

## **THE DOUGLAS LIBRARY IN 1969**

by Hilary Richardson [originally published in 1999]

The late 1960s and early 1970s were an incredible time of growth in North American libraries, and the Douglas, plus branch and faculty libraries, was no exception. The half million volume mark had been passed in July of 1966, and in June of 1973 the Queen's University library system would add the millionth volume to its holdings. This meant that the first half million volumes had been accumulated over a period of 125 years (1841-1966), but this number was to double in only 7 years! The scope of the expansion was mind-boggling.

In June of 1969, the 3/4 million mark was reached, and the Queen's Library System was growing at the rate of about 70,000 volumes annually. As a comparison, in 1997/98 19,483 titles (including gifts) were received for the Central Library System (not however including the faculty libraries, or electronic subscriptions). An enormous amount of strain was placed on the cataloguers, especially since cataloguing in the 1960s, before the Library of Congress sent us preprinted catalogue cards, involved immense amounts of typing and filing. After about 1965, it became more and more difficult for the Cataloguing Department to keep up with the vast number of books received, and as a result the backlog in the "Cage" on 4S grew to 60,000 volumes by 1969.

Relatively unfamiliar with cataloguing delays, Queen's University patrons found it extremely frustrating that books ordered two or more years ago could well be stuck in the Cage. Typical of the faculty reaction was the heartrending plea of Dr. G. W. Hay of the Chemistry Department, at a meeting of the Cataloguing Department with branch library staff in March 1969, to have "all Chemistry books processed promptly, if not immediately". Since each department thought that its books should be made a priority, Miss Skeith, Head of Cataloguing, constantly faced a barrage of questions regarding the backlog.

For a time, Acquisitions staff were recruited to help with the backlog. We lugged the NUC and LC volumes from the Bibliography Room down to the Cage, and snapped photos of relevant entries for the cataloguers. In 1968 we used a Polaroid camera, but in 1969 a Pentax 35 mm. camera was acquired for this purpose. Although there was a delay of about 24 hours in printing the entries, the cost was much less, and the pictures were clearer and less glossy. The Polaroid continued to be used for rush cataloguing, however.

Regular book orders had decreased somewhat because of the Blanket Order procedure, but there were also a fairly large number of out-of-print orders searched by the Order Department. If a title was determined to be out-of-print, but still desired by Queen's, second-hand catalogues were checked, and second-hand book sellers were consulted. If these sources failed, a list of "wants" was then sent to the American Antiquarian Book Seller (TAAB). This list would appear in an issue of the Book Seller, and dealers would then make Queen's offers for as many titles as they could supply.

About 42% of out-of-print desiderata advertised in this publication would eventually be acquired.

Microfilm collection holdings in the Douglas had also increased greatly, from 3173 reels in 1966 to well over 14,000 three years later. In 1969 a system was devised to give a location number to each "bank" or stack of microfilm on the west side of the Periodicals Room. This number was marked with black pentel on each box, on the catalogue cards, and on the cabinets.

There were two branch library milestones in 1969. The Psychology Library in Humphrey Hall opened its doors for the first time, and the Mathematics Library moved from Carruthers Hall to more spacious quarters in Jeffery Hall. The new Mathematics and Statistics Library, built around an open court in the basement of the just completed Jeffery Hall, had 5200 square feet of reading space, seating capacity for about 100, several study rooms, and a new office for Science Librarian Miss Amelia Laing. According to Factotum (Monthly bulletin of Douglas Library facts and staff opinion), the Math move took place in the following manner:

The move was made on May 10<sup>th</sup>, when approximately ten gallant math students, and four math professors, including the department head, volunteered to aid Mrs. Skoulidikidis and Amelia Laing to pack math journals in cardboard boxes, which were transported within hours and reshelved by another volunteer group about the size and consistency of the first one by 4:30 p.m. the same day. Several math books including the QAs in the Douglas Library stacks will be transferred to this area in the near future.

Amelia, who is in charge, has an elegant office here, and she still supervises the Civil Engineering Library in Ellis Hall whenever she can find the time. A few unopened boxes of Adams Old Stock still stand on Amelia's desk - wonder what they contain?

This branch library is one of the most beautiful study areas on the campus, and we highly recommend an early visit.

Factotum, May, 1969, pp. 6-7.

In the beginning, the Math Library was open amazing hours for a branch library: 8:45 to 1 a.m. from Monday to Friday, and 10 to 6 on weekends. The Douglas Library itself in 1969 was open from 8 a.m. to 1 a.m. Monday to Thursday, 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday to Saturday, and noon to 1 a.m. on Sunday. After 11 p.m. Sunday through Thursday the only areas that remained open were the stacks, the Reference area, the New (Purple) Reading Room, and the Reserve Room.

A major event in the Douglas Library was the institution of closed Reserve. For 45 years, from 1924 until August of 1969, Douglas Library Reserve books had always been shelved around the third floor Old Reading Room, where students would retrieve them in a self-serve fashion. At the end of the summer of 1969, they were removed from this area, and placed in the alcove of the Reading Room. For the first time students had to request Reserve books by call number, and sign them out, even if intending to use them only in the Reading Room. Of course the Reading Room alcove had formerly housed the Education Library books, so these were all shelved around the room instead,

to the utter confusion of the returning students. In September, it proved to be quite a task to reorient all the dazed-looking students who wandered forlornly around the room, blithely ignoring explanatory signs, mumbling, "Where did all the Reserve books go?"

It was thought that closer control of the reserve books would decrease the number of missing books (there was no tattletape in those days), and also make them more equitably available to all users. As accurate records would be produced of the circulation of each book, faculty would also be assisted in their decisions to weed out books which did not need to be on Reserve (Reserve holdings at the beginning of the 1969/70 school year consisted of 8000 books).

In July, the Faculty Council announced that the way had been paved for professional library staff to be granted faculty status. It would be granted to individual librarians on the basis of academic merit, rather than administrative standing.

The Douglas Library caught a glimpse of its automated future in September, when the first MARC Institute to be held outside of the U.S. took place in Toronto, attracting librarians from all over the country, including three from Queen's. At the conference, the MARC format, a means of producing machine-readable catalogue entries, for processing by computers, was explained to the participants. The unfamiliarity of these concepts to librarians of the day was illustrated by one of the comments from the floor at the end of the Institute. It was stated that two days had been spent considering the adaptation of computers to library uses, and perhaps some remarks on the adaptation of librarians to computers would be useful!

Staff members continued to come and go. In May of 1969, Miss Skeith announced that she had by chance discovered at the back of her desk a staff roster for July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1966, the day she had started work at the Douglas. She read the roster, and found to her surprise that less than 3 years later, of the 100 names on the list, only 35 people were still with the Queen's Library System, and many of them not in the same department as previously. It was suggested that an M.S.T.E. (Master of Staff Training and Expansion) could be granted to the hardy survivors.

To mention only a very few of the many changes, in January alone, Marion Knox arrived, and Ronanne McConnell (now Ronanne Parady of Stauffer Reference), a graduate of Memorial University, Newfoundland, came as a Library Assistant 3 in the Cataloguing Division. Phyllis Bray returned to Cataloguing after a one-year absence, Nina Fruhling transferred from the Modern Languages Reference Library to the Order Department, and Marcia Stayer (later to be Marcia Sweet) started as a Library Assistant in the Order Department. Marcia however resigned on September 1<sup>st</sup>, in order to attend library school at the University of Toronto. A similar resignation was that of Susan Miller on June 25<sup>th</sup>, to attend library school at the University of Western Ontario.

In February, Doris Potter started in Reserve, and Thelma Fernando joined the staff as a Senior Library Assistant in the Serials Department. Dorothy Clarke (now Dorothy

Loftus of Education) arrived in March as a typist in the Cataloguing Division. Susan Barsby and Elizabeth (Betty) Cobb joined the library staff in May.

The summer seemed to be a good time for arrivals or transfers, especially as 52 new positions were approved in the 1969/70 budget. Brenda Snider (later Brenda Crawford) started on June 30<sup>th</sup> as a Junior Clerk in the Cataloguing Division, and Helen Coffey came back after a year at the University of Toronto Library School on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, as a General Librarian in the Reference and Research Division. The same day Colin Banger (Janet Burgess's brother, now Dr. Colin Banger, a teacher at St. Lawrence College), who had earlier been a student assistant, became a Junior Clerk in Periodicals, and on July 15<sup>th</sup> Eva Kaminski started work as a Library Assistant 3 in the Order Department. Barbara de St. Remy (now Barbara Teatero) became an Intermediate Clerk in the Chemistry and Electrical Engineering Libraries on August 5<sup>th</sup>, and Alma Phelan joined the Cataloguing Division as a typist on August 20<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Helen Allan, Senior Library Assistant in the Geography Library, resigned on August 31<sup>st</sup>.

Two Library Assistants came to work in Government Documents in September: Stewart Renfrew (now a Queen's University Archivist) and Jean Stevenson. Soon Mrs. Stevenson was sent to the U.N. and International Documents Library, in Macdonald Hall. This collection had been rather neglected since Government Documents moved back to Douglas in January of 1966, and Jean spent much of her time putting things in order here.

Several marriages were announced in the 1969 Factotum, including that of Dawn Graham and Eugene Stevens on April 19<sup>th</sup>, and Peter Dickson and Barbara Merz on May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Two of the marriages announced in 1969 were however combined with resignations. Eleanor Robertson, who had worked in the Douglas Library since 1928, the year she graduated from Queen's and only 4 years after the new building opened, became Mrs. Eleanor Bolton in June, and resigned from the library at the end of July. Most of her working years had been spent in the Reference Department, where her knowledge (especially of local issues), her curiosity, abilities of deduction and endless patience made her eminently suitable for this work. Her departure was a great loss to the Library, as was that of Elinor Humphries.

Elinor Humphries had managed the Circulation Desk at Douglas since 1959, and succeeding years of students, both undergraduate and graduate, came to rely on Elinor for personal advice as well as help with books. She was also very good at the systematic work and administration required in this area, and everyone who worked under her seemed to have enjoyed the experience. She left the library system on December 31, 1969, in order to marry Professor J. Lorne McDougall.