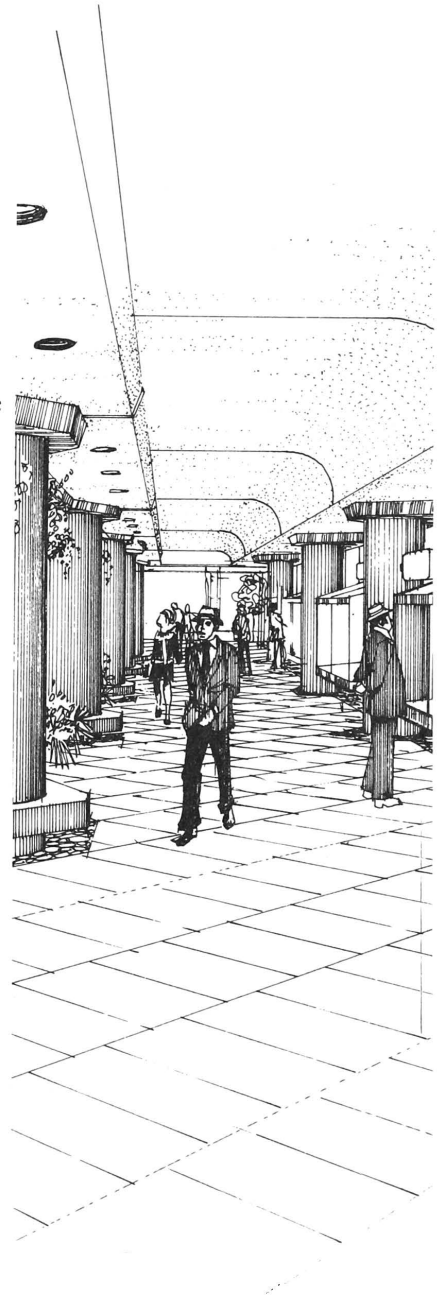
Can we reduce intimidation? Where? When? How? Who? And Why?

Social Context

Our society has moved in quick succession from an industrial age to a post-industrial age to the era of electronics and post-affluence. We have become aware of limits in a finite world. We suffer from economic and political confusion, and we fear the loss of conventional stability. As a result we live in restlessness.

On the other hand, this is also an exciting time—a period of self-directed search, of personal spiritual growth, and of pursuit of personal truth. It is a time of learning, unlearning and re-learning, an era of abundant information. (The spectre of information overload is another matter.)

Within this context the library becomes a unique living information resource. It can be one of the means to help the individual reach what some call personal peace and others call self-fulfilment. The search is diverse. It may be peaceful, even joyful; it may also lead to the violent turbulence of discovery. What matters in the end is that the individual mind is making new connections.



Synthesis

In such a time as this, concepts based on the industrial notion of physical requirements only—logic and fixed reasons for every space and floor area based on physical function—seem obsolete. Lewis Mumford's thought, expressed in 1951, seems in some ways even more valid today:

"Those qualities that differentiate architecture from building cannot be derived from the functional requirements of the structure: they spring from the character and purpose of the users, as these are interpreted and remoulded by the architect".

I cannot subscribe totally to this image of the architect-hero. Our task today is too complex to be worked out by a single person. Yet I do admit that the spirit to motivate, to inspire the team, to give focus and to clarify objectives, is absolutely essential.

In this sense, the notion of "personal peace" became a touchstone, a point of reference, for me. It was a "tool" for further thinking and a "base" to communicate thoughts for action by others.

Perhaps it is important to state why this notion was important to me. It stems from deeply felt thoughts from my own lived experience during the Second World War, experience of a kind not shared by many. During internment in the Rockies as a youngster, without proper school and library, digging ditches for 5 cents an hour, I came to realize how blind social institutions can be to the subtle but real need of the individual for personal growth. To stunt this growth by sheer insensitivity is to waste a great human potential for the community, the country and the world.

Furthermore, it seems to me that Canada's aspiration to achieve unity and a unique identity through its policy of multi-culturalism lies not only in mere tolerance and acceptance of diverse ethnic and community groups. It is rooted in positively encouraging self-fulfilment of each individual. To know oneself is to be self-possessed, to be at home in the world. National confidence starts with the individual.

It was in part this focus on the individual that helped to resolve the contradictions in the library, without eliminating or flattening them by wilful and heavy-handed actions. This notion allowed a more practical "touch and feel" explanation of hardware needs in the areas of intimate communication: of the user and the staff, the user and the material, the user and the self.

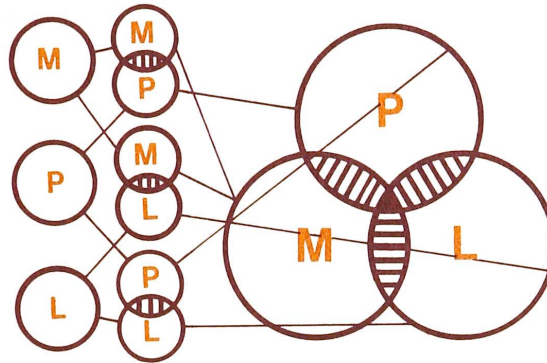
A good example may be the transition from the exterior street to the front desk. We decided to design this area on a low scale, to create an internal "street", to separate the "street" from the library proper with water security, to use the sound of water to blur traffic noise and to add a sense of tranquility inside. The interior "street" and the adjacent lounge and display areas were designed to give a span of adjustment time and distance to visitors before they arrive at the library proper and their business at the front desk. The inquiry counter could not be eliminated, but it was scaled down in height, its finish material more responsive to the touch. Thus it should be more conducive to humane interaction between the patron and

 Architect's Remarks

the librarian. The “street” is also an ambiguous space; it is inside the library building, but outside the library proper. Hence, visitors may drop in without any particular purpose, look around and leave or choose to come in. The leading edge of the library is a casual, free space.

A synthesis of the three most important elements of the reference library is expressed in this diagram.

M Material
P The Users-Public
L Librarians and Staff



There are some natural interactions between these elements, as the diagram indicates, but the total achieves its highest functional value and expression at the intersection of all three. The “magic” happens at the core. It is this core that most intrigued me. What would happen if we gently explode the space near the core, to create “emptiness” in order to change and expand the perceptual ‘geography’ of a reference library, to bring light, philosophically and literally, into the heart of the library? Can this notion of emptiness give dignity and gentle excitement to the materials, the librarians, and the users, to challenge the mind, to arouse curiosity and imagination?

We worked vigorously on solving these questions.

This emptiness, the central, passive, neutral connector with ever-changing natural light will be perceived differently by every individual. My feeling is that many, on entering the library for the first time, will see it more as a physical thing than I would like—as an interior court or perhaps a tiered well. The physical openness will be sensed first, then the potential accessibility. However, as they ascend to the upper floors their experience should become less physical. The “open” elevators and stairs should hasten this shift. The space should still physically attract and draw visitors to it and encourage them to look across, to look upward and downward. But the mind should then become the bridge, making linkages across the emptiness it never made before. Thought itself should fill the space, encouraging exploration, reaching out to look for a place of its own. The mind connects and chooses; the body acts.

In this respect, the “new” balance we sought was between the stability that comes from inherited and traditional values and a system, no less stable but with its own evolutionary potentials, to stimulate exploration and adventure. This meant that, aside from the free mind-space, a variety of diverse personal places was essential. The user should be able to explore, but also should be able to find an “anchor”, a personal place for study, contemplation or meditation. Even window nooks are examples of such places.

Architect's Remarks

The junctions of library departments were blurred in order to enhance the flow of activities—without encouraging the materials to flow out of the building. An individual who feels comfortable in a certain spot, for example, could collect materials from Science, from Literature, and Art and take them to his 'private' study place.

We agreed not to treat special problems of the handicapped and the aged with token gestures. We just applied our design skills to integrate them to the best of our ability. Some solutions are obvious, such as extension legs on tables to allow for wheelchairs. Others will be added by the librarians as uses and users become clearer.

The "feel" of sound was also important to us. We spent much time on this. Meter readings gave us the maximum acceptable level of sound (40 decibels), but the desirable sensory level, the feel of sound, was much more elusive. The public areas in this library should have some reverberation, but not too much; it should be quiet, but not dead. I'm happy with the results. What most will see as ceiling baffles are really acoustic baffles to achieve and control this feel of sound. There is no ceiling. Above these baffles mechanical equipment, ducts, electrical conduits, and other fittings are what they wanted to be. Without the conventional ceiling, future changes and updating can be carried out inexpensively. Adding conduits for computer terminals is one crude example.

In summary, then, the Metropolitan Toronto Library is a place for diverse and essentially human activities. People will come in out of the rain, the cold, the heat. Some will take short cuts, using the internal "street", and some will ride the elevator. Others will be there to ask the Metro Information staff about welfare cheques, to see a movie, to participate in noon hour concerts, to attend ratepayer's meetings. Many more will see it as a rich and unique resource for the mind, an exciting place in a constant state of becoming. The synthesis we have tried to achieve is only a beginning. The collection, for example, is not fixed, it must grow to meet changing needs. We have tried to make the library work for the patrons groping for new knowledge, and also for the professional and technical staff, largely invisible to the public, who have the responsibility to develop the collection. As a building we hope it will put a smile on faces and give dignity to the mind and imagination.

Over the years the public, the Board, the librarians will evolve their own traditions. These are not for me to define. But of one thing we can be sure: the library is one of the very few institutions dedicated to self-directed learning—and the self-help ethos will be vital to the conservation lifestyle of the future.

Raymond Moriyama

Metropolitan Toronto Library Program of Events

Official Opening, Wednesday, November 2, 1977
8:00 p.m.

Vice-Regal Salute

Introduction of Platform Guests

Mr. Walter G. Cassels, Q.C.
Master of Ceremonies
Chairman, Site and Building Committee

Welcome

Mr. Edward J. Canning
Chairman, Metropolitan Toronto Library Board

Greetings from Metro

Mr. Paul V. Godfrey
Metropolitan Chairman

Greetings from the Province

The Honourable Robert Welch
Minister, Culture and Recreation

Declaration of Opening

The Honourable Pauline M. McGibbon
Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario

Special Presentation

What's in this Library

Mr. John T. Parkhill
Director, Metropolitan Toronto Library Board

Invitation to Tour the Facilities

Mr. Walter G. Cassels, Q.C.

*A. Y. Jackson paintings loaned by the East York
Library Board*

Music by The Brass Company

*First aid volunteered by the St. John Ambulance
Brigade*

*Advertisement for the Toronto
Mechanics' Institute 1871*

*The Reference Library, Toronto Public Library in
Mechanics' Institute Building, 1909*

Toronto Public Library 1911

Cartoon from Grip magazine December 20, 1882

Toronto Mechanics' Institute 1867

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.

This Institute offers to the Inhabitants, Artisans, and Employees of Toronto, a comfortable

READING ROOM,

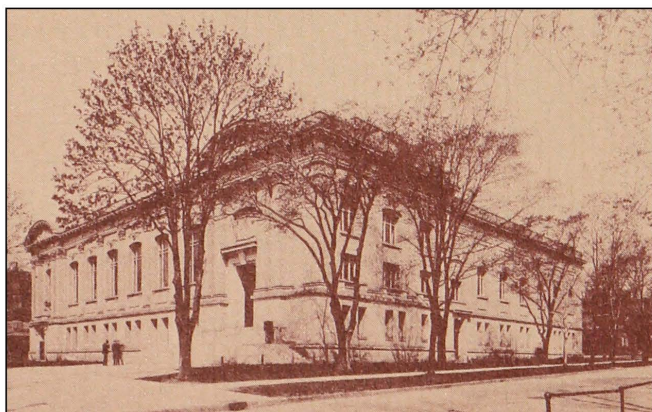
Well supplied with upwards of 600 DAILY and WEEKLY PAPERS, LITERARY and MECHANICAL MAGAZINES and PERIODICALS of England, United States and Canada; also, a circulating

LIBRARY

Of above 7,000 Volumes on HISTORY, BIOGRAPHY, ANTIQUITIES, NATURAL HISTORY, ARTS and SCIENCES, MECHANICAL WORKS, NOVELS, TALES, and

VALUABLE WORKS OF REFERENCE.

The Directors hope to obtain the support of all classes of Society to make the Institute a credit to this "QUEEN CITY OF THE WEST," assuring them no endeavours shall be spared on their part to merit their approbation.



History of the Metropolitan Toronto Library

Books and libraries have always been a part of life in Toronto. Even in the eighteenth century, there were a few highly treasured books which passed from household to household, and were read aloud by guttering candlelight. In 1810 a subscription library was established, but it did not survive the War of 1812 when it was looted by the Americans, and ended ingloriously in an auction sale of odd volumes in 1822.

The Mechanics' Institute

The next attempt at founding a library was more successful. On Christmas Eve, 1830, a small group of men met in the Masonic Hall on Colborne Street to organize a mechanics' institute. Only a few years before, the Mechanics' Institute movement had begun in Great Britain to provide educational opportunities for the urban working class. In Toronto the two most active founders were Joseph Bates, a watchmaker from Yorkshire and James Lesslie, a shopkeeper from Dundee. Like the British institutes, the new organization was to promote adult education by providing a library, lectures and night classes.

From the beginning the Toronto Mechanics' Institute had major financial problems. It was almost entirely dependent on its very low membership fees (five shillings annually in 1830, \$3 in 1882), so that every step had to be considered carefully for possible expense; for example, in 1845 the decision to open the library in the evening involved the purchase of two pairs of brass candlesticks, snuffers, and a "transparent lamp" to hang over the door. By 1846 the Institute had enough money to move from rented premises and to build a second floor above the Court Street Fire Hall, but this was not entirely satisfactory. A lot on the northeast corner of Church and Adelaide Streets was bought at auction from the University of Toronto in 1853 for \$6,529, and the cornerstone of a handsome building was laid the following year before an "immense assemblage". The building was designed by the architectural firm of Cumberland and Storm, who contributed their work without payment, and was most impressive, with a music hall and large lecture room, as well as classrooms and the library. It cost \$48,380.78, an enormous sum for the time, and plunged the Institute into crippling debt. The building had to be rented to the government for offices; the Institute was finally able to take possession in July, 1861. The soirée held to commemorate the opening was a failure because of

"the anticipated troubles with the United States". The Institute seems to have been unlucky in such events; for example, a series of light "entertainments" held in 1870 to raise money to buy books for the library resulted in a net loss of \$77.23.

The Popularity Contest

Financial considerations also influenced the development of the library. In the beginning a small collection of standard works, with emphasis on trades, crafts and popular science, was available for home reading and study in the library. It was not until 1847 that there were even 1,000 books in the collection. The income of the library had a direct relationship with its popularity; the choice and availability of books had to attract and hold members, or the library's meagre budget would be reduced still further. Rules were not enforced for fear of losing members; ladies made "a trysting place of the library"; theft, mutilation and overdue books were common. In 1871 the *Daily Leader* thundered editorially on the need "to cleanse this Augean stable of a library". Gradually the original educational aims were weakened, as more and more novels with titles such as *Between two sins*, *Married beneath him*, or *Not wisely but too well* were added to the collection. Popular demand for such fiction, especially by "lady subscribers", was frequently deplored, but had to be satisfied if the Institute were to remain financially solvent. By 1880 more than 80% of the books circulated by the library were "novels and tales". Of course many of these books had merit; one of the first books for which heavy demand forced the purchase of a second copy was *The mill on the floss*. The second copy was bought in June, 1860, less than two months after the book first appeared in England.

There were other problems connected with book selection besides financial pressure. Each year the library committee struggled with the subscription list of magazines and newspapers to satisfy the demands of the members. In 1872, for example, there was a particularly lively discussion which resulted in the substitution of the *Belfast Whig* for the *Dublin Freeman*. In this, as in the selection of books, the Institute was willing to follow popular taste. One kind of book, however, was not acceptable. In 1862 the works of Jonathan Swift were keenly examined. The library committee reported that they were "generally of an uninteresting character, and of an immoral tendency", and were "filled with obscene

History of the Metropolitan Toronto Library

language"; the Board, which had requested their purchase, withdrew its recommendation.

A Free Library?

By 1882 the Toronto Mechanics' Institute library contained 10,500 books, with an annual circulation of about 27,000. For the last twenty years the membership had remained close to 1,000, while the population of the city had grown to about 100,000. Although the Institute now received an annual government grant of \$400, it still laboured under major financial difficulties. Everything had been tried to raise money, from selling its building to the government (it was bought back six years later) to renting space on the walls of the reading room for advertisements at a dollar a foot (care was taken that the advertisements be not objectionable and as far as possible ornamental). Still there seemed to be no solution. Toronto needed a new organization with new vigour and proper financial support.

The man who saw this most clearly was John Hallam, a former Lancashire millhand but now a very successful Toronto dealer in wools and leather. Hallam was a city alderman for many years, and had been treasurer of the Mechanics' Institute, so that he was well aware of the Institute's problems. He saw the solution as the establishment of a new institution supported by municipal taxes, and in 1881 began a campaign for a free public library. The Ontario Free Libraries Act, modelled on British legislation, was passed in 1882, the first such act in Canada. At the municipal elections on New Year's Day, 1883, a bylaw establishing a public library was presented to Toronto voters.

Hallam campaigned vigorously, but many people disagreed in principle with public funds being used for the circulation of recreational reading. Goldwin Smith, who was the leader of Toronto's intellectuals, objected on these grounds; Mayor A.R. Boswell also objected, but less on principle than for financial reasons. The mayor "regretted that the Free Library question had ever come up; they could have done without it." There were many letters for and against the library in the newspapers; one effusion began:

*What is this building, father?
This, my son, is the celebrated free library.
Why is it called a free library, father?
Because everybody is compelled to subscribe.
What was the origin of it?
Ex-Ald. Hallam's vanity.*

What good is it, father?

To increase the taxes and circulate sensational novels . . .

More people voted on the bylaw than had ever voted in any previous bylaw in Toronto, and it was passed by a vote of 5,437 to 2,932. The Toronto Public Library was now officially in existence, with an appropriation of \$50,000 from the city. Controversy surrounded the appointment of the first library board, but in February, 1883, the first board meeting was held. Hallam, as chairman, made a long speech about the aims and aspirations of the new institution; his ideas became the guidelines for the formative years of the library.

Emphasis is on Canadiana

If the Mechanics' Institute had been founded to provide vocational reading for the workingman, the original aim of the Toronto Public Library, as outlined by Hallam, was to encourage Canadian nationalism. In the 1880's there was a growing consciousness of being in a new country whose traditions and uniqueness must be preserved and cherished. In Hallam's view, the library was to play a central role in fostering pride and spreading knowledge about all things Canadian. The selection of books was to emphasize Canadiana; the chief librarian was to be a bilingual scholar, capable of editing and publishing the rare and unique Canadian books and manuscripts that were to be part of the collection. Of course, there were to be other books as well; "a grand foundation of solid, standard fact literature, with a choice, clean-minded, finely imaginative superstructure of light reading, that would avoid the sensuously sensational—the garbage of the modern press." Hallam also had ideas about the library building. "It should be spacious, neat and comprehensive in design, every detail being adjusted with a view to practical utility rather than effect; mere architecture and ornamentation should be studiously avoided, as entailing great expense, and as being altogether unnecessary to the successful carrying on of the work of the institution."

The Toronto Public Library is Established

The new library, however, did not have to erect a building. In March the Mechanics' Institute offered all its property to the Public Library; this offer was accepted, and the Mechanics' Institute ceased to exist. The Public Library now had a building and

History of the Metropolitan Toronto Library

collection of books. Its Board then struggled with the problem of selecting a chief librarian. There were a number of candidates; the final choice of James Bain was a compromise, resulting from "a misunderstanding between the Grits and Tories on the Library Board." A former bookseller, Bain served the library well until his death in 1908. After his appointment he was sent to Europe to buy books for the library; he bought more than 20,000, at an average price of \$1.05.

On March 6, 1884, the fiftieth anniversary of the incorporation of Toronto, the Toronto Public Library was formally opened in the renovated Mechanics' Institute building. The president of the University of Toronto gave the main address, the Lieutenant-Governor declared the building open, the band of the Royal Grenadier Guards played, and the library was "crowded to the doors by a very happy audience representative of Toronto's foremost citizens." The staff consisted of Bain with a salary of \$2,000, his assistant librarian (who was the former librarian of the Mechanics' Institute, paid \$1,000), a cataloguer (\$450), a caretaker (\$400), two female assistants (\$260 each), a messenger (\$208), and part-time help (\$500). The book stock consisted of more than 27,000 volumes, divided almost equally between the reference and circulating collections. It included 1,900 volumes given by John Hallam; the Hallam collection, especially strong in Canadiana, is now a part of the Metropolitan Toronto Library.

After the euphoria of its opening, The Toronto Public Library settled down to cope with the routines of day-to-day operation. many of its problems were distressingly familiar. Except for its first year its funds were small; the annual book budget was only a few thousand dollars. In the 1890's, serious friction about finances developed between the Library Board and the City Council, culminating in 1900 when the Library Board was forced to sue the city to get sufficient funds to remain open. The library building was also hopelessly inadequate. Quarters were cramped and inconvenient. Ventilation was so bad that patrons' complaints led to an examination by the medical health officer. Yet even with its limited funds and overcrowded conditions, the library began several important services in the old building. The acquisition of non-Canadian books in languages other than English began with the addition of books in French and German in 1885, in Italian in 1888, and in Spanish in 1894. Service to the handicapped was started in 1895 with the acquisition of 70 books in

Braille. And of course it must always be remembered that the Toronto Public Library from the first operated branches as well as its central library.

A New Central Library in 1909

In 1903 the American steel magnate and philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie, offered Toronto \$350,000 for a new central library and three branch libraries, on condition that the city would provide land and guarantee \$35,000 a year to support the library. Although the Toronto Trades and Labour Council protested against having anything to do with Carnegie because of his labour practices, the gift was accepted. The City Council and the Library Board then proceeded to quarrel over the site of the new central library; the Council wanted it downtown, while the Library Board favoured an uptown location. The Library Board won, and in 1904 a lot on the corner of College and St. George Streets was bought for \$75,000. A competition was held for the selection of an architect, who had to be practising in Canada; it was won by Messrs. Wickson & Gregg and A.H. Chapman, associated architects. The first two suggestions in the terms of the competition were:

1. *The building is for a library and is to be planned for library work. It is to be essentially a work place and not a show place.*
2. *No convenience of arrangement is to be sacrificed for mere architectural effect.*

The cornerstone of the new library was laid on November 27, 1906, by the chairman of the Library Board, Sir Glenholme Falconbridge, in the presence of the Lieutenant-Governor; and the building was formally opened on October 28, 1909. The opening was a quiet affair with many short speeches, including one by the new chief librarian, Dr. George Locke, who unveiled a portrait of his predecessor, Dr. Bain.

This library, which cost \$275,000, was the southern part of the building occupied by the Metropolitan Toronto Library until 1977. It was called the Public Reference Library, although there was a circulating library and a children's room on the ground floor, in the area used in 1977 for the Languages Centre and the Toronto Room. There was also an art and newspaper room (in 1977 the Bibliographic Centre), and an art gallery on the top floor (in 1977 the Fine Art Section). But the glory of the building was the reference reading room (in 1977 the General Information Centre and the Social Sciences Section)

*Card urging support of Public Library Bylaw 1882
Stackroom, Toronto Public Library 1911*

with a small alcove on the north for the cataloguing department. Even in 1977 when partitions and lighting not envisioned by the architects had become necessary, it remained impressive, as did the magnificently proportioned facade.

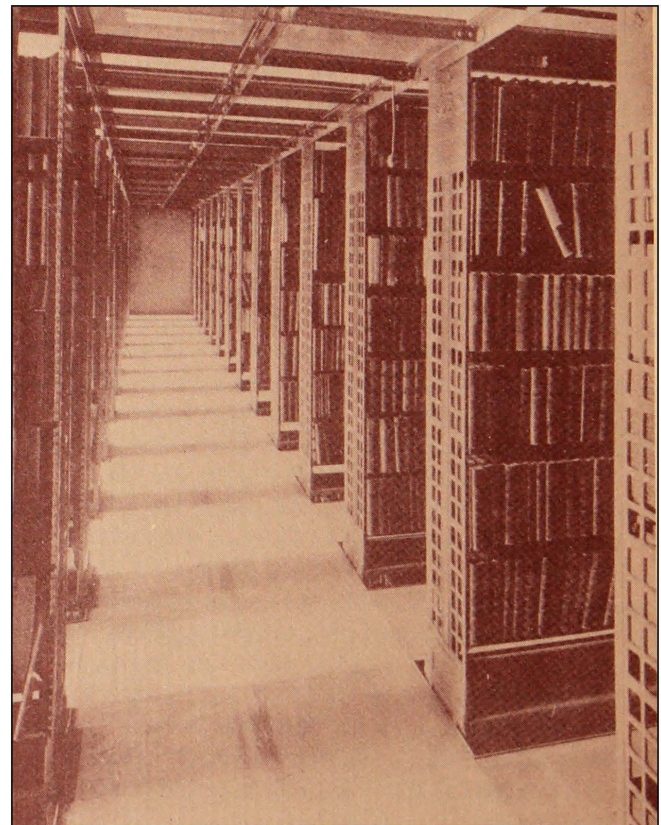
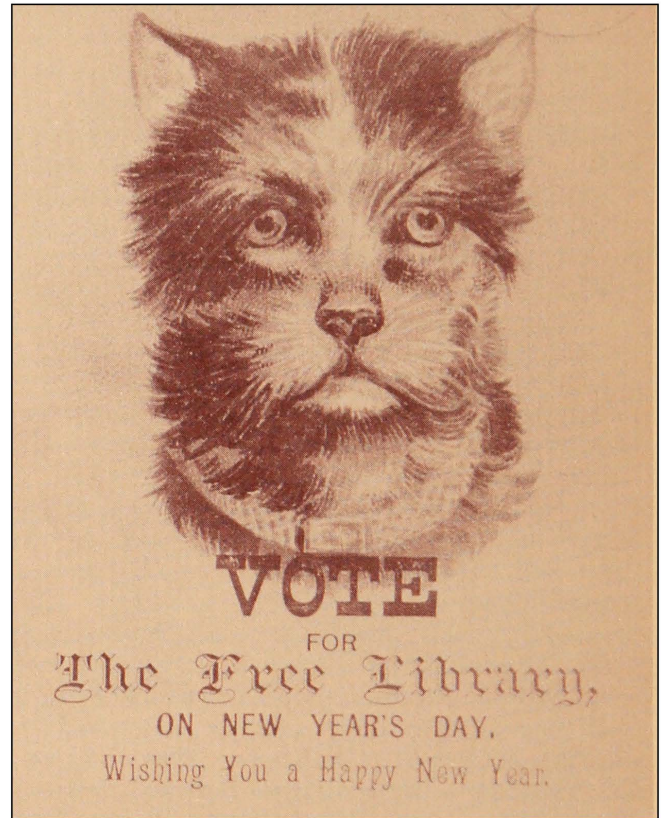
For the next few years the Toronto Public Library concentrated its attention on the building of branch libraries and the expansion of library service throughout the city. There was, however, steady progress in developing the collections and improving service in the central building. In 1910 reference telephone service was begun. The following year the Municipal Reference Branch was opened in the City Hall, the first such library in Canada. As the years went by, however, this library became much more of a business than a municipal library, and in 1927 it was closed and its collection was transferred to the Downtown Branch.

In 1911 also, John Ross Robertson gave the Library his collection of more than 4,400 paintings, engravings and prints of early Canada. The chairman of the Library Board called this "the most notable gift since the foundation of the library"; it is now one of the treasures of the Metropolitan Toronto Library. A music library was opened in 1915 on the ground floor with the circulating, children's and periodical rooms. Specialized service in music has continued unbroken to the present. In 1928 the City Council requested that the Reference Library open on Sundays; there were a number of protests and a lively controversy developed, but Sunday service was begun in October of that year with very limited response.

The collections continued to grow from a total of 97,788 books in 1909 to 222,782 twenty years later. Standards in book selection were maintained as the Library lived up to the quotation from Seneca proudly carved over the St. George Street entrance, *Libros non refert quam multos sed quam bonos habere* (It is not important how many books you have, but rather how good they are). Use of the Library also increased greatly; for example, use of reference books more than trebled between 1909 and 1929.

Expansion and Extension

Expansion of collections, services and use had the inevitable result of serious overcrowding in the building. In 1922 the situation improved somewhat when the children's library moved to the Boys and



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Girls House next door, and a newspaper storage room was built in the third floor. This relief, however, was only temporary—more drastic measures were needed to provide essential space, especially for the circulating, order and cataloguing departments. In 1927 the City Council approved the expenditure of \$400,000 for a new wing extending northward on St. George Street. This extension, designed by Wickson & Gregg and Chapman & Oxley, included the Central Circulating Library with its innovative Kipling Room for young people (in 1977 the History and Literature Sections), the Technical Services Department, the Treasure Room to house the Library's rare Canadiana (in 1977 the Acquisitions Department, still with bars on the windows!), a picture gallery for the J. Ross Robertson Collection (in 1977 the Central Library Theatre). It was opened on April 21, 1930. The *Globe's* account of the opening was headlined, "Foe of Communism seen in Libraries as New One Opened", because Dr. Locke in his address equated libraries with intelligence, "which makes the libraries a greater foe to Communists, and much more hated by these people, than ever the greatest police force could be."

The new wing was planned in a time of economic optimism and opened in the midst of depression. In the 1930's every seat in the reference reading room was taken, as the unemployed desperately tried to fill their empty days or to learn a new trade. In the circulating library long queues stretched to the main desk near the door from the lower level up the stairs and right across the library. Yet even in the depths of the depression the Toronto Public Library continued its valuable publication program; for example, its annual *Canadian catalogue of books*, which began in 1922, appeared regularly until it was superseded by the National Library's *Canadiana* in 1950. To celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the incorporation of Toronto in 1934, the Library published its famous *Bibliography of Canadiana*, compiled by Frances M. Staton and Marie Tremaine. Technical improvements were also introduced; in 1937 "a micro-photo-recording device" was installed, the first in any public library in Canada, and in the following year photographic copying services were offered to the public.

The opening of the Hallam Room of Business and Technology in 1941 was an important new development in reference services. Except for the Music Library, there was no subject specialization in either the reference or circulating divisions. When the Hallam Room opened (in the area occupied in 1977 by the Bibliographic Centre) it contained 5,000 books

on the open shelf, many new periodicals and extensive current files of newspaper clippings and other ephemeral material. Specialization of a different sort began in 1947 with the establishment of a film library. Seven years later the Library entered another non-book field, when the Music Library was given a collection of classical phonograph recordings by the Chief Librarian, Dr. Charles R. Sanderson.

By 1956 when Mr. H. C. Campbell became chief librarian, Toronto was a vastly different city than it had been before the war. The population of the Toronto metropolitan area was increasing rapidly, and was also changing. Many of the newcomers did not share the predominant British Protestant tradition, a tradition that was naturally reflected in the library's collections. Toronto was becoming a cosmopolitan city in which many cultures blended. The Library established a foreign languages collection at the Queen and Lisgar Branch, which was moved to the Parkdale Branch in 1963, and to the Central Library in 1969, where it became the Languages Centre with a collection of books and periodicals in more than 70 languages as well as modern audio-visual facilities for language learning.

The Metro Library System Unfolds

Surrounding the city proper were the suburbs, consisting of twelve separate autonomous municipalities, each developing its own library system to provide service to its burgeoning population. In 1953 a metropolitan system of government was established, with each municipality retaining many powers while sharing or delegating others to the new municipality of Metropolitan Toronto. Libraries remained the responsibility of the local municipality. There was some cooperation among the systems, and a Library Trustees' Council of Toronto and District was formed. This Council commissioned Dr. Ralph Shaw, Dean of the Library School at Rutgers University, to survey the libraries of Metropolitan Toronto. Shaw's report, published in 1960, made a number of recommendations, of which three were of particular importance to the Central Library. He recommended that a Metropolitan Library Board be established, and that about one-half of the cost of maintaining and servicing the reference collections of the Toronto Public Library be paid for by others than the taxpayers of the City of Toronto. He also recommended that "The Toronto Public Library should merge its reference and circulation departments into a single subject-departmentalized

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library and should move to a new building in a more central location." Shaw's report was to become the blueprint for development for the next decade.

The subject division recommended by Shaw was already beginning when his report came out. The Library had once more outgrown its building, and a new addition, designed by Fisher, Tedman, Fisher, was opened in 1960. It was occupied by book stacks, the Bibliographic Centre (in 1977 the religion and philosophy reading room of the Social Sciences Section), and the Baldwin Room of rare Canadiana. At the same time the Fine Art Section was opened on the refurbished third floor of the old building. In the next six years the entire Library was divided by subject. By 1966 there were nine subject sections—Literature, History, Social Sciences, Fine Art, Music, Theatre, Science and Technology, Business, and Municipal Reference. There were three sections covering all subjects—the Languages Centre, the Baldwin Room, and the General Information Centre. The Bibliographic Centre maintained a giant union catalogue containing the holdings of the City and Borough libraries and a number of special libraries, as well as of the Central Library itself. The film needs of the area were provided by a cooperative organization called the Audio-Visual Services of Metropolitan Libraries, Inc., which was housed in the Central Library building.

This reorganization of the Library was complicated by the nature of the College Street building. It was difficult to fit the new sections into space designed for a library divided by the traditional reference and circulating functions. Moreover, the building itself was much too small for the collections and services of a modern library. The provision of stacks for 300,000 volumes which had looked so optimistic in 1909, was hopelessly inadequate, even with the additions of 1930 and 1960. Reading rooms were overcrowded, and ventilation was once more a problem. The Music Library moved out to its own building, the former home of Premier Howard Ferguson, to be joined by Audio-Visual Services in 1969; and the Business and Municipal Reference Libraries were established in the new City Hall.

Metro Regional Library Board Appointed

Meanwhile, further examination had been made of the workings of the metropolitan system, and in 1966 the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto Act was amended. In the same year the Public Libraries Act

provided for the establishment of regional library boards. Early in 1967 the Metropolitan Toronto Library Board was appointed under the provisions of these two acts, and John T. Parkhill was appointed the first Director by the Board. The amended Metropolitan Toronto Act (Bill 81) permitted the new Board to take over any public libraries in Metropolitan Toronto that it required for its purposes and in 1968 the Metropolitan Toronto Library Board assumed financial and administrative control of the Central Library from the Toronto Public Library Board. After 53 years as a Mechanics' Institute and 85 years as part of the Toronto Public Library, the Central Library now entered a new era.

Like its predecessors, the Metropolitan Toronto Library Board has other functions besides the operations of the Central Library. Much effort has been spent on the development of its regional responsibilities, but at the same time the Board has been very conscious of the needs of the Central Library. The most obvious need, of course, was a new building. In 1969 the Board applied to the Metropolitan Toronto Council for \$2,000,000 for a site and \$15,000,000 for the new library. The Toronto architect, Raymond Moriyama, was asked to make a feasibility study in 1970, and discussions of the specific requirements of the building began in earnest. Land at the corner of Yonge and Asquith Streets was bought in 1972 for \$7,000,000, and in 1973 Moriyama was appointed architect. At the end of 1973, the Council of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto approved the concept and general plans for the new library, with the request that the Library Board hear further representations from the North Midtown Planning Group. On a blustery day in February, 1975, the ground breaking ceremony was held. Now, on November 2, 1977, the building is officially opened.

As the Metropolitan Toronto Library moves into its new building, we take with us books from three main sources. We take several thousand volumes from the old Mechanics' Institute, mostly magazines and newspapers. We take hundreds of thousands of books and other materials from the Toronto Public Library and the Metropolitan Toronto Central Library. We take with us also our memories of past successes and failures. But most important, we take with us a great tradition of public service. Books and libraries have always been a part of life in Toronto.

*By Edith G. Firth,
Head Canadian History Department*

