
EX LIBRIS NEWS

Newsletter of the Ex Libris Association

Spring 1994 (Number 15)

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EDITOR'S NOTES

You will see in this issue an advertisement for an EDITOR for *Ex Libris News*. This is the 15th number that I have put together over the past 7½ years and the time has come for others to pick it up if the Association thinks it is worth doing. At the beginning I assumed the responsibility by default because I believed retired librarians had not lost all interest in their profession and their fellow librarians. (I'm having trouble with a non-sexist word for "fellow".) It is an honorable profession and yet our history is largely ignored even by ourselves. Our members retire/die with little in the record to show they ever existed. This Christmas one of our cards to an old Ohio friend was returned marked "deceased"; another whom we telephoned has disappeared forever since the person who answered had never heard of him. Neither had family.

Over the years some of you responded to the call for articles, news items, little notes that might interest others. First Clara Chu, a PhD student at SLIS, did much of the physical work, then John Macpherson and recently Betty McCamus have helped in the proof reading and editing. Janette White has searched out information about retirements, in memoriams and honours bestowed.

It would be great if two or three people would take on the task. With the technology now available they could live any place and communicate via computers and modems. The mechanics of inputting, labelling, stamping would have to be done centrally.

In this issue we have printed the talks given at our annual meeting by Sheila Wilson and Chris Raible. Dorothy Ryder's article on the history of the University of Calgary Library has not been printed before. The contributions by Len Wertheimer, Betty Spicer and Howard Overend accent our history.

I willingly accept all of the blame for the errors recorded in the past and the omissions of stuff that should have been reported. But now it is time for a change.

Stan Beacock, Editor

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS

It's just past eight years since Stan Beacock gathered a small group together and formed, as far as I'm aware, the first organization for retired library workers in Canada or the U.S. These have been formative years of considerable achievement for **EX LIBRIS**.

Stan, before retirement the Director of the London Public Library, with the assistance of a New Horizon Grant, established a headquarters, developed aims and objectives and since 1987 has edited (with the help of various members) and published 15 Newsletters, the *Ex Libris News*. He has had assistance from various sources. Members have written articles, researched awards, retirements and deaths, and helped in many ways; the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, UWO has provided space and use of equipment; the Board has guided policy and finances, planned and developed programmes for the Annual General Meetings and expanded membership; but the burden of producing the Newsletter has largely been his. Stan deserves our admiration and gratitude.

Recently Stan has asked to be relieved of his role in EX LIBRIS. We are now in the process of seeking a new editor and assistant editor, and office storage space. It is my view that in the solution to this problem lies the future of our organization. Board members, Les Fowlie and Connie Corkham,

will be seeking new space and someone to put together future Newsletters. If members have suggestions please get in touch as soon as possible.

Plans for the year

During my term as President I would like to see further progress on three fronts.

1. We need to expand and broaden the membership. Too few members are located outside Southern Ontario. We need more active people from B.C., the Prairies, Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces.
2. At the end of December, 1993 we had \$17,519.00 in our Elizabeth Morton Fund (members' contributions dedicated to the publication of a history of the Canadian Library Association). This is a major project. It is underway but we are going to need further contributions. (See Janette White's report later in this issue.
3. It is time to review the Aims and Objectives of EX LIBRIS and establish priorities for the future. The Board will devote time to a discussion of this topic at its next meeting. However we need the thoughts and suggestions of our members. Should we try to have regional meetings or regional chapters? Are there projects of interest and usefulness that we should consider? What do you think EX LIBRIS should do in the future?

Write to me at 137 Beaconsfield Ave., Toronto, ON M6J 3J5, call me personally at (416) 532-9762 or contact our Secretary-Treasurer, Elizabeth Lockett at the Association office.

Al Bowron, President

ELIZABETH HOMER MORTON FUND: APPEAL FOR ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This Fund was initiated by the Ex Libris Association in 1988 on a specific proposal by Edith Jarvi, to honour this outstanding Canadian Librarian and first Executive Director of the Canadian Library Association. CLA joined with Ex Libris to coordinate fund raising under its mandate to further Canadian library education and research. Ex Libris members in particular have been very generous in their support of the Fund.

Members of our Association directed that the Fund be used to publish a history of the Canadian Library Association with emphasis on the role of Elizabeth Morton. The plan is that this history will be published in time to mark the 50th anniversary of CLA in 1996.

The Board of the Ex Libris Association is now in a position to commission the writing of the history. The money in the Fund is sufficient to support the initial stages of the work, in particular the research which will be required, but more contributions will be needed to fund the project to completion and publication.

Please support this worthwhile project.

Make your cheques payable to the Canadian Library Association with the notation "Morton Fund" on the face of the cheque and send to:

Canadian Library Association
200 Elgin St. Suite 602
Ottawa ON K2P 1L5

CLA will issue receipts for income tax purposes. A gift form is enclosed.

FYI: On March 1 postage for an issue of the *News* this size increased from \$1.44½ to \$1.50 (including GST)

Ex Libris Association
Eighth Annual General Meeting
Old Stone Inn, Niagara Falls, November 4, 1994

Minutes

1. The meeting convened at 11:05 a.m.
2. Approval of the minutes of the 7th Annual General Meeting was **moved** by C. Corkum and **seconded** by E. Schultz. **Carried**
3. President's Report

J. White announced that it had been a year of the status quo. There has been a campaign to increase awareness of the Association. There were displays at the OLA Conference in Toronto in 1992, at Ideashop in January 1993 and at the CLA Conference in June 1993. John Wilkinson has contacted Library schools for lists of retired librarians. G. Prodrick has resigned from the Membership Committee. J. White is grateful for his hard work. There have been negotiations with CLA and OLA about joint membership. The proposal for joint membership was published in the 1993 Spring Newsletter, p.6. J. White thanked Stan Beacock for his work in editing and producing the Newsletter and Betty McCamus for her assistance. Stan would like to retire from his position as editor of the Newsletter. A volunteer to undertake this work is needed. Betty Hardie wrote a document outlining Responsibilities of the Board and its officers. E. Lockett produced a budget.

Acceptance of the President's report was **moved** by J. White and **seconded** by J. Munro.

Carried

Treasurer's Report

The report attempted to show the actual expenditures in 1993. The Newsletter costs at least \$8.00 for the two issues. The \$10.00 membership barely covers costs.

Acceptance of the Treasurer's report was **moved** by E. Lockett and **seconded** by R. Burford.

Carried

Moved by S. Beacock and **seconded** by G. Prodrick that the Board be directed to invest up to \$5000.00 in a GIC or other investment instruments for a period of time to be determined by the Board.

Carried

Newsletter

Stan Beacock brought news of various library retirees. J.J. Talman has moved into a nursing home. Margaret Banks was ill and unable to come to the meeting but she had been planning to come and talk about her article on Bourinot. Dan Sudar lives in British Columbia and is ill. He had saved material on the founding of the Library Technician Program at Lakehead University and Stan had arranged for this to be sent to GSLIS, UWO. Betty Spicer needs someone to complete the input of her index of the Ontario Library Review using *In Magic*. GSLIS has subsidized the Association by providing space. A desk, two filing cabinets and some supplies are located in an office there.

Stan reported on his interview with Florence Cummings which was published in the Fall 1993 issue of the Newsletter as an example of possible articles by others.

He needs someone to find materials for the Newsletter. J. White does retirements, awards and obituaries. Mailing is very expensive. Stan is trying to find better rates.

E. Ketchum proposed a vote of thanks to Stan.

Membership Report

G. Prodrick has resigned as chair of the Committee. He was not in agreement with the Board's position on joint membership with OLA and the proposed fee increase.

5. Elizabeth Homer Morton Project

J. White reported that there have been further efforts to find a researcher/writer. One person has expressed interest.

6. Ammendment of the Constitution

John Wilkinson had proposed a number of amendments to the Constitution. A Vice President is needed to provide a smoother succession to the office of President. (A copy of the proposed amendments was mailed to all members with the Fall 1993 *Ex Libris News*.)

Moved by B. Hardie, seconded by C. Corkum that the amendments to the Consitution be approved. **Carried**

7. Amendment of By-Laws - Increase in membership fees

Some people felt that increasing membership fees would reduce membership but it was pointed out that current fees do not cover the total costs of the Association.

Moved by G. Hughes, seconded by B. Hardie that, effective for the calendar year 1995, category b. subscriptions be raised from \$20.00 to \$25.00. **Carried**

Moved by G. Hughes, seconded by B. Spicer that, effective for the calendar year 1995, the By-Laws be amended to increase Membership fees by \$5.00: **Regular** members \$15.00, **Sustaining** members \$25.00. **Carried (2 Naves)**

8. Nominating Committee Report

Composition of the Board, 1994:

Retiring members: Lucille Galloway, Betty Hardie, Gerald Prodrick.

Continuing members: Constance Corkum, Heather McCallum, Clara Miller, Joyce Sowby, John Wilkinson.

New members: Arn Bailey, Leslie Fowlie, Erich Schultz.

President: Al Bowron.

Secretary-Treasurer: Elizabeth Lockett.

Past President: Janette White.

Acceptance of the report was moved by B. Hardie and seconded by J. Snell. **Carried**

J. White thanked the retiring members.

E. Schultz thanked the President.

9. Other business

E. Ketchum reported that the Canada House library in London, England, has been closed. If people have influence with the government they should use it to have the library re-opened. A history of the library should be written. G. Prodrick recommended that the Board should take action.

10. The business meeting adjourned at 1:55 p.m. There was a lunch break from 12:15 to 1:30.

(Note: Mr. Raible very kindly donated to the Association \$5.00 from the sale of each copy of his book *Muddy York Mud: Scandal and Scurrility in Upper Canada* at our Annual Meeting. We gratefully acknowledge his donation of \$55.00 to Ex Libris.)

EX LIBRIS ASSOCIATION
Treasurer's Report 1993

	<u>Income. \$</u>	<u>Expenses. \$</u>
<u>Income</u>		
15 life members (Interest from GICs)	226.29	
83 Regular members at \$10.	830.00	
40 Sustaining members at \$20.	800.00	
5 Library subscriptions at \$20.	100.00	
Bank interest	<u>90.99</u>	
Total	2047.28	
<u>Expenditures</u>		
Newsletter: Printing & stationery		722.76
Newsletter: Postage		400.00
Office expenses		
Postage		86.65
Post box rental		187.80
Change of address		110.21
Word processing & stationery		46.50
Printing for CLA meeting		<u>243.80</u>
Total		1797.72
Balance for 1993	<u>249.56</u>	
<u>Annual General Meeting</u>		
Registration	575.00	
Honorarium to C. Raible		100.00
Donation from C. Raible	55.00	
Hotel expenses		463.59
Refund to M. Banks who was ill	<u> </u>	<u>25.00</u>
Totals	630.00	588.59
Profit	41.41	

23 members attended the meeting. There were two guests.

In 1993 net income was \$290.97

Bank balance December 31, 1993 \$7740.65

This includes renewals for 1994. Renewals for 1994: 61 Regular, 20 Sustaining, 1 Life, 4 Library subscriptions.

GIC April 11, 1994 @ 7.75% \$1003.70

GIC April 15, 1995 @ 8.25% \$1800.00

The two issues of the Newsletter cost \$8.00 per member. Expenses for the AGM vary from year to year. The Board tries to set the cost of registration to cover expenses. Expenses for speakers in 1993 were \$150.00 (honorarium and meals). Board members cover their own expenses.

This report attempts to show actual income and expenditures in 1993.

Elizabeth Lockett
Secretary-Treasurer

**"CONSULTING AUTHORITIES CONTINUALLY, SO MANY ARE MY IMPERFECTIONS"
WILLIAM LYON MACKENZIE AS EDITOR AND PUBLISHER, by Chris Raible**

(Paper given at the 8th Annual Meeting OF THE EX LIBRIS ASSOCIATION, NOVEMBER 4, 1993, Niagara Falls, Ontario)

"Papers," William Lyon Mackenzie once reflected, "are the depositories of our fortune—the trustees of our credit, character and reputation—our closest confidant."¹

The famous (or infamous) leader of the ill-fated 1837 Rebellion penned this comment during one of the darkest periods of his life. A refugee living in New York City in 1845, he was having difficulty earning enough to provide for his family—a wife and five daughters.² Despite such responsibility, he had resigned a properly paid position as clerk/librarian at the U.S. Customs House to embark on a new venture. While working at the Customs House, he had turned up an old box filled with private correspondence—its contents suggested corruption by former federal employees. Mackenzie decided to publish many of these letters—they would be politically damaging to former United States President Martin Van Buren.

Yet the editor felt some qualms about exposing private papers to public view:

Secrets that may cost a man his life, or which men would rather die than have discovered, secrets of trade, wills, settlements, things on which the peace of families, and the love and union of relatives may depend, are often to be found among a person's private papers, in his closet— and all attempts to invade the sanctity of a private dwelling, on any other ground than treason against the state . . . cannot be too severely condemned.³

Nonetheless, Mackenzie pushed ahead with his project. He had found the documents in a public office, not in a private home. He even suspected that they had intentionally been brought to his attention. He was doing his duty,

for one in his position invades no privacy—betrays no confidence—circulates no secret record—but refers to parts of a correspondence.... [They are] proof of a formidable conspiracy against the liberties and franchises of the American people. No honest man can or will conceal treason.⁴

Mackenzie's book, *The Lives and Opinions of Benjamin Franklin Butler, United States District Attorney for the Southern District of New-York; and Jesse Hoyt, Counsellor at Law, formerly Collector of Customs for the Port of New York*, created a minor sensation. It sold more than 50,000 copies, and has since been credited with preventing Van Buren's political come-back. Mackenzie himself, however, received only \$100 for his efforts—out of a stubborn pride he refused to take more. There were too many questions about his motives and his integrity. Nonetheless, for the rest of his life he was forced to defend himself against accusations of theft, greed, dishonesty, and violating personal privacy.⁵

This early "freedom of information" encounter was anything but Mackenzie's first experience of arousing public ire by publishing private information. Indeed, it was a far more notorious episode nearly twenty years earlier that had proved to be the making of Mackenzie. I refer, of course, to the so-called "Types Riot," the wholesale destruction of his printing establishment in 1826, when a gang of York Tory hooligans tried to silence the controversial editor. He collected £625 in damages from the rioters in a succeeding court case, not only solving his deep financial problems, but making him a popular hero. He had stood up to the ruling York elite and won.⁶

Whether in York or in New York, for Mackenzie to have stirred emotions with pen

and press is no surprise. His public political career and his work as an editor/publisher were essentially one and the same. From his beginning, as it were, were his words, —throughout his life, Mackenzie relied on the print medium to put forth his messages.

Mackenzie believed in books. In 1830, he published *A Catechism of Education*, a political tract with the purpose of promoting (and reforming) public education. In it he lauded libraries:

71. *Have not the most beneficial effects often resulted, to individuals as well as to society, from the establishment of public libraries for apprentices, mechanics, labourers, and others, who were not able out of their own means to acquire a select assortment of useful books...? The establishments of institutions of this sort have, in general, been attended with the happiest consequences; the minds of the people have been enlightened, and their manners improved, by study and reflection.*

73. *Have not the most profound scholars; the greatest philosophers; the most eminent statesmen and divines, been self-taught?*

Instances abound in the history of the latter ages, of individuals who, after receiving instruction, only in the elements of reading and writing, and without the aid of teachers, have overcome innumerable difficulties, and attained an enviable eminence in the walks of science and literature. These men studied books, studied nature, and studied the arts, without the help of a schoolmaster; and persevered in their labours, though often under the most unfavourable circumstances.⁷

Mackenzie's own life was a testimonial to

literacy.

The writer ... well remembers the many advantages he derived from the establishment of a literary and scientific institution in his native city [Dundee, Scotland], of which, at the early age of sixteen, he became a member. It was furnished with an extensive and well assorted library.... Many a long winter's evening has the writer spent in the hall of this institution, endeavouring to acquire the elements of useful knowledge out of the abundant materials thus placed within his reach, while, had no such society existed, he might have been induced oftener to exchange his labours at the desk of his master's counting-room, for the deceitful gratification offered in the tavern or gambling house.⁸

Such a sixteen-year-old lad's noble sentiments notwithstanding, he soon demonstrated little resistance to such "deceitful gratification." By age seventeen, he years later admitted:

I was reckless, wild, a confirmed gambler, and somewhat dissipated, (more so perhaps than I would like to own). But, even at that age, my thirst for knowledge was unquenchable.⁹

During this period before his emigration to Canada, Mackenzie kept track of all the books he had read. The list contains nearly a thousand volumes.¹⁰ A modern historian has summarized it:

His reading included histories of Scotland, England, Greece, Rome, modern Europe, and America; travels in Africa, Arabia, India, Europe, and America; Scottish and English poetry; popular and critical journals; books on agriculture, natural history, medicine, mathematics, mechanics, and chemistry; diaries, letters, and biographies of the leading men of the

eighteenth century; theology and sermons; novels and plays. In translation he had read something at least of Moliere, Cervantes, Le Sage, Mirabeau, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Homer, Virgil, Plutarch, and Josephus.¹¹

The controversial journalist often reflected on the influence of libraries in his life. In 1827, for example, he complained about the neglect of the parliamentary library, then located in York:

We fervently pray that it may be enlarged and kept open at all seasons of the year not only to the members, *but also to those whom they may introduce to the librarian....* For until our studious men can have access to proper books, we will never boast of profound scholars. Gibbon could not have written his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," in Canada—no nor in any part of America. And why? Because he would not have been able to meet with the necessary authorities in any library; no, nor in all the libraries of this quarter of the world. And it must be obvious that the fewer the books are, the evil becomes the greater.

(The phrase ought to be carved over the entrance to every library in the land: "The fewer the books are, the evil becomes the greater!") With uncharacteristic modesty, Mackenzie went on to confess:

Were the editor of this paper a member of the provincial legislature, he would require to consult authorities continually, so many are his imperfections; although there are few who have passed a greater portion of a short life in reading.

But he quickly returned to his subject—and to his political purposes:

As the library is now managed, the books instead of being annually increased are scattered and lost, being

taken away and no account kept of them. Look at the advertisement in the Upper Canada Gazette of stray books... all from improper management. We heard some of the members (Goths and Vandals) talk of *selling the books* the other Day. God forbid.¹²

Not many months later, Mackenzie was in fact elected to the provincial parliament. He soon returned to the subject of its library to complain that it

has not had a volume added to it, except the journals, for nearly a dozen years. It is indeed a miserable apology.... I made repeated efforts to improve and enlarge the library. The Legislative Council successfully opposed [my] attempt.... They threw the motion under their table and refused to act upon it, and indeed manifested in all their proceedings the utmost unwillingness to put the country in possession of those British and Colonial publications for reference which the spirit of the age requires.¹³

We have, alas, no record of Mackenzie's own library, but his multitudinous literary references reveal that he was a lifelong reader. We have more than ample evidence of the extent of his interests in the vast number of letters and clippings which he left and which are happily preserved.

These papers provide fascinating insights into one man's mind. Mackenzie created his own unique information storage and retrieval system. He consecutively numbered the sheets of a series of blank books—eventually totalling nearly seven thousand pages. These volumes became his filing cabinet—he tucked between their pages "correspondence, accounts, maps, sketches, speeches, genealogical information, invitations, programmes, photographs, newspaper clippings, telegrams, minutes and reports of associations and committee, and

printed material."¹⁴ As his files grew, he created his own idiosyncratic index of topics and subjects. For example:

Dayton, Nathan, Circuit Judge	4318
Deaf & Dumb & Blind Institutions in Canada	6375
Deafness- See: Hearing	479\5
Dearborn, Genl. Henry (& his son)	3349
Death - ought the punishment of to be entirely abolished in all cases	569
See also "Murder"	520
Deaths - Funerals - Graveyards	2172
Debentures	6127
DeBlaguier, P.B., Chancellor Univ.	2983
Debt in rent—exemption of household furniture from seizure for	1144 ¹⁵

Fortunately (for those of us who are interested in such obscurities) these files were kept by his son-in-law biographer, Charles Lindsey. All 64 feet, 6 inches of them are now carefully preserved in the Archives of Ontario—the Mackenzie-Lindsey Papers. It also includes an almost complete run of all of Mackenzie's newspapers.

These files testify to a life of reading and of saving. During his York/Toronto years as an editor, he read a hundred newspapers a week, marking what he wished to copy immediately, clipping what he wanted for possible future reference. During his exile, he was for a time employed as actuary and librarian at the Manhattan Mechanics Institute. It had a large collection of domestic and foreign journals. When a decision was made to cull the entire collection, Mackenzie apparently read the lot, clipping and saving whatever caught his fancy.¹⁶ The Mackenzie-Lindsey Papers thus contain items from late 18th and early 19th century newspapers (thank goodness for rag paper),

although, alas, often without indication of their sources.

Mackenzie's own newspaper—his first and certainly his most famous, *The Colonial Advocate*—was begun in 1824.¹⁷ Its title suggested his clear intent—to be the advocate of the colonials. In his agrarian utopian dream for Upper Canada, he saw himself as the spokesman for the yeomen farmers (not that Mackenzie had ever turned a spadeful of dirt in his life.)

By its very format, the first issue of the *Colonial Advocate* suggested its editor's intentions, and revealed his ambivalence. It took the form of a long editorial essay printed in two columns, a sixteen page octavo booklet wrapped with a four-page blue cover—the cover was to be used for notices and advertisements. William Lyon Mackenzie thus initially presented himself to his prospective readers as a journalist, the publisher of a reflective journal.¹⁸

But at the last minute, the cover was changed. The editor killed the ads to make room for a lengthy report of an inquiry into the death Colonel Robert Nichol, a prominent Niagara citizen. The publisher thus sacrificed private income for public information. By the third issue, the format had changed entirely—into a cheaper, less substantial, five column, four-page folio. It had definitely become a *news* paper.

Most of that first issue was given over to an extended critical evaluation of the political situation in Upper Canada. Much of it dealt with Sir Peregrine Maitland, the Lieutenant-Governor of the province, a man whom Mackenzie described as "a knight of noble birth & noble connexions, who ... has gained enough renown in Europe to enable him to enjoy himself, like the country he governs, in inactivity.... We cannot remember any thing he has done of a public nature worth recording.... What road has he made? What Canal has been begun in his time? Of what agricultural society is he the patron, president or benefactor? What does the

domestic manufactures of the Province owe him?" Such a passive governor was, by Mackenzie's good Scot measure, not only worthless, but, in "his enjoyment of a princely salary," expensive.

Notwithstanding all his caustic commentary, Mackenzie saw himself as an instructor, with ambitions practical as well as political. He wanted to share much of what he had read. Along with his reflections on the passing scene, he planned to offer useful information to improve the lot of his farmer readers. He announced his intent

"to copy.... articles on Roads and Bridges, Townships, Diseases, Scotch emigrants, Irish ditto, English ditto, American ditto, Sheep, Cattle, Agricultural Societies, Wheat, Barley, Oats, Corn, Buck Wheat, Potatoes, etc.... [also] articles of commerce: such as Flax, Hemp, Pot and Pearl Ashes, Bees' Wax, Honey, Lumber, Tobacco, Ginseng, etc.... [as well as] notices on Gypsum, Lime and manures, and.... upon the attendant science of horticulture."

It was an archival effort of sorts, an attempt to preserve something of the passing present for the enlightenment of the future, that first plunged the Queenston publisher into controversy.

[*Muddy York Mud...* page 18:]

On June 1, 1824, a full Masonic ceremony laid the foundation-stone of a memorial to Major-General Sir Isaac Brock, hero of the Battle of Queenston Heights, killed fighting off American invaders in 1812. At Mackenzie's suggestion, a sealed bottle—containing a patriotic inscription (authored by Mackenzie), some coins, a copy of the current *Upper Canada Gazette* and a copy of the first issue of the *Colonial Advocate*—was placed in the stone "to remain as a memorial until some future generation, long after we and our contemporaries are

forgotten, shall perhaps discover it hid amidst the wreck of ages."

It did not, however, remain there that long. A few days later Maitland learned of the event—he was upset. The Lieutenant-Governor was not about to allow a journal so critical of his administration to desecrate Brock's memorial, or, worse, to be preserved for posterity. Maitland immediately ordered the capsule's removal. Despite the fact that the monument had by then reached a considerable height, the masonry was taken down and the vessel disinterred. Col. Thomas Clark, the commissioner in charge of the removal, reportedly threw the bottle in the air and cried "so go all Mackenzie's enemies."

This "premature resurrection," as Mackenzie delightedly referred to the affair, served only to publicize his publication. It was the first of many incidents when the over-reaction of opponents worked out in his favour.

As an editor, Mackenzie read, swallowed, saved, and regurgitated. His primary purpose might have been educational, but he was almost totally preoccupied with the passing political scene and with what he perceived to be the inadequacies and injustices of those who held influence. Perhaps he envied those he would later call the "Family Compact."¹⁹ He would never be admitted into their circle of power. If he could not join them, he could kick them.

It was the publisher's penchant for digging up and dragging forward from the past which brought him much of his popularity—and of his unpopularity. Few people of prominence wanted to be reminded of what they had once promoted, propounded or promised. Mackenzie, damn him, remembered. Aided by his files, he could recall past incidents, cite old sources, quote formal documents, revive former controversies.

At times, when pressed, the editor might go even further. He was adept at stirring up old scandal, skilled at raking old muck. It was one of his efforts at slinging old mud which provided the Types Rioters with their public justification (whatever their private reasons) to try to silence him.

[*Muddy York Mud...* pages 24 to 27:]

Week after week for the next several months, Mackenzie took on every public issue, fanning the flames of controversy. His circulation surpassed the combined figure for the other three York newspapers, including the official *Upper Canada Gazette*. But again his costs escalated—again he was in deep financial trouble. Something had to be done.

"When I am reduced to personalities, I will bring *The Advocate* to a close," the editor had written in an early issue. On the second anniversary of his starting up his newspaper, he announced his intention to close it down. If so, it would end with a bang, not a whimper. Mackenzie apparently felt free to release some of his long-repressed hostility. He could indulge his most savage satirical talents in puncturing some puffed up pretensions.

The columns of the *Colonial Advocate* # 75, dated May 18, 1826, were quite unlike anything the Province had seen before. "The most infamous and wicked thing that has ever yet been published," Mary Jarvis informed her mother in New York. Robert Stanton, in a private letter to a Kingston friend, wondered, "Is it not disgraceful to think that such vile stuff as has been vomited forth in the columns of the Advocate, should find its way even into the meanest cottage in the land?" (Eighty years later one biographer called it "an orgy of slander and scurrility"—and a more modern historian, "journalism of

the gutter.")

What was it that so upset the good people of York, indeed of the province? Mackenzie had gone to some length to set up what he probably saw as a marvellous practical joke. Two weeks before, in issue # 73, he had published this note:

TO THE PUBLIC. The subscriber has determined to retire from the management of the *Colonial Advocate* at the conclusion of the next number, and respectfully informs its numerous patrons that its successor will pay their respects to them in No. 75.

Colonial Advocate, 1826 May 04

A week later, he had run a second notice:

To prevent a misunderstanding which has arisen out of a notice in the last paper; the subscriber respectfully informs the public, that he will continue to print and publish the *Advocate*, of which he remains the sole proprietor; but that from henceforth he will leave the editorial management in hands admirably fitted to inflict summary punishment on those drivellers to whom he has hitherto shewn an undue partiality.

W. L. MACKENZIE.

Then, on May 18, he sprung his trap—a fictitious report which, in the guise of humour, attacked the provincial aristocracy. It was a long article (a *very long* article—some seven thousand words, continued the following week with ten thousand more) entitled: "A faithful account of the proceedings at a general meeting of the contributors to the *Advocate*, held in Macdonell's Parlour on the evening of Monday, May 1st, 1826." It described a supposed gathering of friends and contributors to the *Advocate*, there to select a new editor since

Mackenzie had resigned his responsibilities. Among those assembled were several men bearing Mackenzie pseudonyms, including "Peter Russell, Esq., a native of Cumberland in England," "Capt. Humphrey Clod, of the 7th Regt. York Militia, (a Canadian)," and "Patrick Swift, Esq. of Belfast in Ireland." Swift was quickly selected for the *Advocate* post.

"Patrick Swift" was described as "a grand nephew of the famous Doctor Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's in Dublin," the satirist be known as the author of *Gulliver's Travels*. Mackenzie adopted the pseudonym as his editorial alias for these commentaries to give his readers a clear message—he was writing political satire.

According to the report, the party of editorial advisors reassembled two weeks later for what quickly degenerated into a rather drunken binge. Much of the *Advocate* account was devoted to describing the revellers making punch, telling jocular tales, singing frivolous songs, or debating the relevance of political quotations from American sources. But also quoted at length were outrageous and often ribald comments about certain members of the York ruling elite.

A prime target of the account was James Buchanan Macaulay with whom Mackenzie had recently quarrelled. The newly appointed member of the Executive Council was ridiculed for "his nose being crooked upwards." The explanation for this deformity being that "his father intended him at first for his own trade of an apothecary and kept him pounding stinking gum for hysteric pills to old women, until the horrid smell of the drug

actually turned his nose into a peg, whereon his grandfather might safely hang up his fiddle."

Especially harsh also was a description of Attorney General John Beverley Robinson as descended from Virginia's long line of "thieves, rogues, prostitutes & incorrigible vagabonds," whose mothers "came there to try their luck and were purchased by their sires with tobacco at prices according to the quality and soundness of the article." "From such a source ... we may look for the tyranny engendered, nursed and practised by those whose blood has been vitiated and syphilized by the accursed slavery of centuries."

Advocate readers were reminded of the lowly origins of many of York's high and mighty. Court of King's Bench Justice D'Arcy Boulton was "formerly assistant steersman of a Lake Champlain lumber raft." Legislative Councillor and Bank of Upper Canada President William Allan was once a "menial servant, shoe black and knife scourer [when] he was respectable." Church of England cleric and Executive Councillor John Strachan came to Canada as "a poor itinerant schoolmaster" and obtained a tutoring position. In the same house where his later wife served as "chamber-maid or house-maid in the kitchen, the Rev. Doctor [was] in the garret as the scholar's guide to arithmetic, and the Honourable William Allan as boot-polisher inhabited the lower regions or scullery."

No one, thought Mackenzie, could claim immunity from derision. "It's the upstart pride of these people that I wish to humble by relating plain truths." The so-called "better classes" were but the "upstart barbers, shoe-blacks,

wheelwrights, stable grooms, beggars, barmaids, cake and beer dealers, old drunken soldiers, raftsmen, and such like who have by the fickle dam fortune got out of their orbit."

[Note: The complete texts of the "Patrick Swift" commentaries are included as an appendix to the book.]

Scandalous! Scurrilous! Patrick Swift's "faithful account" was obviously a work of fiction, but it was also rather nasty—and some of it was true. Which *Advocate* readers fumed and which found it funny in 1826 no doubt depended on whose balloon was being pricked.

The rest, as they say, is history. Mackenzie's *Advocate* not only recovered, it flourished—at least in its influence and even as a business enterprise. With the exception of the Methodist *Christian Guardian*, it was the most widely circulated paper in the province.²⁰

By 1834, his duties as new mayor of Toronto and his activities as a leading member of the Legislative Assembly prompted him to sell his paper. But a year and a half later—out of office and out of sorts—he started up another, the *Constitution*,²¹ which became his vehicle for agitation and ultimately for Rebellion. He lost it all—a printing establishment valued at \$15,000 and a bookstore with an inventory of more than 20 thousand volumes²²—in his abortive attempt at a *coup d'état*.

In the course of the next twelve years in exile in the United States, he started up three different newspapers—and closed each one down again. There was not enough interest by Americans in the Canadian cause, and not enough attachment by Mackenzie to American politics. He did, however, spend his latter New York years working for Horace Greeley and the *New York Tribune*, perhaps the era's most important newspaper. Mackenzie also ultimately became an American citizen and deeply involved

himself in New York politics—but he never settled down.

American politics were no better than Canadian politics, yet Mackenzie survived. When a general amnesty at last made possible a return to Canada, in 1850 he came home. Within a year he was elected to Parliament. Within two years he was putting out another newspaper.

The first number of *Mackenzie's Weekly Message* contained this teasing note: "The Editor ceased the series of his last newspaper, the *Constitution*, somewhat abruptly, in December, to recommence his present series, the *Message* in January, and hastens to return his most grateful acknowledgments to many friends who... have interested themselves in its early establishment."²³ There was no reference to the lost fifteen years or to his three American newspapers—they might never have existed.

The *Message* did fairly well for about two years, but Toronto had changed and journalism had changed with it. Mackenzie could not make the necessary adjustments, or could not afford to make them. There were three daily newspapers and any number of specialized weekly papers with which to compete. Nevertheless he struggled on.

On September 15, 1861, the *Message* was issued for the last time. Mackenzie's publishing ventures were over. In eight-and-a-half years, he had put out more than 300 numbers of the paper. He had driven himself 15 hours a day,²⁴ presenting his political and personal reflections to a shrinking but passionately loyal constituency. Less than a year after the *Message* expired, Mackenzie himself was dead.

The last political words Mackenzie wrote were published in another newspaper on July 2, 1861, only eight weeks before his death.²⁵ When he put down his pen, when he stopped his press, his life was effectively over.

Endnotes:

- 1 William L. Mackenzie, *The Lives and Opinions of Benjamin Francis Butler...and Jesse Hoyt...*, Boston: Cook & Co., 1845, p. 10.
- 2 For details of Mackenzie's family life, see Nancy Luno, *Domestic Life of William Lyon Mackenzie and his Family*. Toronto: Toronto Historical Board, 1990.
- 3 Mackenzie, *The Lives and Opinions ...*, p. 10.
- 4 Mackenzie, *The Lives and Opinions ...*, p. 11.
- 5 See Lillian F. Gates, *After the Rebellion: The Later Years of William Lyon Mackenzie*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1988, chapter 8.
- 6 See Chris Raible, *Muddy York Mud: Scandal and Scurrility in Upper Canada*. Creemore, Ontario: Curiosity House, 1992.
- 7 William Lyon Mackenzie, *Catechism of Education*. York: 1830, quoted in Margaret Fairley, *The Selected Writings of William Lyon Mackenzie: 1824-1837*, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1960, p. 82.
- 8 *Colonial Advocate*, 1829 October 01.
- 9 *Constitution*, 1837 February 08.
- 10 Charles Lindsey, *The Life and Times of William Lyon Mackenzie....* Toronto: P.R. Randall, 1862, Appendix A.
- 11 Margaret Fairley, *The Selected Writings of William Lyon Mackenzie: 1824-1837*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1960, p. 67.
- 12 *Colonial Advocate*, 1827 January 11.
- 13 William Lyon Mackenzie, *Sketches of Canada and the United States*. London: Effingham Wilson, 1833, p. 183.
- 14 Archives of Ontario, *Inventory of the Mackenzie-Lindsey Papers*, F 37, p.9.
- 15 Archives of Ontario, *Inventory of the Mackenzie-Lindsey Papers*, F 37, p. 23.
- 16 See Lillian F. Gates, *After the Rebellion: The Later Years of William Lyon Mackenzie*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1988, Chapter 7.
- 17 *Colonial Advocate*, 1824 May 18.
- 18 There are two anthologies of Mackenzie's writings: Margaret Fairley (ed.), *The Selected Writings of William Lyon Mackenzie: 1824-1837*. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1960; and Anthony W. Rasporich (ed.), *William Lyon Mackenzie*. Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972.
- 19 *Colonial Advocate*, 1833 September 26.
- 20 Charles Lindsey, *The Life and Times of William Lyon Mackenzie....*, vol. 1, p. 280.
- 21 "Prospectus, The Constitution, a Weekly Journal," 1836 April 18, clipping #3645. Archives of Ontario, Mackenzie-Lindsey Papers.
- 22 As advertised in issues of the *Constitution*, 1837 September.
- 23 *Message*, 1853 Jan. 27.
- 24 *Message*, 1856 Feb. 01.
- 25 "A plea to the people of Oxford against Skeffington Connor by W. L. Mackenzie." 2 July 1861. Offprint of unidentified newspaper article. Archives of Ontario, Mackenzie-Lindsey Papers.

WRITING LIBRARY HISTORY, by Sheila Wilson

(Paper given at the 8th Annual General Meeting, November 4, 1993, Niagara Falls, Ontario)

In talking about writing library history, I have to use the example of course, of the St. Catharines Public Library, because I did a first attempt at some sort of history of that library.

First of all, here in brief is the story of the St. Catharines Public Library.

There were many attempts to form a library from 1827 on and finally a Mechanics' Institute was established in the 1850s. After the Libraries Act of 1882 and the Mechanics' Institute Act of 1886 which permitted the institutes to function as lending libraries, the city of St. Catharines passed a bylaw in 1888 to establish a Free Public Library. The library did not have a permanent home until the Carnegie library was built in 1905. This building with additions, served the community with a bookmobile and then branches until 1977 when it moved to a new building on a new site nearby—the present St. Catharines Centennial Library.

To find details of the development of the library, the only sources I could use locally were the library records, city hall records, newspaper files and library archives. I knew that it would add another dimension to the study if I could interview past associates and try to include biographical material, and I am sorry that I did not do so. Also I do not know whether there were documents relating to the library in the Provincial archives, for I did not pursue it.

Records for the library did not exist before 1895 because the premises where the library was located, the Masonic Temple, suffered a dreadful fire and it was disastrous for the library for all the records and the book collection were destroyed. The city hall records were complete but gave little insight into the workings of the library, except for finances, and of course the business of building the Carnegie Library. Newspapers were important for information about the early period, and luckily the present

library held all the newspapers on microfilm and had also indexed them for the period 1827 to 1871. There were however serious gaps in the newspaper runs from 1875 to 1895 because they had not been preserved. Newspapers continued in a full run after 1903.

Library memorabilia was very sparse and consisted of a catalogue of the Mechanics' Institute, a catalogue of the book collection in 1901, the architect's plans for the Carnegie library, a builder's contract for Roman stone used in the building and a letter of agreement from the Carnegie Foundation. There was also a mug with a picture of the Carnegie library on it. Some photographs and scrapbooks compiled after the late 1950s were the rest.

Here are some of the highlights of that research:-

The first entry referring to a library appeared in a notice in the St. Catharines Journal, Feb. 7, 1827 which said that subscriptions were being taken to form a circulating library. A hamlet of no more than three houses in the War of 1812 it had fast developed as a busy community due to the construction of the First Welland Canal which was completed in 1829. By 1827 its population was 400 and by 1829 had also established one of the first grammar schools in the Niagara Peninsula. The leading citizens had hopes of fostering libraries and reading rooms but none of their efforts lasted long. One newspaper stated that after the Second Welland Canal was built between 1842-1843, the engineers and contractors on the canal donated their scientific books to a reading and lecture group which later became the Athenaeum, the forerunner of the Mechanics' Institute. Even when a Mechanics' Institute was established on November 21, 1851, it soon languished for lack of support and the Journal admonished people for not paying their dues. It remarked "The

Institute does not get enough money from the boasting, flourishing and progressing community to pay current expenses of the year; and but for the £50 per annum granted by Government, could not exist."

It would appear that the Mechanics' Institute never had a building of its own and its rooms always seemed to be on the upper floor of a building. After it was saved by the Ontario Department of Education taking over the responsibility for these establishments, and after enabling legislation of 1882 and 1886 allowed it to become a Free Public Library, the bylaw passed by the city in 1888 still did not get it a permanent home. In 1888 the St. Catharines Free Public Library moved to rooms in the Masonic Temple. By 1892 it had 6,175 volumes and by 1895 it had none, for the whole book collection and all its records were lost when the Masonic Temple had a disastrous fire.

After the fire, the library's new abode was the upper floor of a building on Queen Street where the St. Catharines Standard Building is to-day, and it shared this upstairs with the Board of Trade and also shared some of the expenses. In some spirit of fair play, I suppose dictated by City Hall, lighting was supplied by the St. Catharines and Welland Gas Company from January to June and by the St. Catharines Light Company from July to December. In 1901 when the population of the city was 9,000 the library's book collection was also 9,000—not a bad effort after such a total loss in 1895. Membership was 2,000.

St. Catharines followed the idea prevalent at the time that it was sound economics to hire a woman in the library for she would cost less. Miss Sarah Waud, who was hired somewhere around 1875 was receiving a monthly salary of \$37.50 in 1890. When she was given two weeks' holiday her brother was hired "to keep her library open." From inferences, she was apparently a quiet, low voiced, unassuming

spinster, and not too robust—the outdated stereotype image. She had no responsibility for book selection, which was done by the Library Board. There was a complaint once about a board member who, it was suggested, was ordering books for the library which only he would be interested in. Once, the chairman of the Library Board filled in for Miss Waud when she was ill, and I found out that later he became the deputy librarian of the Legislative Assembly for the Province of Ontario—just an interesting piece of trivia.

Lending practices were also probably typical of this period. There was an annual fee of \$1.00 in advance, which entitled the borrower to one book at one time on one day. Those who were willing to pay a double fee could have a double borrowing privilege. The stacks were closed and had a three step procedure to order the book of one's choice.

It is difficult to understand why St. Catharines was so slow in providing the library with a building of its own, for it was by all standards a prosperous community. By 1901 the library rooms were very cramped and it was very inconvenient to have to climb the library stairs to the second floor every time one wished to borrow a book. This seemed to strike a chord in a local newspaper, the St. Catharines Daily Star which suggested that although St. Catharines was a prosperous city it did not project that image visually. The Star suggested that "A handsome public building would be a splendid and most appropriate addition to the city's institutions."

In 1901 some members of the Library Board and the mayor approached the Carnegie Foundation asking for financial assistance to help build a public library. After some negotiation, the Foundation agreed to grant the sum of \$20,000 provided the city would maintain the library from municipal revenues, and based the sum at \$2.00 per capita which

would be at that time \$2,500. The city agreed, and two civic minded citizens, the McSloy Brothers then offered to buy a suitable site. After the architect was chosen, he offered to donate his plans and services for old times sake. His name was Sydney Rose Badgley, and was a former St. Catharines boy who had gone to practice in Cleveland and was gaining a reputation for his church architecture. Just for interest, the latest issue of *Rotunda*, the magazine of the Royal Ontario Museum (Fall 1993), has an article which describes his association with the building of Massey Hall and the recent rediscovery of his stained glass windows.

One pocket of resistance for the new library was voiced by local trade unions who said "take back your gold" to the Carnegie Foundation, because they objected to Carnegie's labour practices. Plans for the new building did go ahead, however, although the city had to ask for an additional \$5,000, when it was found that the building could not be completed under the original grant. The request was granted.

The building of the library spanned the careers of three mayors. The first one took all the credit, but it was his successor who laid the cornerstone in August 26, 1903. He spoiled it a little by stating that the city had agreed to an annual grant of \$2,500 for the library (which was of course part of the agreement), then he announced that the city was going to give a like sum of \$2,500 to support "the development of muscle in the fine art of rowing." Certainly the Royal Canadian Henley was a worthy cause but his timing seemed to show where St. Catharines' heart really lay—in sports. The third mayor had the embarrassing task of petitioning the Carnegie Foundation for additional funds, this time because the city had not budgeted for the library furnishings. The Foundation declined, and the first mayor took pleasure in writing to the Foundation to applaud its decision, and to

reprove the City Council for its lack of foresight. There are two scrapbooks in the present library relating to this mayor's career, which are interesting because they include clippings from newspapers no longer available for this period. These scrapbooks were assembled by his wife and also have articles on the art of embalming, for he was also a noted undertaker.

The Carnegie Library opened in 1905 and from that time to 1950 all the head librarians were male. Sarah Waud did not get to serve in the new library (She died in 1903.) and her sister filled in for her until the new librarian could be appointed. These librarians did not seem to have any special training, and it is difficult to know who, Librarian or Board, might have suggested the purchase of the complete set of the translation of the Jesuit Relations or the order to subscribe to the Champlain Society publications from the beginning. There are several pleasant surprises in looking at some of the books which have survived to the present day.

It is not intended to be comparative, but one can say that the St. Catharines Public Library was not innovative, but it served its community by being primarily a lending library. It did develop a children's section in 1916. During World War I, it lent books to the troops guarding the Welland Canal and permitted a domestic science teacher the use of the basement to teach sewing, domestic science and millinery. By 1910 the concept of closed stacks disappeared and in 1921 it was permitted to borrow one book of nonfiction at the same time as one fiction title. The head librarian was finally made secretary to the Board, and another record of sorts, in 1926, one of the Board members celebrated fifty years of continuous service on the board.

In the 1930s we see that Jessie Warren joined the library staff at a salary of \$50.00 a month