

THE DOUGLAS LIBRARY IN 1971

by Hilary Richardson [originally published in 2000]

It was 1971 when the Education Library finally moved from its cramped quarters in the Douglas Library Third Floor Reading Room to the newly completed McArthur Hall on West Campus, at the corner of Union and Sir John A. Approximately 36,000 monographs and journals, 1,000 pamphlets, 500 reels of microfilm, 50,000 microfiche, and 4,000 audio-visual materials were relocated to their new home on the 21st of June. The new library, which had a capacity for 100,000 volumes, measured 18,445 square feet, so there was a great deal of standing room (especially as most of the furniture had not yet arrived). After a fortnight of organizing the library, and coping with minor adversities such as dirty shelves, furniture arriving piece by piece, no hot water, and no cafeteria, by July 5th staff members were at last ready to serve their anxious public, summer Education students.

The new location was described by a staff member of the time as “a resplendent building beyond our fondest dreams” (Marion Knox, quoted in Factotum, July 1971). At the beginning of July, Dean Vernon S. Ready gave a Welcome Party in the Library for the Education Library staff and the McArthur staff and faculty. Honorary visitors were Chief Librarian Donald A. Redmond and Associate Chief Librarian Ted Phillips, from the Douglas Library. An Open House Reception was also held in the Education Library on the 10th of September, attended by staff from Douglas Library and most of the branches.

With the departure of the Education books, the walls of the Reserve Reading Room in Douglas looked bare and forlorn, as the Reserve material (consisting of 11,700 items for 269 courses at the end of the 1970/71 academic year) was now shelved behind the desk. It was therefore decided to move some of the Precataloguing books all the way from the bottom of the library to the top.

The job of bringing the Precataloguing arrearage upstairs fell to the Cataloguing Division, who divided themselves into four shifts according to musical taste. To the background sounds of the record player in the Cage on the 4th stack level, the books were labelled, and the numerical record by which they could be found under author name was arranged. Susan Barsby devised an assembly line plan of attack, which developed specialists in sticking green square labels on front covers, or green rectangular labels on back covers, stamping edges, stapling slips together, etc., etc. Volumes numbered up to 014000 were put on the open shelves around the Reading Room, and the 4S Cage in which the 46,000 or so remaining PRE-CATs were still housed was now opened to the public. Branch library reps., particularly those from Music, Physics, and the Math library, retrieved and signed out a large number of the PRE-CATs originally intended for these branches.

There was some excitement on the labour front in 1971. The Non-Professionals Association (NPA) had officially become Local 1302 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees on July 1st, 1970, and negotiations for a contract had been going on since then, but broke down on Feb. 15th, 1971. In these talks, the Union, consisting at that time of about 190 members, was represented by CUPE rep. Mr. Ed Scott, plus Mrs. Joan Eadie, Mrs. Nancy Leitch, Miss Myra Carr and Miss Bev Heald. The University was represented by Mr. Wright from Personnel, and Mr. Redmond, Mr. Phillips and Miss Blake from the Library.

An emergency union meeting was called. The University's offer was revealed, and a unanimous vote to strike was passed, should no other offer be forthcoming. Defiant CUPE 1302 members waved their signs and placards at a demonstration held at the opening of the new Gymnasium on Union Street. Fortunately, a conciliation officer was appointed by the Department of Labour. After some discussion, the major issues were resolved, and the agreement was eventually accepted by both sides. The contract was ratified on April 12th, and no one seemed to be sorry that there was no immediate further use for the strike placards.

The time was fast approaching for the very first trial of the new computerized circulation system at Queen's. In May, all members of the university community were asked to return the books they had borrowed, for book carding. In June, the C-Dek terminals, manufactured by Colorado Instruments, were installed at the Circulation Desk in Douglas Library. There were two of them, each about the size of a large typewriter, one for checking out books, and the other for recording the return of the book. When a patron brought books to be checked out, the computer card would be taken from the pocket of the book, along with the person's I.D. card. Each would be placed in its corresponding slot of the machine, a series of buttons would be pressed, the computer card would be placed back into the pocket of the book, and the due date stamped manually.

That was the theory of how things would work, at any rate. July 5th, 1971 marked the actual trial of the very first computerized circulation system in the Douglas Library, with all the expected growing pains. The C-Dek proved to be very efficient (with an error rate of less than 1%), but rather over-enthusiastic in the beginning. Circulation staff members found themselves afflicted by flying ID cards, as the ones in use that summer lacked any embossing and, in consequence, were being ejected from the C-Dek too vigorously. In fact, they shot about one foot straight up in the air before landing, sometimes neatly back in place in the C-Dek, sometimes elsewhere. After a weaker spring was installed, staff could finally stop dodging nervously. Although not all of the shelf-list records had been completed, the C-Dek was being used for most Douglas Library transactions by the opening of classes in September.

The C-Dek recorded each transaction onto magnetic tape which was brought over from the Computing Centre in the morning and returned to the Centre at closing time in the evening. It was run through their IBM 360 computer, producing a master record of circulation, and a daily printout. This system was supposed to eliminate much of the filing and also the task of sending out overdue notices, which would be prepared and mailed out from the Computing Centre. Patrons would also be able to see if the book they wanted was signed out, as a daily listing was to be posted on each stack level and on the main floor. There was however a slight drawback, because each listing posted was the summary of the previous day's transactions, since the tapes were sent over to the Computing Centre at 1 a.m. and not worked on until the following day.

The age of the "Government Documents Department" had come to a close in 1971. Since not all the documents were government, it was decided that the area, whose Head was Mr. George Henderson, now a Senior Archivist at Queen's, should now simply be called the "Documents Department". It was located in the former "Old Stacks" area of the Douglas Library (now the Special Collections stacks), but the related U.N. and International Documents collection, a depository for publications of the U.N. and other international agencies, was still in the basement of

Macdonald Hall. In 1971, the Documents Department added a new branch to its empire, the "Documentation Unit", which later changed its name to the "Social Sciences Documentation Section". Located near the Department of Politics, in Room 225 of the Interim Administration Building (later to be known as the St. Lawrence Building), its mandate was to collect and house files of newspaper clippings in the social sciences area, particularly political science. It also was to collect documentation about political parties and pressure groups.

By July of 1971, Professor Hugh Lawford's QUIC/Law project had been installed and was now working in the Law Library. This information retrieval service, which still exists today, much improved and expanded, provided at that time the full text of the Judicial Decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada as found in the Supreme Court Reports from 1923 to 1970. The original meaning of QUIC was "Queen's University Investigative Computing", but users added a "K" to the acronym, so it stuck, and the service is now called QUICKLAW, or just QL.

It was announced in 1971 that Queen's ranked third in interlibrary loan traffic for 1970/71. With a total of 6345 loans and borrowings, Queen's edged out McMaster (5996) and Western (5163), but was behind Ottawa (7479) and Toronto (14,959).

For the first time, on a trial basis, Interlibrary Loans started extending loans to undergraduates (before 1971, only graduate students and faculty members were eligible for this service). Borrowers were cautioned to expect a wait of a minimum of two weeks before their loans would arrive. To qualify for an undergraduate ILL, the item had to be needed for essay or thesis use, and would be borrowed only from other Ontario libraries. Patrons were assured that if the results showed a need for this, the experiment would be extended.

The enrolment at Queen's for the 1970/71 year was 8157, of whom 7074 were undergraduates, and 1083 were graduates. Part-time studies was a comparatively new phenomenon; 204 of the graduate students, but only 128 (or less than 2%) of the undergraduates were part-time.

The library personnel had increased greatly since 1965, when it stood at 90 persons. As of September, 1971, there were 238 employees. In comparison, at present (the year 2000) we have approximately 163 full-time equivalent personnel, to serve a population of 14,217 full-time and 2796 part-time students.

Professionals comprised less than 25% of the library staff in 1971, the official count being 53 professional librarians, and 185 supporting staff. Cataloguing (including the Shelf List Conversion Project) boasted by far the largest department, at 50 people. There were 29 in Orders, 23 in Serials, 17 in Law, 17 in Education, 11 in Health Sciences, 23 in the other branches, 16 in Documents, 15 in Circulation, 10 in Reference, 8 in Reserve, 7 in Administration, 6 in Special Collections, and 6 in Archives. Many of the 1971 personnel had been hired relatively recently, as there had been 91 resignations during the 1970/71 year, 48 promotions, 16 transfers and 124 new arrivals.

To name only a few of the new arrivals, in March Kathleen Moore (later Kathleen Hartley) came as a junior clerk in Documents; in April, Marie French arrived as a junior clerk in Circulation; and in May Heather Houlden (now Heather Woolnough) started as an LT1 in Circulation. In mid-

April, after Local 1302 of CUPE had ratified its contract, the nomenclature for non-professionals changed, with library assistants from now on being referred to as technicians, and junior clerks becoming LT1s (yes, there actually once were LT1s), and so on up the scale.

New faces in the summer included Sylvia Spasoff, who came as a Senior Librarian in the Cataloguing Division. Cheri Dobbs (now of Serials) arrived as an LT1 in Documents, and Linda Kirby (now Linda Bastos of Serials) started as an LT1 in Education. David Pardy (Ronanne Pardy's husband, now Manager of Faculty Resources in the Faculty of Applied Science), began work as an LT4 in the Acquisitions/Search Unit, and Susan Amo (now Susan Office of Archives) as an LT1 in Cataloguing. Stewart Renfrew (now a Queen's University Archivist) was promoted to be an LT5 in the Documentation Unit.

In the remainder of the year, Joyce Dodds and Alan Kirby came as General Librarians in Cataloguing and Documents respectively. Two General Librarians came to the Law Library: Mai M. H. Chen, and Jeffrey W. H. Johnson, an attorney-at-law, who arrived on September 1st, and was soon put in charge of organizing the Reference services. Many new LT1s started work in the Douglas, including Linda Anglin (now of Cataloguing) in Circulation, Lorraine McLaren (now Lorraine Helsby of I.L.L.) in the Order Department, and Bonny Lloyd (now of Stauffer Circulation) in the Reserve Room.

Stuart MacKinnon of Cataloguing was awarded a Junior Arts Bursary for Creative Writing, by the Canada Council, to cover the period from September 1971 to August 1972, when he planned to travel and write. W.F.E. (Bill) Morley, curator of Special Collections at the Douglas Library, had also received a Canada Council in 1969, to work on a bibliographical study of Major John Richardson, a nineteenth century Canadian novelist, poet and historical writer. (In 1967, Mr. Morley had been the recipient of a Centennial Commission grant for his work on bibliographies of Canadian local histories.) Also in 1971, it was announced that Eleanor Martin, who had worked at the Douglas Library from 1967 to 1970, had been appointed Librarian at Canada House, in London, England, with the mandate of developing the small Canada House Library as a means of providing more information about Canada to enquirers in Britain (I'm still in touch with Eleanor; she's now Assistant Registrar at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, England).

The Education Library on the West Campus celebrated its first Christmas in the new building in style. On the evening of December 21st, the staff and faculty of McArthur College put on a party for immediate relatives and friends. It started out to be a "Pot Luck Supper" affair, but ended up being a full-scale banquet complete with turkey and all the trimmings. After dinner, everyone moved into the auditorium, where the grand piano had quite a workout as Christmas songs were sung. Among the entertainment which followed was a play presented by the library technicians of the Education Library. For this spoof play called "Snow White and her Friends", the cast of characters included: Snow White - Jan Richardson, The Queen - Janet Fisher (Janet White), The Mirror - Barb Astbury, The Narrator (and Doc Dwarf) - Linda Kirby (Linda Bastos), Dopey Dwarf - Glenda Shibley, The Prince (alias Woodsman) - Marion Knox. According to reports, the performance was great fun, and everyone seemed to enjoy it.