



THE BEGINNINGS OF THE LIBRARY OF YORK UNIVERSITY

In seeking to describe the beginning of a university library, it is first necessary to consider some part of the vast world of books in which it finds itself. Some thousands of years ago the writer of Ecclesiastes commented "of making many books there is no end". And so it has proved. It has been particularly apparent in our own day as the geometric rate of production of the world's presses in the twentieth century has mounted, until now it is predicted that before 1980 there will be issued over one million volumes annually throughout the world. No library can hope to select from this mass all the worthwhile materials it would have if it would anticipate all the needs of its community; thus, no library can ever expect to be complete in itself. If the problem of the acquisition of materials is great in older and well established institutions, it is yet much greater in the newer libraries such as York, for not only must they cope with current materials but they must also endeavour to build up their collections from among the 50 million worthwhile volumes now estimated to be extant. It seems obvious, then, that both old and new institutions must cooperate in sharing the resources of their libraries and that if the research and teaching obligations of the combined faculties of a group of physically related universities are to be fulfilled, then individual libraries must assume responsibility for collecting in certain areas and the resulting total resources must be made available to all members of the cooperating institutions. A further incentive to this kind of institutional cooperation lies in the fact that it is now possible to predict that future sophistication of the techniques of inexpensive reproduction and dissemination will develop so that marginal materials need not be added to the holdings of all libraries but yet can be quickly made available by one library to all others. This is

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not to say, however, that the burden of collecting in some kind of depth can be left to a few institutions, but, rather, that it must be realized that if smaller libraries would share as equals in such cooperative ventures then they must add to the holdings of their own libraries at costs scarce dreamed of in the past history of library development. Looking then to the future, York can prepare to build on what it has developed in the past and to continue to strive first to care for the wants of its own undergraduates, second to continue collecting in discrete areas in graduate fields and in the areas of professorial research and finally to establish its policies, procedures and facilities in a manner which might best fit in with what can be foreseen of the obligations of the Library to the future of world scholarship. It is against this background that the report on the first years of the York University Library should be considered. Much of what the Library has done has been determined by events beyond its control and outside of its own University. Much of the future will be determined by the way and to the extent that the Library recognizes and adapts to its surroundings.

Unlike many of the other departments in the University, the Library of York University came into existence not in 1959 but rather in July of 1960 with the arrival of the first Librarian, Mr. Douglas Grant Lochhead. On hand when he came to the University were some unprocessed materials, most of which he had ordered prior to his arrival. Acquisition and cataloguing procedures were immediately instituted and it is a measure of the Librarian and the small staff which he immediately began recruiting, that in September of 1960 when the first students arrived at Falconer Hall

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(York's building on the University of Toronto campus) they found available for their use the beginnings of a library. This included reference materials and some other books which had been chosen to support the first year courses of study offered by the University. Through that first academic year, books and staff were added to the Library, so that by the fall of 1961 the staff totalled seven and the Library had a catalogued collection of over 7,000 books and periodicals. It was in 1960 that the York Library became a depository for Canadian Federal documents.

During this first year, many important policy decisions were reached and some part of the character of the future university library emerged. As was stated by Mr. Lochhead in September of 1961: "It is perhaps obvious to say that the Library will evolve as the University itself grows. As I see it, this evolution will parallel York's distinctive pattern of education, and the nature of its library collections, services, staff will be influenced by the particular York concept of liberal education. ... I believe the first task of this Library is to amass a basic collection of books to support the curriculum."

It was also decided in this year that the York University Libraries, insofar as possible, would follow the system of book classification which was developed and is used by the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C. This decision has enabled the York Libraries to take advantage of the tremendous cataloguing economies which are available through the Library of Congress mainly in the matter of being able to purchase from this, the national library of the United States, catalogue cards which can easily be adapted for use in the York Libraries. It also established a kinship among York, the Library of Congress and the large number of libraries around the world which make use of this system.

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Indeed, it is in this latter concept that the greatest advantage might accrue to all concerned, in that a common background is thus provided for cooperation among libraries, aided by computers and other mechanical means.

It was during this early period that the University of Toronto agreed that by reason of York's temporary affiliation with the University of Toronto all faculty and staff at York would have full privileges in the Toronto Libraries until June of 1965. It was also agreed that undergraduates who enrolled at York up to September of 1962 would have, during the entire period of their undergraduate studies, the same privileges in the University of Toronto Libraries as University of Toronto undergraduates. It would be difficult to overestimate the benefits York University has derived from this arrangement.

In August of 1961, the Library moved with the University from Falconer Hall to its own campus at Glendon Hall, an eight-six acre estate some miles distant. At this new location the Library was housed in the original mansion on the estate and was assigned some 6,000 square feet on the main floor of the building which were adapted to contain an open stack, reading rooms and office space and almost 3,000 square feet of storage space in the basement of the building.

In a report to the President commenting on the year 1961-1962, Mr. Lochhead stated " ... the main activity of the Library staff was devoted to the development of the book collections and the provision of adequate library service. Considerable time was spent in the training of new personnel, in the establishment of effective and economical routines for the acquisition and classification of books and periodicals, and in the planning of a new library building." During the year, the collection

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grew to 14,882 catalogued books and periodicals and the staff increased to eleven, of whom seven were professional librarians.

During 1962-1963 the Library staff was increased to fifteen, of whom eight were professional librarians. In this year 10,763 volumes were added to the Library holdings: Thus, in June of 1963 there were in the Library 25,645 catalogued volumes. The total number of periodicals received was 510.

In 1962 a standing committee of the Senate of the University was established to advise and work with the Librarian. It has continued to meet regularly since that time.

Two other outstanding events in the life of the Library that occurred in this year should also be recorded.

In October of 1962 construction was begun on a separate library building for the Glendon campus. Planned to service the needs of the community at Glendon College only, this air-conditioned building of 34,500 gross square feet was designed to house a total of 125,000 volumes in an open stack arrangement and to contain 210 seats. Included in the plans were a reserve book reading area, a section for the display of current periodicals, a rare book room, a browsing area, a room for the storage and playing of audio materials and a study for group discussion. As many carrels as possible were incorporated into the plans.

In August of 1962 the University was visited by Dr. Stephen McCarthy, Director of Libraries at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Dr. McCarthy had been asked by the University to prepare a report on the direction in which library developments at York should proceed. He had been informed that York University had decided to have two campuses; the one a relatively small residential college which would be located at

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Glendon Hall; the other a multi-faculty university which was to be located on a 475 acre estate in northwest metropolitan Toronto. The latter was expected to accommodate 7,000 students by 1970 and over 15,000 students by 1980. He had also been told that the large university would be composed of an undergraduate teaching division organized by colleges, a graduate school, an evening college and a series of professional schools. He had been asked to consider the nature, extent, cost and tentative scheduling of the library facilities, collections and services that should be provided.

In September of 1962, Dr. McCarthy submitted his 32-page report to the President. In it he agreed basically with Mr. Lochhead's views on future plans and recommended that a library system should be organized with a unified central administration but with a planned and limited pattern of decentralization for service to readers. He discussed alternative approaches to the problem of construction schedules for library buildings and suggested that on the large university site it might be most advantageous to commence with a Science Library which could be used until 1969 or 1970 when the main University Library would be built. He projected a library growth rate through 1980 which would ensure that the libraries would at that time contain some 870,000 volumes and he predicted that by 1980 this would have cost the University a total of \$13,969,000 for materials and staff.

Quite quickly after this, Dr. McCarthy's recommendations were accepted in principle by the University, and the staff of the Library began planning for an eventual Science Library of a total gross footage of 87,130 square feet, which would house on two levels 400,000 books and 745 seats and which would serve the University as its main library until 1969 or 1970, after which time it would hold only materials in the field of the sciences.

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This building was scheduled for opening in the summer of 1965.

It was my honour to be appointed the Director of Libraries in March of 1963.

In October of 1963, the Leslie Frost Library was dedicated on the Glendon campus and much of the staff and all of the collections were moved into the building. The new Library proved itself more than adequate and as has been noted in the 1962-1963 report of the Librarian of the Leslie Frost Library, "The Library's greatest asset is its atmosphere which appears to encourage serious study, quiet behaviour and respect for the Library's purpose without creating a forbidding impression of formality. This has been achieved by a combination of design, furnishing and operation, and it is gratifying indeed that this vital objective of the original building programme has been accomplished with such success."

During 1963-1964 detailed planning for the second library in the York complex proceeded. Also during this year the staff grew to a total of thirty-three people, of whom eleven were professional librarians. 27,159 volumes were added to the University holdings, making a total of 52,804 volumes which were ready for use by June of 1964. Current periodicals received grew to a total of 947. During this period the assimilation and training of new staff members proceeded apace and the Catalogue and Acquisitions Departments drew up and implemented new policies and routines caused in large part by the preparation of materials for a second library on the main campus. In this year the Serials Committee of the Library worked out a policy for the treatment of serials at York and after the basic decisions had been approved, the Catalogue Department, drew up a Cataloguing Procedure, and in cooperation with the Serials Librarian, a routine for handling this material from its arrival in the department

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until its release for shelving. Also on the basis of a report by the Binding Committee of the Library, procedures were worked out and policies established for binding both monographs and serials.

Now, in the Spring of 1965, it is possible to predict that by June of this year the Library will contain about 98,000 volumes, which will be serviced by a staff of 48 people of whom 18 will be professional librarians. It is looking forward to the occupation of its second library building in August of 1965, to the transfer of most of its staff to the new campus, to the addition of its 100,000th volume, and to the manifold challenges of the future.

This, then, is a brief account of the beginnings of the Library of York University. What has been done, particularly in the matter of the selection of the books and periodicals added to the Library, has served us well as a base upon which the multi-million volume Library of the future can be planned. It should also be remarked that a collection of books, no matter how well chosen, cannot be of much use to a university unless sound acquisition and cataloguing policies and procedures have been laid down. These are vital adjuncts to the composition of a library. They form it into a useable tool, give coherence to the collections, and make them readily available for the use of the community which the library would serve. York has been well served in this matter by its Library staff, for no book has been added to the collections which has not received consideration as to its suitability for inclusion, and as full cataloguing treatment as was deemed necessary for its complete assimilation into the collection. Mention should also be made of the services rendered to the University by the Circulation and Reference Departments of the Library. Their aid,

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granted freely to all who sought it, helped in no small manner to recompense for the obvious discrepancies in library holdings. Perhaps the greatest tribute I can pay to the men and women who have been instrumental in the founding of the Library is to remark that surely they were given the gift as pictured by Yeats to see:

"In all poor foolish things that live a day,
Eternal Beauty wandering on her way."

Prepared by Thomas F. O'Connell
Director of Libraries
York University

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