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Beckman, Margaret; Langmead, Stephen; and Black, John. *The Best Gift: A Record of the Carnegie Libraries in Ontario. Toronto and London: Dundurn Press, 1984. Pp. 192. Illustrations. \$29.95*

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ville de Montréal n'est pas, sur le plan des activités tertiaires, en concurrence avec les autres zones de la région métropolitaine, mais plutôt avec les autres centres-villes nord-américains. Avec les autres zones de la région, le centre-ville de Montréal entretiendrait un rapport de complémentarité: les activités manufacturières et commerciales des zones périphériques seraient liées en bonne partie à la diversité des activités tertiaires du centre-ville et le tertiaire moteur du centre-ville reposerait sur le dynamisme industriel des zones périphériques de la région métropolitaine et des autres régions du Québec

Le document qui contient trente-huit (38) tableaux est très riche en données sur chacune des zones de la région métropolitaine de Montréal. C'est son point fort. De plus, les tendances révélées par ces données, sont mises en relation avec celles observées dans les grandes villes nord-américaines, et plus particulièrement Toronto et Vancouver. Cependant, l'étude reste très descriptive. L'analyse des facteurs explicatifs n'y est pas approfondie et les conséquences des tendances dégagées sont à peine esquissées. Enfin, ces tendances ont été calculées sur un terme assez court, soit dix (10) ans (1971-1981). Il eut été intéressant de situer de manière plus détaillée l'arrière-plan historique des mutations économiques mises en lumière.

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Beckman, Margaret; Langmead, Stephen; and Black, John. *The Best Gift: A Record of the Carnegie Libraries in Ontario*. Toronto and London: Dundurn Press, 1984. Pp. 192. Illustrations. \$29.95

*The Best Gift: A Record of the Carnegie Libraries in Ontario* is an interesting review of the grants provided to Ontario communities by the American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie (and later the Carnegie Corporation of New York). The funds, which were awarded between 1901 and 1917, supported the establishment of public libraries. The book was written for several reasons: to record part of Ontario and Canada's heritage as well as the history of libraries; to raise awareness of the Carnegie libraries and thus prevent insensitive renovation and demolition of the buildings; to signal the authors' appreciation for the Carnegie libraries that they have patronized; and to explore a research subject shared by the three authors. The final stimulus for producing the book came from the Province of Ontario: the volume was published in 1984, the year of Ontario's Bicentennial. The publisher, Dundurn Books, is well known for publishing works on Canadian heritage.

The major primary sources consulted were microfilms of correspondence relating to library funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the annual reports of Ontario's Department of Education, and archival holdings of some of the Carnegie libraries, including local Library Board minutes. The Carnegie Corporation's microfilms contain letters written to and by James Bertram, who was Carnegie's secretary and the administrator of the library grants. This documentation is a rich but relatively unexploited record of the requests made for library funds. Its use makes accessible new material on the history of over 100 libraries, to the benefit of local historians researching community development across Ontario.

In addition to presenting detailed accounts of the establishment of individual institutions, *The Best Gift* offers insights into the evolution of a grant program's delivery. Originally, Carnegie grants were given if the community provided a site and guaranteed annual operating support for the new facility (usually a percentage of the capital grant). Several years of experience with projects that were poorly designed or that overran their budgets led Carnegie (or Bertram) to require that the building's plans be submitted for approval prior to tendering. In 1911, to assist communities in satisfying Bertram's expectations, a leaflet entitled *Notes on Library Building* [sic], with sample floor plans and general advice to library planners, was sent to each grant recipient. The provincial government was involved in the Carnegie grants through its Inspector of Public Libraries, who interpreted Ontario's library legislation to Bertram and the local communities. After 1905, the Province asked that plans for new libraries be filed with the Department of Education to create an information resource that could be used by other communities. A collection of related publications was added later, together with "lantern slides" and photographs for loan. The increasingly heavy regulation of the grant program, to improve the technical quality of the projects, and the growing influence of the Province in consulting with Bertram on new projects and in providing communities with advisory support are elements that recur frequently in the history of a variety of public and private financial assistance programs.

*The Best Gift* suffers from two major analytical weaknesses. The first is inadequate consideration of the social context of the Carnegie grants. Library development in other provinces (and particularly the small number of grants awarded outside of Ontario) is ignored; the reasons for the tremendous surge in interest in public libraries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is not dealt with; and the discussion of Carnegie's motives in funding libraries is incomplete. Carnegie's belief in anglo-supremacy, for instance, is not mentioned, even though links clearly existed between that view and the funding of libraries in Commonwealth countries and the United States. Perhaps this shortcoming reflects the authors' backgrounds, which lie in library science and architecture, not Canadian history. Mar-

garet Beckman is the Chief Librarian, University of Guelph; Stephen Langmead is a Toronto architect; and John Black is the Associate Librarian and an Associate Professor of Political Studies at the University of Guelph. The three maintain a consulting service for libraries with an international client list.

The other area of weakness is the overemphasis on the role of Bertram and Carnegie's money in the development of each facility, at the expense of recognizing the contributions made by the local population. In some cases, brief reference is made of opposition to library establishment, but these glimpses of local personalities and issues are too rare. Without a broader exploration of local conditions, the significance of the Carnegie grants in the creation of libraries cannot be seen in perspective. In the case of Ottawa's public library, for example, efforts to establish a free public library began in 1895, six years before Carnegie was approached for a grant. Carnegie's financial assistance helped to make the Ottawa facility possible because the City refused to commit capital funds at a time when it was incurring heavy costs for paving streets and other local improvements; however, without the activities of the Local Council of Women and Ottawa's leading citizens and eventually the agreement of City Council, the library proposal would not have been initiated and would never have progressed.

The production values of the book are generally good. There are few typographical errors and visual material complements the text well. Visuals include period interior and exterior photographs, contemporary exterior photographs, floor plans, and photographs of Carnegie and Bertram. The book also incorporates several water colour renderings of library buildings; they convey no unique information, however, and thus are unnecessary. Nominal and geographic indices were compiled, which are helpful for local and urban historians consulting the book. There is no thematic index, unfortunately, which would have been useful for readers studying the grant request process and its revision over the two decades of Carnegie giving in Ontario.

The main users of *The Best Gift*, apart from casual readers, are those interested in urban and local history, the history of libraries and the history of granting agencies. For urban and local historians in particular, the book is a useful starting point for research aimed at uncovering a full, balanced history of cultural institutions in Ontario communities. At the same time that *The Best Gift* answers some questions about Ontario's Carnegie libraries, it raises many more issues by dealing with the grant program in isolation from its historical setting.

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Penman, Margaret, *A Century of Service: Toronto Public Library 1883-1983*. Toronto: Toronto Public Library, 1983. Pp. 102. Illustrations, bibliography. \$5.50.

To write a concise history of the Toronto Public Library (TPL) covering a full century in 100 pages (including more than 100 photographs) is a daunting task. In this well documented study Margaret Penman has achieved an admirable balance. No chronological period or chapter imposes on other eras or topics, and her lively blend of biography and subject matter fortifies the book's unifying thesis about community service.

Over the years TPL has repeatedly been a trend setter in many areas of librarianship. Penman recounts this leadership role in some detail using a variety of primary and secondary sources. The steady development of various special collections reflecting different needs — Canadiana, music, science fiction, audio-visual, multilingual, and children's literature — recurs many times. Transformations in library architecture are vividly recorded in many pictures. Changing patterns of organization that dramatically shaped library design and use are also included. Penman outlines the formation of the Staff Association and the eventual unionization of TPL, a difficult process that has occurred in many urban libraries. The gradual evolution of a fully integrated central library and branch system based on centralized book ordering, cataloguing, and staff training is described, a system that long served as a model for the management of other public libraries in Ontario. Of course, in the field of reference TPL had established a leadership role in Canada long before the transfer of its central library collection to the Metro Toronto Library Board in 1968.

Important personalities that helped stamp their imprint on librarianship are also prominent in Penman's history. Among them are George Locke: a commanding figure who began to organize TPL into an integrated system across Toronto and served as President of the American Library Association in 1926; Charles Sanderson, who planned the military camp libraries in the Second World War, then the rapid development of expanded services after 1945; James Bain, the first chief librarian, who laid the foundation for TPL's valuable Candiana collection; Winifred Barnstead, the head of cataloguing for many years before she became director of the University of Toronto library school in 1928; Lillian Smith, director of children's services for four decades and the driving force behind Boys and Girls House, a library completely devoted to children's services; Henry Campbell, who guided TPL during the dramatic shifting currents in TPL's philosophy of service necessitated by the restructuring of governments in metropolitan Toronto during the 1960s and 1970s.

The emphasis here (as with so many library histories) is on library organization, personalities or leaders, and the library's functional roles. While these ingredients provide