

**1993 Founder's Day
Bradford West Swillimbury
Public Library
Souvenir Program
and Library History**

Founder's Day
February 3, 1993, 7:30 p.m.
Compton Room
Bradford West Gwillimbury Public Library

Celebrating 37 Years of
Public Library Service and
127 years of Library Service to Bradford

PROGRAM:

- * Welcome by
Pauline Taylor, Chair, Library Board
- * Honouring of Founders and Friends by
Lesley Coo, Library Board
- * Guest Speaker:
Stan Beacock, BA, BLS, MLS
- * Concluding Remarks by
Lesley Coo, Library Board
- * Wine & Cheese Social

Master of Ceremonies - Lesley Coo

Mechanics' Institute

The Mechanics' Institute was an early form of public library that encouraged the education of the working classes through reading, lectures and courses. The emphasis of the collection was educational. Therefore, lighter reading materials were not considered to be suitable for the library's collection.

Bradford's Mechanics' Institute is known to have been in existence between 1865 and 1916.

1865-1875 Samuel Driffill was the librarian and the library was located in the Old Post Office on Holland Street West.

1875-1916 Mr. H.S. Broughton was the Postmaster and librarian. He also owned the South Simcoe News from 1865-1892.

In 1892 the library, which was being called Bradford Public Library, contained nearly 1800 volumes and magazines.

In the May 31, 1906 issue of the Bradford Witness it was reported that "a public library of over 2,500 volumes, in the Post Office building, with the postmaster as librarian, is an institution of public favour and is fairly well patronized by the reading public."

Association Library

Angus Mowat, Inspector of Public Libraries in Ontario during the 1930's & 1940's, gave the following definition of an Association Library: "This kind of library is owned by the members and supported by membership fees. It is just about as modern as a privately owned fire department or a privately owned school system would be. It is useful only in getting a start in backward communities (411, Mowat journals)."

From 1933-1953 an Association Library operated under the name Bradford Public Library. The library received a provincial grant and funds from the Women's Institute and others. The library was originally located over Evans & Evans offices at 21 Holland Street West.

1933	Miss Mary Brown, Librarian
1936	Mrs Ida Day Smith, Librarian
1936-53	Mrs Ethel Day, Librarian

In 1940 the Simcoe County Library Cooperative was formed to supplement the collections of small libraries such as Bradford Public Library.

In 1948 the library was located on Barrie Street in the "Old" Fire Hall.

On November 7, 1938 Angus Mowat visited the Bradford Public Library and wrote the following report in his journal (210-211):

Met Mrs. Day the librarian, Mr. Evans and Mr. Cooke, board members.

This library is in a room over Mr. Evans' office. Actually the space is donated by Mr Evans for library purposes. It is quite a good room and fairly well lighted, although not at all attractively arranged or decorated. It has one thing, though, that I have not before encountered in a public library, and that is a carpet on the floor. Shabby, but a carpet. There is an adequate reading table.

The shelving in the adult section follows the usual practice of being half a mile too high, but at least there are no stacks cluttering up the place. There is a pay-shelf of newer books and a good table of book jackets. The children's books are arranged on shelves, the like of which I have never seen. A pigeon-hole for each book. It has the appearance of something out of a museum and I suspect that if the children want to use the library very much they would have a good deal of difficulty in getting the books out.

The books, speaking generally, contain a good many of the customary "has-beens". But there is also a larger proportion than usual

of newer titles. For the most part they are in fair condition although there are quite a number of backless and decrepid ones which ought to be discarded. The children's books are of a much poorer quality than the adult, which undoubtedly accounts for the fact that only 375 (and of these only 8 non-fiction) went out from the children's department in 1937.

I had a long talk with the three people mentioned about the possibilities of a County Association, and found them most interested and willing to cooperate. They all asked intelligent questions and I feel that I left them pretty well convinced of the need and practicability of such an organization in Simcoe County. Mrs. Day, the librarian, is an elderly lady, but struck me as being keen and interested in books and people. She would benefit greatly if she were to attend classes in primary librarianship. The total circulation of Bradford is only 5000, or about 5 books per capita. The annual income is \$138, of which \$25 comes from the village. The librarian's salary is \$37.53, and about \$50 are spent for books.

(The Angus Mowat journals are housed in the archives at the School of Library and Information Science, University of Western Ontario, London.)

Free Public Library

In 1955 a Free Public Library was established with the first board meeting being held on February 3, 1955.

Angus Mowat wrote: " [a Free Public Library] is publicly owned and financed. It is open to all members of the community which supports it."

The budget for 1956 totalled \$3,355 of which the Village of Bradford paid \$1,600 and the Province paid \$1,755. Rent of \$480 was paid back to the Village.

The library was first located in the Old Town Hall where renovations were inspected by Angus Mowat.

Within five years it was evident that the library required larger quarters and the board began discussions with Town Council regarding inclusion of the library in the new Town Hall facility. Negotiations with council were not progressing satisfactorily in 1960 when Mrs Blackwell reported to the board that the Old Orange Hall was available for \$2,500. The board voted unanimously to "make such an offer for it."

This was the beginning of the John Street library building which was funded entirely through donations from the community:

Lions Club	\$12,000
Rotary Club	6,000
Knitting Club	500
Women's Institute	500

At the official opening on June 18, 1963 Mr. Roedde, Director of Library Services for the Province "gave a very good discourse on how the people of Bradford had far exceeded the expectations of the Department [of Education]."

Board Members from 1955-1960 included:

Lena Blackwell	Daniel M. Blake
Louis DiRocco	Cecil Brittain
Glen E. Boyd	Ted Devlin
Joseph C. Wood	Arthur Evans
<i>Rene</i> Delph Kneeshaw	Arthur H. Stevens
Robert McMaster	Ruth Yeomans
Rocky Colangelo	Fred C. Cook
Marion Adelaide Cordingly	

In 1988 the present library was built at 100 Holland Court. Then, in 1991 with the amalgamation of Bradford and West Gwillimbury and the annexation of a portion of the former Township of Tecumseth the library acquired two small branches in Bond Head and Newton Robinson.

Librarians 1955 - 1993

1955-1967 Miss Birdie Webb & Carolyn Schmidt
1965-1979 Gertie Melbourne
1979-1991 Adrienne Price, Diploma Lib. Tech.
1991-1993 Alannah Hegedus, BA, MLIS

Here is a sampling of known collection and circulation figures over the past 55 years:

	Pop.	Coll'n	Circ.
1938	1,000	2,900	5,000
1943	1,000	2,877	3,053
1953	1,600	2,632	5,175
1970	4,566	8,940	32,932
1980	7,128	20,235	49,710
1990	10,188	26,121	83,458
1992	17,700	28,764*	94,394

* Estimated (unconfirmed) collection size for 1992. Note that the collection size for this population should be closer to 45,000.

**Prepared by Alannah Hegedus
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