

Dahms, Frederic A. *The Heart of the Country*. Toronto: Deneau Publishers Ltd., 1988. Pp. 191. Illustrations, black and white photographs

William B. Hamilton

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Greenfield, J. Katharine. *Hamilton Public Library 1889-1963: A Celebration of Vision and Leadership*. Hamilton: Hamilton Public Library, 1989. Pp. 139. Illustrations. \$19.95

Katharine Greenfield's history is concerned with the 75 years following the passage of a free public library bylaw in Hamilton in 1889, a period that spanned the late Victorian and modern eras of urban public library service. As with many library histories, the author describes the development of the Hamilton library based on chapters revolving around the tenure of its chief librarians: Richard Lancefield (1889-1902), John Kendrick (1902-1904), Adam Hunter (1904-1921), William Carlton (1921-22), Earl Browning (1922-25), Lurene McDonald Lyle (1926-1940) and Freda Walton (1940-1963). A short personal conclusion updates major changes to 1989.

The growth of Hamilton's library services — the advent of open access for the public to the shelves; the establishment of the Carnegie Library in 1913; the creation of children's services; the expansion to branches in Kenilworth, Barton, Westdale, Locke Street, and the Mountain; new cataloguing and classification systems; the organization of an integrated central library and branch system; the progress of audio-visual departments, school library services, special collections, and public relations — is well documented and balanced within the confines of the chronological structure the author uses.

Major events, celebrated or otherwise, that impacted on Hamilton's library are also examined. Lancefield's disappearance in 1902 under suspicious financial circumstances, provincial Inspector William Carson's 1920-21 report that marked the end of Hunter's term as director, the budget cuts of the Depression years, postwar reconstruction after 1945, the renovation of the central library in 1951-52 and subsequent expansion of city services are all chronicled at some length for the first time.

Although the chief librarians, and a few trustees, emerge most often as the visionaries or leaders, it is not clear what leadership they provided. Near the finish, Greenfield relates leadership to "good planning, dedicated citizen participation in leadership" and "judicious government financing". This is incomplete at best, and I would regard a standard definition of leadership in a management sense to mean the process of influencing the behaviour of members in an organization to fulfil their tasks of setting and achieving goals.

In *Hamilton Public Library 1889-1963*, personal leadership traits such as initiative, originality, knowledge, dedication, or patience are often mentioned, but these characteristics describe what leaders are like, not how they use power to influence decisions or events. Similarly, fundamental leadership styles are alluded to — e.g. authoritarian, democratic, and consultative managerial styles — but style highlights the relationship of leaders and staff, not the development of goals or ways of persuading people to achieve defined ends. Nor is there any indication that Hamilton's leaders practised managerial ideas stemming from scientific management or human relations thinking which dominated administrative texts in the first half of this century.

Despite the lack of clarity concerning leadership, *Hamilton Public Library 1889-1963* is a worthwhile addition to the growing literature dedicated to Canadian library history. There is much to commend in this mostly narrative history, especially the depth of research based on the Hamilton library archives which Greenfield has helped organize. The writing is clear and concise. The illustrations are well chosen. One quarrel readers will present is that bibliographic footnotes are not used and that no reference list is presented to assist researchers.

However, without the patient construction of individual library histories and biographies of chief librarians (history in a microcosm) which

the author provides, it would be difficult to improve our understanding of the development of modern public library systems in urban Canada. Greenfield's efforts in this direction are a valuable contribution.

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Dahms, Frederic A. *The Heart of the Country*. Toronto: Deneau Publishers Ltd., 1988. Pp. 191. Illustrations, black and white photographs.

What do place names such as Bayfield, Duparquet, Georgetown, Hartland, Orangeville, Pubnico and Wroxeter have in common? The perceptive reader, versed in geographical trivia, may well recognize the abovementioned as a list of towns and villages scattered throughout Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes. It is the conclusion of Frederic A. Dahms that communities such as these and their many counterparts "form the heart of the country . . . Canada." At first glance this book gives the appearance of a typical travel treatise. As with all good travel books, it is attractively printed and well illustrated with black and white photographs plus explanatory maps for each chapter. The text is also supplemented with first rate sketches by the author's wife, Ruth Dahms. Throughout, we are taken on an armchair journey from the Great Lakes region of Ontario to the Atlantic coast of the Maritimes. Along the way, approximately 100 "dying" and "rejuvenated" towns and villages are described and subjected to historical and demographic analysis. In the author's own words: "Only by examining the past and contemporary character of [these] towns and villages can we completely appreciate the reasons for the recent changes in historic migration trends, and their implications for the future of our settlement patterns. The history of our villages and hamlets is long and complex. Many have

died but others remain. Some have grown and prospered to become major cities while others have languished.'

It is at this point that Professor Dahms departs from the typical travel book to examine and explore "demetropolitization" — the contemporary movement back to small towns and to the countryside. What are the reasons for this phenomenon? Who are the people who have moved? Where have they resettled and equally important, why? What physical, social and economic impact have they had on rural and small town Eastern Canada? It is in tackling questions such as these that *The Heart of the Country* takes on added significance and meaning. It is also here that Professor Dahms goes well beyond the scope of the typical travel guide.

The book is generally well edited and remarkably error free. This reviewer found the entire book of interest, but two regions, Southwestern Ontario and the Maritimes, had special appeal because of long periods of residence spent in each. The regional coverage is, unfortunately, uneven and it is the Maritimes and more particularly New Brunswick which received "short shrift." On the route taken through New Brunswick, the author missed a number of interesting small towns and villages — e.g., St. Leonard, Grand Falls, Perth-Andover, Florenceville, Woodstock, Maugerville, Jemseg, Sussex, Petitiocodiac, Memramcook and Sackville. Admittedly, several of these are by-passed by the Trans Canada Highway and certainly they do not all merit attention. Yet in omitting a random sample of such towns and villages the book loses something of importance. Mainland Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island are well covered while Cape Breton and Newfoundland are entirely overlooked. One can only hope that the author may one day retrace his steps and redress the balance.

In the final analysis, these omissions, while noteworthy, do not diminish the importance of the book. Urban history can only be fully

understood when we are truly cognizant of the heritage of small town Canada. But beyond this truism the author argues convincingly that there is a future for these small towns and villages. He does so by introducing us to "the burnt out academic refinishing furniture in Mahone Bay, to the retirees in Lions Head, to the busy entrepreneurs of Annapolis Royal." In *The Heart of the Country* he suggests "there is a place for the former Torontonian or Haligonian among the cows and silos of the countryside . . . [or for] the retired executive from London [to be] welcomed in Bayfield."

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Beito, David T. *Taxpayers in Revolt: Tax Resistance During the Great Depression*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989. Pp. ix, 216.

Ladd, Helen F. and John Yinger. *America's Ailing Cities: Fiscal Health and the Design of Urban Policy*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989. Pp. xi, 334.

The economic vitality of cities has been and continues to be of interest to policy makers, politicians, citizens and scholars as they seek to understand municipal fiscal processes: why are city services cut, why are municipal infrastructures allowed to decay and why are taxes continually increasing? Two new publications, Helen F. Ladd and John Yinger's *America's Ailing Cities* and Thomas Beito's *Taxpayers in Revolt* examine these issues from fresh perspectives. Rather than focusing upon such traditional subjects as tax structure or the allocation of funds, these scholars consider how external factors affected local economies and examine the impact of popular responses upon revenue raising initiatives.

Ladd and Yinger scrutinized a voluminous body of municipal economic data to define factors, beyond local budgetary decisions,

that determine fiscal health. Fiscal health, the authors explain, "is the ability of a city to deliver public services to its residences." They continue to explain that "this fiscal health is the balance between a city's ability to raise revenue and the amount it must spend to obtain services of average quality." The authors examine fiscal health by calculating city service responsibilities and measuring them against the revenue raising capacity of municipalities. They conclude that state and federal institutions have a critical impact upon a city's ability to generate revenue. In addition, incentives for infrastructural development, non-resident taxation policies and the division of responsibilities for municipal services between city and state are all factors which bear directly upon the state of a city's fiscal health.

In an exhaustive quantitative analysis, Ladd and Yinger considered the impact of these factors on eighty-six cities between 1972 and 1982. They limited their sample to municipalities with a population of at least 300,000 and to those central to one of the fifty largest major metropolitan areas, and concluded that smaller cities tend to be healthier than larger cities. Primarily, they found that smaller cities had a greater opportunity to benefit from state and federal policies promoting fiscal healthfulness than did the major cities. However, when larger cities received assistance proportional to their size they also prospered. Such an observation underlies Ladd and Yinger's recommendation that states need to devise policies and institutions that will promote municipal healthfulness.

This study is thorough, well-researched, and well-documented; Ladd and Yinger wrote a sophisticated economic analysis of the fiscal condition of America's cities. However, the appeal of this book remains limited to a specialized audience. Its narrative relies heavily upon the professional jargon of the economist in spite of the authors efforts to elucidate it with numerous tables and graphs