

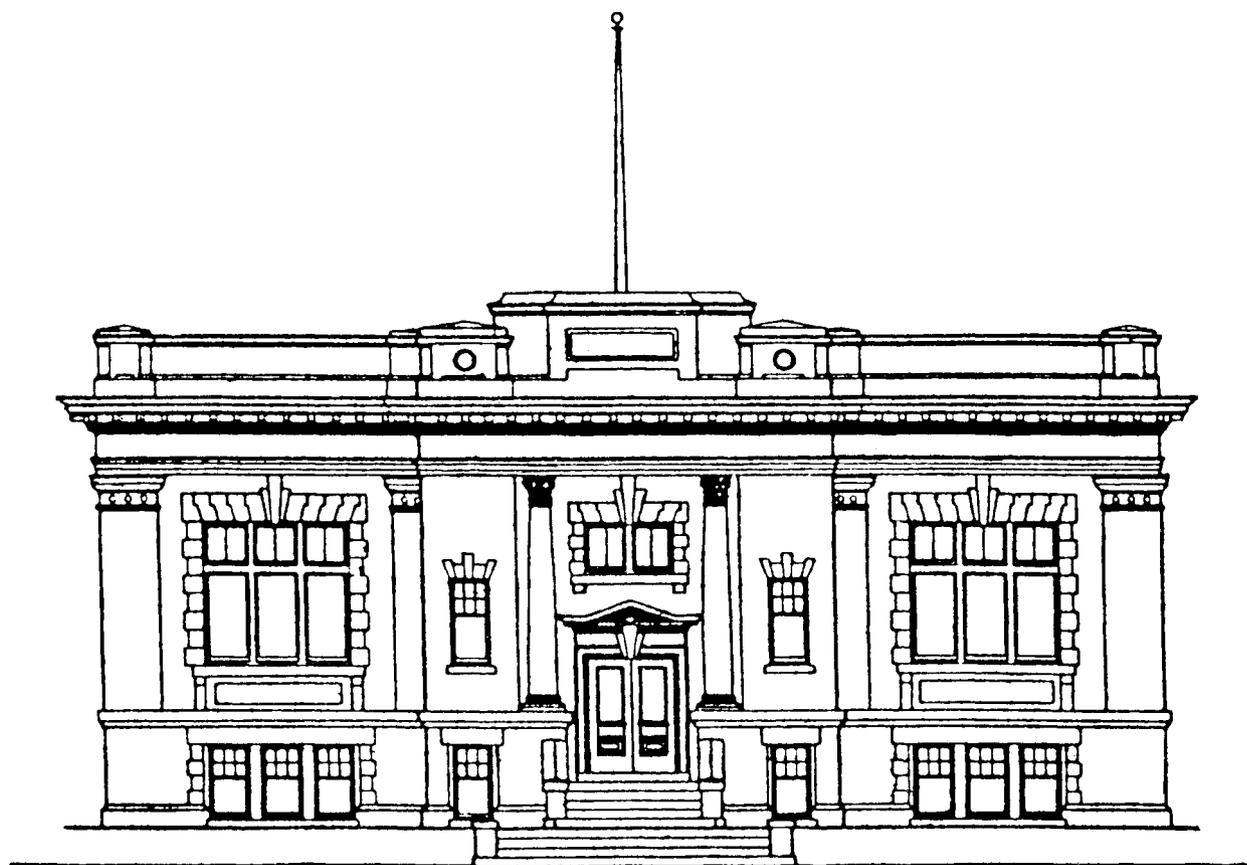
The Most Attractive Resort in Town:



Public Library Service in West Toronto Junction, 1888-1989

Barbara Forsyth and Barbara Myrvold

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1989

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Guide to Abbreviations

AO	Archives of Ontario
CTA	City of Toronto Archives
MTLB	Metropolitan Toronto Library Board
TBE	Records, Archives and Museum, Toronto Board of Education
TPLA	Toronto Public Library Archives
TPLAS	Toronto Public Library, Annette Street Library
TPLD/S	Toronto Public Library, Dufferin/St. Clair Library
WTJHS	West Toronto Junction Historical Society

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Preface

Annette Street Branch of Toronto Public Library initiated this history to commemorate its 80th anniversary, 1909-1989. Very quickly, however, we discovered that there has been a thriving library service in the Junction area of Toronto since 1888, when a mechanics' institute was established. Consequently, we expanded our terms of reference to include developments during the 21 years before 1909 as well. Since we wanted to place the library in its social context, we also included major community events and trends that influenced the library's growth.

We have based this history, whenever possible, on original documents, and are indebted to the staff of many libraries and archives for their assistance in finding material for us, namely: Toronto Public Library Archives, Annette Street Library, Boys and Girls House, Runnymede Library, Archives of Ontario, Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library, Toronto Board of Education Records and Archives Centre, City of Toronto Archives, Canadian Jewish Congress Archives, West Toronto Junction Historical Society Archives, and Sherman Swift Reference Library at the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

Several individuals were also very kind in sharing their memories and knowledge with us. Robert Hill provided information on James Ellis and William Connery from his forthcoming "Dictionary of Ontario Architects." Joan Miles and Diana Fancher gave us many invaluable leads. Ray Kennedy told us about the Canadian Pacific Railway's crucial role in the Junction's history. Anne Wright, Margaret Murray, Helen King, Helen MacMillan, Sandra McCallum, Katrin Soots, Ingrid Khasnabish, and Pat Bull gave us first-hand information about the library from their working days there. We thank them all.

A special thanks goes to Joan Miles and Marlene Archambeau for reading the manuscript and offering useful suggestions; to Diane Pickett for editing the text; to Brent Kearns who unearthed and confirmed information during his Seneca College field placement; and to the West Toronto Junction Historical Society for its financial assistance.

Barbara Forsyth and
Barbara Myrvold
Toronto, Ont.
August 1989

Introduction

Inspector Archibald . . . tells us that in his experience in the City of Toronto, both pool and billiard rooms have a most demoralizing effect on the community. Could not the present Mechanics' Institute be made the most attractive resort in the town, provided with first-class reading of all kinds, and various games of an innocent nature, so that young men would be encouraged to go there and improve themselves by so doing?¹

One hundred years ago, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) expressed this hope in a letter to the West Toronto *Junction Comet* newspaper. In the ensuing century, the library's name and location have changed several times. Its collections and services have grown and altered with the demands of twentieth century technology and society. Rather than promoting any particular moral code, the library now champions the principles of intellectual freedom. Nevertheless, the library in west Toronto has not strayed from the aspirations of those early citizens in that, today, it still endeavours to meet the community's needs for recreational and informational materials and activities.

Established in 1888 as the West Toronto Junction Mechanics' Institute, it was renamed Toronto Junction Public Library in 1895, then West Toronto Public Library in 1908/9. Upon West Toronto's 1909 annexation to the City of Toronto, it became the Western Branch of Toronto Public Library (TPL). In 1962, the TPL Board renamed the library Annette Street.

West Toronto Junction Mechanics' Institute, 1888-95

In the early 1880s, Daniel Webster Clendenan, a Toronto lawyer, and his uncle J. M. Laws purchased 240 acres bounded approximately by Dundas, Bloor, Keele, and Elizabeth (now Runnymede) streets. The land was laid out in building lots and the subdivision was named West Toronto Junction. By the late 1880s, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) had constructed shops, a station, and roundhouse there; and the area's population had reached about 900 people. In June 1887 the Village of West Toronto Junction was incorporated, receiving provincial assent 1 January 1888.

The village was still in its infancy when, early in 1888, a group of prominent citizens formed the West Toronto Junction Mechanics' Institute and set up a library.² The first board was headed by Robert Latham McCormack (1854-1917), a local businessman and village councillor. The vice-president was Dr. George Washington Clendenan, the village's coroner, medical officer of health, and school board trustee. A cousin of West Toronto's founder, Dr. Clendenan became its mayor from 1896 to 1898. The first



Mary McCormack Draper

Robert Latham McCormack, shown here ca. 1912, was first president of the West Toronto Junction Mechanics' Institute Board in 1888.

directors were equally illustrious civic leaders: David Lapp (village councillor 1888-9); Daniel W. Clendenan (reeve 1888-9, mayor 1891); Dr. John T. Gilmour (first editor of the *York Tribune* newspaper, MPP for North York 1886-94); Thomas Peake (hardware merchant, village councillor 1888, reeve 1890); Rev. A. C. Miles (rector at St. John's Anglican Church, 1888-94); Rev. James A. Grant (minister of Victoria Presbyterian Church, 1886-95). Little is known about the other two directors, painter F. A. Brooks and A. J. Reading.

Shortly after its establishment, the Institute made its first appearance in the Ontario Minister of Education's annual report.* It noted that as of 1 May 1888, West Toronto's total receipts and expenditures were \$175, and its assets were \$146.36.³ Most of its revenue came from a \$150 municipal grant from West Toronto Council. Its only other source of income was \$25 from the sale of memberships. (By the following year, however, there was also a legislative grant of \$114.) Two-thirds of its expenditures were devoted to books and periodicals; and, reflecting the didactic role ascribed to libraries at that time, \$97.75 of that amount was spent on non-fiction compared with \$12.65 on fiction. Incredibly, only \$12.35 was spent on rent and \$5 on salaries! At this early stage, the Institute owned 118 books, subscribed to 8 newspapers and 8 periodicals, and its 25

*Until 1900, the Minister of Education's annual reports were for the year ending 30 April/1 May. Therefore, any statistics from these reports bridge two years, e.g. 1889-90.

members had borrowed a total of 50 books.

Mechanics' Institutes, which began in Great Britain in the 18th century, had originally "attempted to educate all working men (mechanics) by setting up libraries, and offering classes ranging from philosophy to architecture and mathematics."⁴ However, the Institute at West Toronto, which charged an annual membership fee of one dollar, must have been almost prohibitively expensive for the labouring class there. In the 1890s, earnings of workers at the Junction were generally low. For example, local newspaper editor and historian Allan Berlin Rice (1858-1950) recalled: "In 1894 the CPR was paying its section men . . . \$1.25 per day of 10 hours, \$7.50 per week of 60 hours. . . . Girls worked in stores and offices for as little as three dollars a week."⁵

The Junction's first library was ideally situated at "the hub of the village" in the Campbell Block, a large three-storey structure erected in 1888, and later described as "the most ambitious building project in York West."⁶ The Mechanics' Institute paid \$73.70 in 1888-9 for rent, light, and heating in this prestigious block. By 1894, the Institute had moved its library and reading room to the second floor of Kilborn Hall, located at the northwest corner of Dundas and Van Horne (later Heintzman Avenue) streets. Architect James A. Ellis had designed the building,

and it was one of only a few large structures erected at West Toronto in the early 1890s.

Walter A. Thring was the secretary-librarian of the Institute from 1888 to ca. 1893. At first, the library's hours and salaries were limited, and clearly Thring considered his position part-time. The West Toronto *Daily Tribune* of 22 November 1890 advertised "Reading room, open every evening 7 to 10, Library open Wednesday evenings from 7 to 10; and Saturday 1 to 6, and from 7 to 10."⁷ In 1888-9, when the library's total expenditure for salaries was \$15, Thring also advertised his painting and decorating business. By the following year, annual library salaries increased dramatically to \$160, where they remained more or less until after the annexation to Toronto (with the notable exception of 1895-6). Thring, however, was still listed in the 1890 and 1891 Toronto city directories as "sign writer," and he had several other vocational interests besides. From 1888 to 1890, he either applied to be (or was) the municipality's assistant constable and lamp lighter, deputy returning officer, assessor, and health officer. In 1891, he was also secretary of the Loyal Orange Lodge.

Miss Elizabeth W. McCallum had become the Institute's secretary and librarian by April 1893. With her arrival, the library was open longer hours—"every afternoon from 3 to 6 and every evening from 7 to 10."⁸ Apparently collections

From 1888 to ca. 1893, the West Toronto Junction Mechanics' Institute located its first library and reading room in the Campbell Block, at the northwest corner of Dundas and Keele streets.



WALTER A. THRING,

THE

PIONEER PAINTER.

—•—

Sign Writing A Specialty.

Calsoining, Paper Hanging and general Decorating, &c.

W. A. THRING.

Residence, 28 25th St. (Formerly Law St.)

N.B.—Orders left with Secretary Mechanics' Institute, 10 Dundas St. west (Campbell Block) will be promptly attended to.

Thring was secretary-librarian of the West Toronto Junction Mechanics' Institute from 1888 to ca. 1893. As this advertisement shows, he also used the library as an office for his painting business.

also improved. In 1894, when the Mechanics' Institute had 1,221 volumes, the Toronto Junction *Leader* of 17 February reported it had "made a valuable addition to their already large library by purchasing a number of the latest books in travel, history, fiction, humour, etc., and can now boast of one of the finest circulating libraries in the Province."⁹ In 1949, A. B. Rice recalled:

. . . Miss McCallum diminutive of size, widely known and highly esteemed in the community and a most efficient librarian. There was no printed catalogue and such an aid to the library operation was unnecessary, for every volume with its location was registered on the tablets of Miss McCallum's wonderful memory.¹⁰

Evening classes began to be offered at the West Toronto Junction Mechanics' Institute in 1889-90 with courses in bookkeeping, arithmetic, and writing; and an enrolment of 43 students. In 1891-2, the curriculum was expanded to include programmes in English, Canadian History, grammar and composition (18 students); and freehand, geometry, perspective, model and blackboard drawing (15 students). No classes were offered the following year, and they were discontinued altogether from 1895.

Toronto Junction Public Library, 1895-1904: Financial Crisis and Recovery

In 1895, the provincial government consolidated all its previous legislation on free libraries and mechanics' institutes. The act required the West Toronto Junction Mechan-

ics' Institute to change its name but it altered little else. The renamed Toronto Junction Public Library was "not free," i.e. it still charged membership fees, and its revenue remained as before—dependent on these fees as well as municipal and provincial grants. This limited fiscal base put the library in great jeopardy when the town itself underwent a severe financial crisis in the 1890s, culminating in the infamous 1896 tax sale.

West Toronto Junction had grown quickly. On 23 March 1889, its population was over 3,000 and it was elevated to a town. Its boundaries were expanded to include Carlton and Davenport, two unincorporated villages to the northeast. By the early 1890s, the town had accumulated a huge debenture debt paying for services such as schools, waterworks, fire and police protection; and financing such large capital projects as the Keele Street underpass and Weston Road bridge (and their accompanying damage-compensation claims). Meeting the 4.5 per cent interest payments on the debt became increasingly difficult during the country-wide economic depression of the 1890s. West Toronto, dependent as it was on the railroad, was particularly hard-hit. The CPR cut wages or laid off workers, and many families left. Unpaid taxes on some 1,800 vacant parcels of land held by speculators increased the town's financial woes. This was particularly devastating because the Junction's taxes were based on landowners—as an enticement to relocate there, industry was exempt from taxation. Rice recalled the results. "At the beginning of 1895 . . . the town was a year in default of interest payments on a million dollars worth of its bonds . . . Tax revenue . . . was barely enough to pay the salaries of town officials and school teachers."¹¹

The effect on the library was particularly devastating. Receipts in 1895-6 plummeted 70 per cent from the previous year: from \$735.28 to \$221.17. The municipal grant



Town of West Toronto Junction coat of arms, 1889

fell to a mere \$20. While there was an unprecedented number of members (105), revenue from membership fees dropped to \$39.50. With such drastically reduced finances, it appears that the library at Toronto Junction had to suspend its operations for at least part of 1895-6. Its expenditures fell dramatically: only \$32 was spent on salaries and \$59.13 on rent. The 1896 Toronto Directory has no listing for the Toronto Junction Public Library.

Meanwhile, the bondholders wanted their interest payments, and forced the town to sell the vacant lots to recover back taxes. Nevertheless, by 1897 the picture was much brighter for both the town and the library. Rice viewed the tax sale as "the most important thing that happened to the Junction during the twenty years of its existence as a municipality," and the subsequent provincial Ross-Wood Report, which called for a new issue of bonds at a lower rate of interest, as "the turning point from dependency to hopefulness in West Toronto."¹² The Minister of Education's 1896-7 report showed the Toronto Junction Public Library was also back on its feet as receipts and expenditures soared to almost \$850.

Throughout the rest of the 1890s and into the twentieth century, the library's collections continued to grow. By 1904 apparently even Miss McCallum needed more than her incredible memory to guide her to the library's holdings and *The Catalogue of Books in the Toronto Junction Public Library* was printed at the *Leader and Recorder* newspaper office. It informed the public that "the library consists of 3,451 volumes of selected and well chosen literature of different classes,"¹³ including biography, fiction, history, literature, miscellaneous, poetry, religion, science and works of reference. The reading room subscribed to six Toronto dailies, eleven weeklies, and thirteen monthlies.

FREE READING ROOM.

In connection with the Library there is a free Reading Room. The Municipal Grant makes it possible to supply the tables and desks with the best periodicals and papers, to which the citizens have free access. The following papers may be found on the tables :

DAILIES—Mail and Empire, Globe, World, News, Star, Telegram.

WEEKLIES—Toronto Saturday Night, Toronto Junction Tribune, Toronto Junction Leader and Recorder, London Times (England), Christian Standard, The Templar, Scientific American and Supplement, Harper's Weekly, Illustrated London News, Tit Bits, New York Life.

MONTHLIES—Locomotive Engineer, Canadian Magazine, Munsey's, McClure's, Blackwood's, The Century, Nineteenth Century and After, Chambers' Journal, Boys' Own, Strand, Delineator, Ladies' Home Journal, The Pilgrim.

E. W. McCALLUM, Secretary and Librarian.

TPLA Toronto Junction Leader and Recorder, 1904, [3-4]

This excerpt from the 1904 *Catalogue of Books in the Toronto Junction Public Library* indicates that, at the turn of the century, Junction residents were given a fairly extensive and cosmopolitan selection of newspapers and magazines in the free reading room at their local library.

A membership fee of "only one dollar a year" was charged to those wishing to borrow books but the reading room was free to all. That year, the library had 181 members and issued 5,882 books.

The Carnegie Grant and Library, 1908-9

Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919), the Scottish immigrant who amassed a fortune manufacturing steel in the United States, made his first grant for Ontario library buildings in 1901. The following year, on 25 February, Toronto Junction librarian Elizabeth McCallum wrote to James Bertram, Carnegie's private secretary, asking for information on the grants. No reply is recorded as being sent, and it would be another six years before Junction officials attempted to contact Carnegie again.

By 1908, the library at the Junction still had only two small rented rooms in Kilborn Hall, known by then as the Bank of Hamilton Building—the library was 20 x 20 feet and the reading room 30 x 15 feet. New quarters were desperately needed, as then-board chairman A. B. Rice later explained in his unique writing and spelling style:

. . . prospects began to brighten as to Dundas St. real estate, it began to look like the library losing its comfortable home in the Kilburn [sic] building.

Finally proof that our fears were well founded came in the form of notice that we must vacate in time for alterations in the premises a few months hence. In vain, alternative premises were sought. There was nothing available in the town that could be used as a shelter for the library and it looked as if the town must wind up its library, dispose of its assets and deprive its patrons of what had for many years brought joy to their hearts as the source of supply of good books to read.

I called a meeting of the board of directors, explained the situation to my colleagues and asked their approval of my proposal to apply to Mr. Andrew Carnegie for a grant of \$20,000 to pay for the erection of a free library . . . The directors were readily acquiescent but were dubious as to the success of the effort.¹⁴

On 27 January 1908, Rice wrote the first letter in what was to be an intense correspondence with Carnegie (always through Bertram). As Miss McCallum had correctly surmised in 1902, the Carnegie library grant had only two conditions which had to be met and these had to be stated in a formal letter from town officials: first, that the town provide a building site; and second, that the town council should appropriate by taxation no less than ten per cent of the cost of the building for annual maintenance (i.e. books and staff).¹⁵ On 16 March 1908, Mayor Baird and the town council agreed to the two Carnegie conditions: i.e. "to procure a site for a Public Library and . . . an annual grant of not more than Two Thousand dollars for the main-

tenance of the Library.”¹⁶ Three days later Rice sent a certified copy of this resolution to Carnegie, but he must have felt the philanthropist needed further convincing, for he added his own letter boosting the Junction:

Toronto Junction is a rapidly growing Town and a bill granting it a City Charter and changing its name to West Toronto is now before the Legislature.*

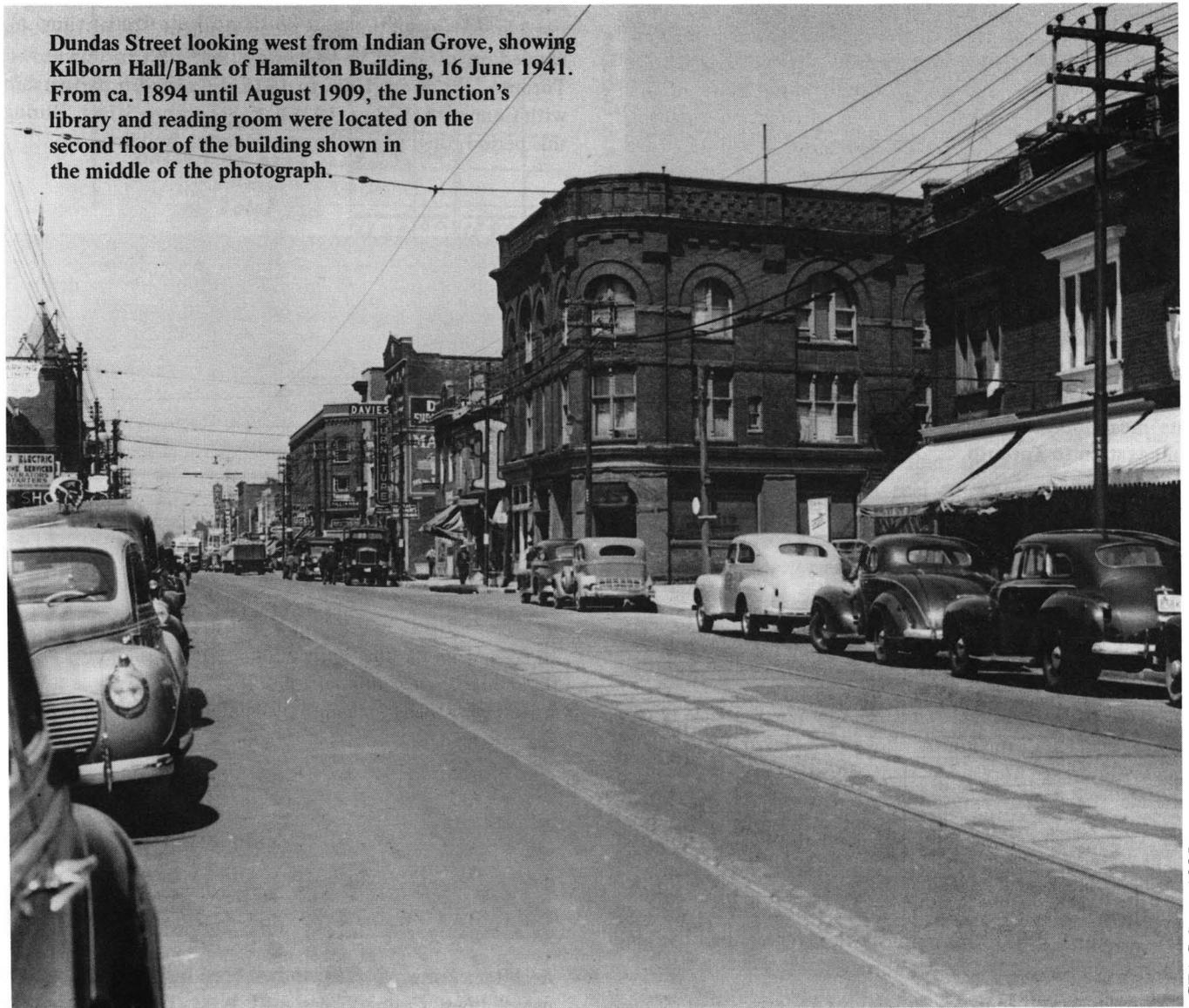
Although a suburb of Toronto, this Town has an importance independent of that which it derives from its proximity to that City. The work-shops for the Ontario division of Canadian Pacific Railway Company are here, and the excellent shipping facilities has

attracted to this place many large factories and the most extensive stock-yards in Canada with kindred industries.

Most of our citizens are therefore of the mechanic and working classes including locomotive engineers, machinists, iron-moulders, boiler-makers, piano-makers, etc., the very kind of a community on which a good library would exert a powerful influence.¹⁷

Carnegie, however, was still not satisfied and demanded a statement of the town’s assessment value from 1900 to 1908 which Rice quickly sent. The figures evidently convinced Carnegie of West Toronto’s financial viability, and Bertram conveyed the favourable decision on 6 April 1908:

*The City of West Toronto, with 12,563 citizens, was created on 14 April 1908.



CTA Salmon 1985



WTJHS, Allan Doner Rice Collection

Allan Berlin Rice, shown here in ca. 1922, was chairman of the West Toronto Public Library Board in 1908-9, during its most momentous period: the Carnegie grant and the annexation to Toronto.

If the City agree by resolution of Council to maintain a Free Public Library at a cost of not less than Two Thousand Dollars a year, and provide a suitable site for the building, Mr. Carnegie will be glad to give Twenty Thousand Dollars to erect a Free Public Library Building for Toronto Junction.¹⁸

Two or three suitable sites for the new Carnegie library were available. Apparently, however, Mayor W. A. Baird and Alderman Alexander Hain were anxious to locate it beside the property recently acquired by the Masons on the old Keele estate, which had been subdivided in 1906. The library board paid the subdividers, Toronto real estate dealers James Armstrong and John J. Cook, \$2,000 for two and one-half lots (4, 5, half 3); and the deed was registered on 26 June 1908. Rice enthusiastically described the land in his 22 July 1908 letter to Carnegie:

The site is centrally located on Annette Street which parallels Dundas Street, our chief Business

thoroughfare. Most of the Churches are on Annette Street and one of the finest of these, Victoria Presbyterian Church is on the opposite corner. Immediately west of our site land has been bought for a Masonic Temple which will be a fine building. Our site has a frontage of 90 feet on Annette Street by 85 feet on Medland Street. The Citizens are unanimous in the opinion that we have secured the best location for the purpose in the City.¹⁹

On 6 October 1908, the library board paid Armstrong and Cook another \$675 to acquire an additional 32 x 85 foot lot (part 2 & 3) immediately west of their original purchase. Seventy-one years later, this farsighted purchase provided a site for an addition to the library.

The contract for designing the new library was awarded to architects James A. Ellis and William Connery, who were paid \$1,000 for their work. Ellis (1856-1932), had moved to West Toronto Junction ca. 1891 where on Dundas Street East [today West], he established "the Business of registered architect and building superintendent."²⁰ In 1895, he opened an office at 4 Adelaide Street East in downtown Toronto. From ca. 1906 to 1915, Ellis was in partnership with Connery (1872-ca. 1933) at 18 Toronto Street. During this period, they planned many Junction buildings.



G. Mercer Adam, Toronto, Old and New

Architect James A. Ellis, shown here in 1891, and his partner William Connery designed West Toronto's Carnegie library in 1908-9.

J. A. ELLIS & W. CONNERY
 ARCHITECTS
 208 & 209 MANNING CHAMBERS

Progress Certificate No. 1 for \$ 800.00

Feb. 26 1909

To Secretary, West Toronto Public Library Board

We Hereby Certify that R. Paterson
 entitled to a payment of Eight Hundred Dollars
 for work done and materials supplied in the erection of
Plumbing & Steam Fitting in Library

Progress Statement No. _____
 In the _____ Department

Contract			1620	00
Additional Contracts				
Total -			1620	00
Previous Certs.				
This Cert.	800	00		
Draw back	215	00		
Balance on hand	605	00		
Total -	1620	00	1620	00

Ellis Connery
 C.E. Architect.

Received Eight Hundred
Dollars

in payment of the above Certificate, this
 day of 2 March 1909

\$ 800.00

R. Paterson

Throughout the construction of the Carnegie library in 1908-9, architects Ellis & Connery issued progress certificates to the library board's secretary, so the trades could be paid. R. Paterson was a Junction plumber.

On 22 July 1908, blue print copies of the architects' plans for the new library were sent to Carnegie with a request for his approval. Apparently this was given, and various trades were contracted for the building: masonry, Teagle & Son (\$7,515); carpenter work, Smith & McElroy (\$4,020); heating and plumbing, R. Paterson (\$1,620); plastering, Collyer & Lewis (\$1,525); painting and glazing, Jas. Casey (\$456); roofing and sheet metal work, A. Mathews (\$794); electric wiring, Gas and Electric Power Company (\$280); electric fixtures, McDonald & Willson (\$315); steel, McGregor & McIntyre (\$1,248); hardware, J. L. Vokes & Son (\$160); and furniture, Library Bureau of Canada (\$892).²¹

Construction magazine devoted three full pages in its September 1909 issue to exuberant praise of "West Toronto's New Public Library" noting: "It is a square, practically planned building, one story and basement in height, and designed with a modern classic feeling."²² The exterior featured "easy ascending steps," Corinthian columns, and a sandstone cornice. The main floor included a vestibule, rotunda, ladies and men's reading rooms, a ladies wash-room, reference room, stacks, and a board room. A high-

light was the rotunda's elaborate ceiling. The circulation desk, located opposite the entrance, enabled "the librarian or the clerks to have a commanding view of both reading room[s] and to exercise complete supervision over the entire floor."²³ In the basement, there was "a large lecture room occupying one half the floor space, a smoking room, men's lavatory, boiler and fuel compartments and work room."²⁴

Toronto Takes Over in 1909

On 1 May 1909, the City of West Toronto's 11,686 citizens and 1,603.6 acres were annexed to the City of Toronto. (Junction residents often preferred to use the term "amalgamation" rather than "annexation.") With this annexation, Toronto Public Library (TPL) took over the building, collections, and operations of the West Toronto Public Library Board. TPL quickly made plans to integrate the Junction Library into its system. Although the Carnegie building was not yet finished, TPL's chief librarian George H. Locke took action to ensure that library service in the annexed city would not be unduly affected, as he reported on 8 June:

I made arrangements with the Bank of Hamilton, in whose building the old library was, that they extend the lease for one month; this they consented

to do for the sum of \$16.60. . . . I have arranged to have the library opened on Wednesday and Saturday for reading purposes but not for the circulation of books. This will be in effect until the 1st of July, when I expect the new library will be ready for occupancy.²⁶

Staff for the new library caused concern in West Toronto well before the annexation, as Rice later recalled:

Nobody was more delighted than Miss McCallum with the news of the new library, but she could hardly keep back tears when she added that her job was finished. She thought she would be supplanted by a man librarian. I told her that public sentiment would not permit such a change and that anyway amalgamation of the cities was just around the corner and she would be taken care of by the Toronto Library board but she refused to believe it.²⁶

Apparently Rice and his West Toronto Public Library Board took some initiative to ensure its librarian would secure a position in TPL, and made her eleventh-hour promises which TPL, in turn, felt obliged to keep. At its 16 July 1909 meeting, the TPL Board resolved to honour:

. . . the agreement entered into between the old Board of the West Toronto Library and Miss McCallum, who at that time was the librarian, that Miss McCallum be taken into the service of this Board, at a salary of \$35.00 a month which she had been promised as soon as the new library building was equipped.²⁷

Elizabeth McCallum's salary was a considerable increase over her old board's 1909 rate of \$20 monthly. (Interestingly, at the same time, the West Toronto Library Board was paying Mr. J. H. Doner, the library's caretaker, \$64.08 a month!)²⁸ Miss McCallum was given special orientation to TPL. On 8 June 1909, Locke reported to the TPL Board's Library Committee that she "is now in attendance each afternoon, except Wednesday and Saturday, at the College Street Branch, being instructed in our method of work."²⁹ Six weeks later, she was considered to be sufficiently familiar with TPL's "method" to "assume control of the West Toronto Library on the 1st of August."³⁰

The library was finally completed on 31 August 1909, and the following day the reading room opened to the public. It would be some weeks, however, before the circulating department was ready since, as Locke related to his Board's Finance Committee at its 7 September meeting, "the books had to be accessioned, classified and labelled."³¹ (By September 1909, TPL had spent \$500 above the \$20,000 contributed by Carnegie, and had insured the building and permanent fittings for \$15,000.)

The formal opening of the new library at West Toronto took place on Monday evening, 27 September, and, according to *The Toronto Star*, "the auditorium . . . was well

filled."³² Norman B. Gash, chairman of the TPL Board's Library Committee, supervised the proceedings. "Addresses were given by Mr. Kelly, Chairman of the Board of Management, the Chief Librarian, A. B. Rice, Chairman of the old Library Board of West Toronto, and some civic officials [Alderman Baird, Controllers Hocken and Geary]."³³ In his speech, Hugh T. Kelly pointed out that "by annexation the citizens of Ward Seven had access to one of the largest libraries in Canada," i.e. TPL's central reference library. He also stated his belief "that the aim of a public library should be to elevate the moral standing of the community,"³⁴ echoing the WCTU's sentiments 20 years earlier. Miss K. Ellis and Mr. J. S. Hill added to the festivities by singing solos.

The new library was called Western Branch, a name which closely resembled that of the former municipality.* Apparently George Locke "wanted libraries named after the geographic names of Toronto to preserve the city's heritage."³⁵

Western Branch, Toronto Public Library, 1909-29: Growth of Collections, Circulation, and Programmes

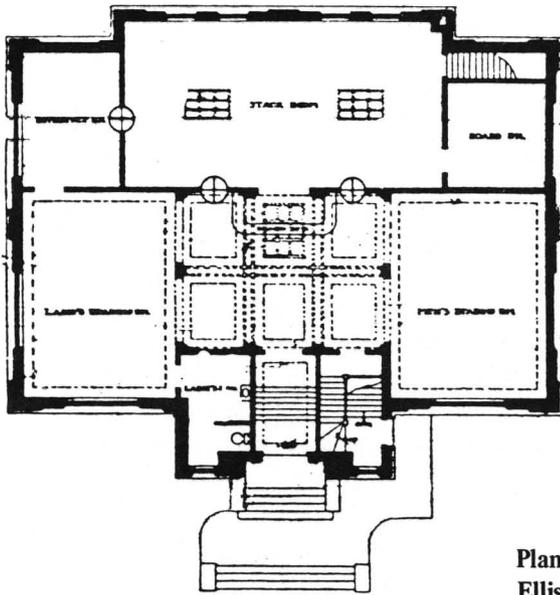
The library now had its own accommodations and settled into being an integral part of the neighbourhood. In 1909, once a permanent janitor was appointed, the reading rooms and circulating department were open every afternoon and evening (except Sunday) from 1:30 to 9 p.m. (The circulating department was closed for the hour between 6 to 7 p.m.)³⁶ By 1918, the library was open from 2 to 9 p.m., but was closed Wednesday as well as Sundays.

Western's large basement lecture room, a feature not common in TPL branches of the day, caused the Board concern almost immediately. In October 1909, the West Toronto Festival Chorus requested use of this space, and, in response, the Board drafted what it called a "distinctly experimental" policy. Persons or organizations were to be charged four dollars for each evening and had to agree to pay any damages. Nothing, however, was to be "held in the auditorium that would interfere with the main purpose of the Library, namely, that of the Reading Rooms."³⁷

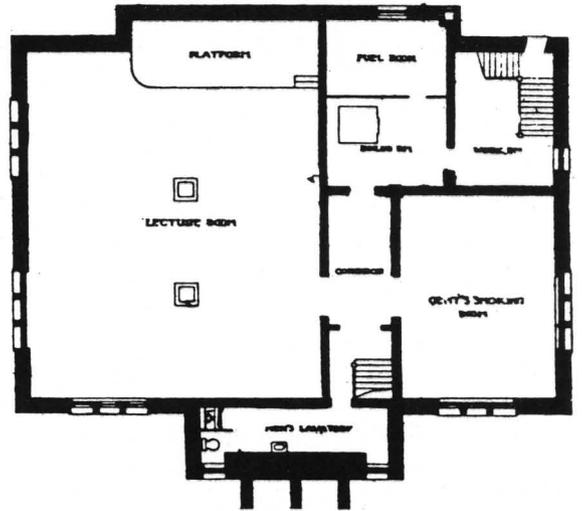
During the 1910s and 1920s, the branch inaugurated a strong service for adolescents. In 1915, a High School Room opened at the branch, which the *Toronto Evening Telegram* reported was for "pupils of High, Public, and Separate Schools. Special books of instruction are kept to aid the school students."³⁸ Lillian H. Smith, head of TPL's children's department, acknowledged "the hearty co-operation of the teachers of the HumberSide Collegiate Institute and of the Public Schools in the district. The result was an immediate jump in circulation and a greatly increased reading room attendance."³⁹ In the 1920s, the classes from HumberSide and Western Technical and Commercial High

*This was TPL's second Western Branch. The first was located in St. Andrew's Market at Richmond and Brant streets. It opened in February 1884 and closed at the end of May 1909.

Ground level

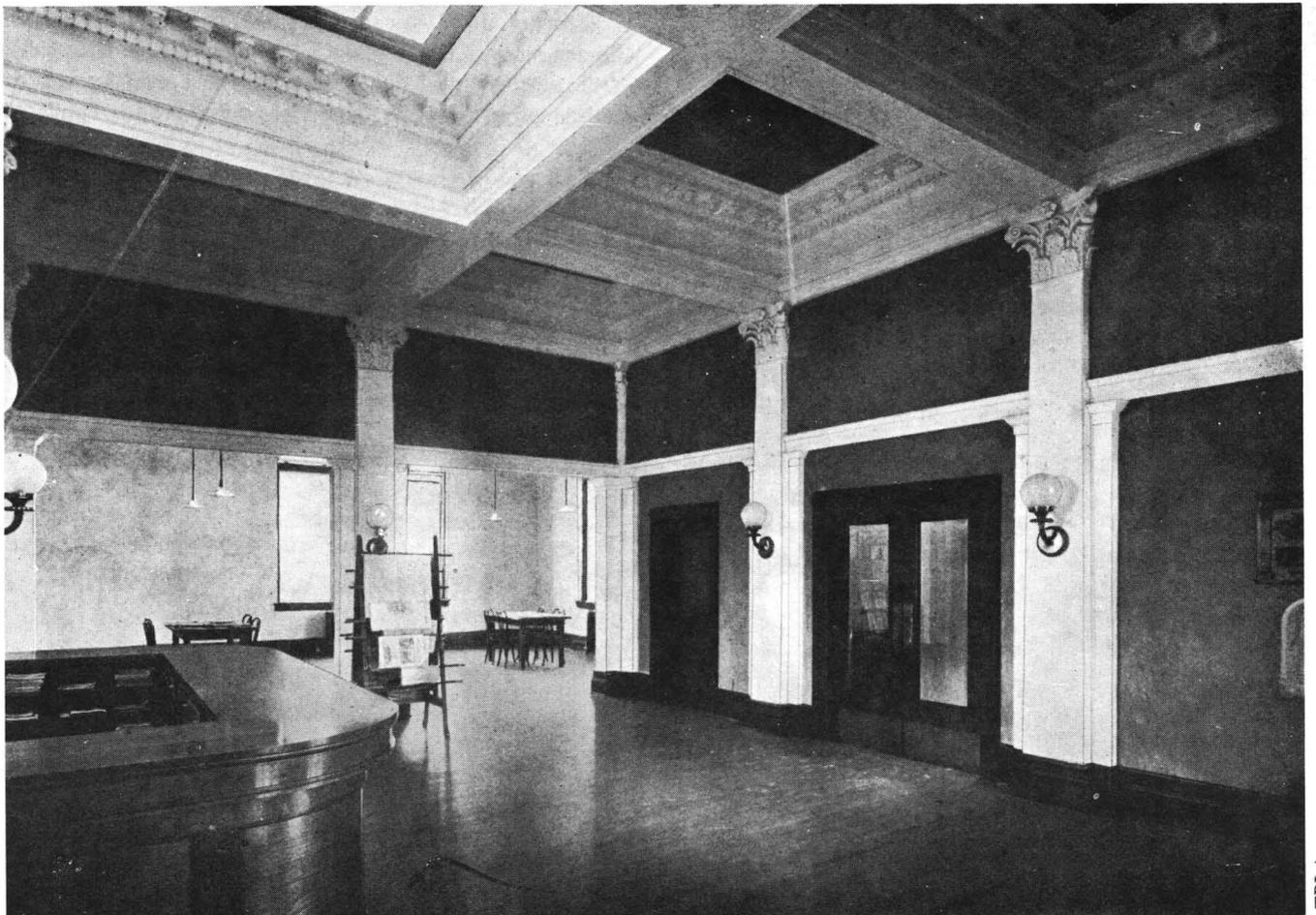


Basement



Construction, September 1909

Plans of Public Library West Toronto, 1908-9
Ellis & Connery Architects



TPLA

September 1909 *Construction* magazine gave this description of Western Branch's rotunda: "The walls are finished in a brown toned stucco; the pilasters, capitals and cornice in white keen cement; and the ceiling crossed with enriched white plastered beams forming deep recessed panels, the centre of which providing a skylight over the delivery desk."

School began to visit the library “for instruction in the use of the catalogue, arrangement of books, and use of reference material.”⁴⁰ In 1927, the branch broadened the scope of its teenage service “so that the student who was to leave school might still be guided along educational lines.”⁴¹ Links were established with social organizations such as the Big Brother and Sister movements and the Neighbourhood Workers’ Association and in 1928, branch head Annie C. B. Millar could report, “we have been able to guide a number of older boys and girls in their reading.”⁴²

In the 1920s, the branch became an “enthusiastic participant” in the adult education movement, and instituted several ambitious and well-attended book-based programmes. In 1925, George H. Locke presented a talk on Canadian literature inaugurating a lecture series, which Miss Millar hoped would “fill the definite need in our community of a centre where matters of a purely literary character may be discussed.”⁴³ A young women’s reading study group was also formed. The following year, the library offered more public lectures on “various subjects of literary or

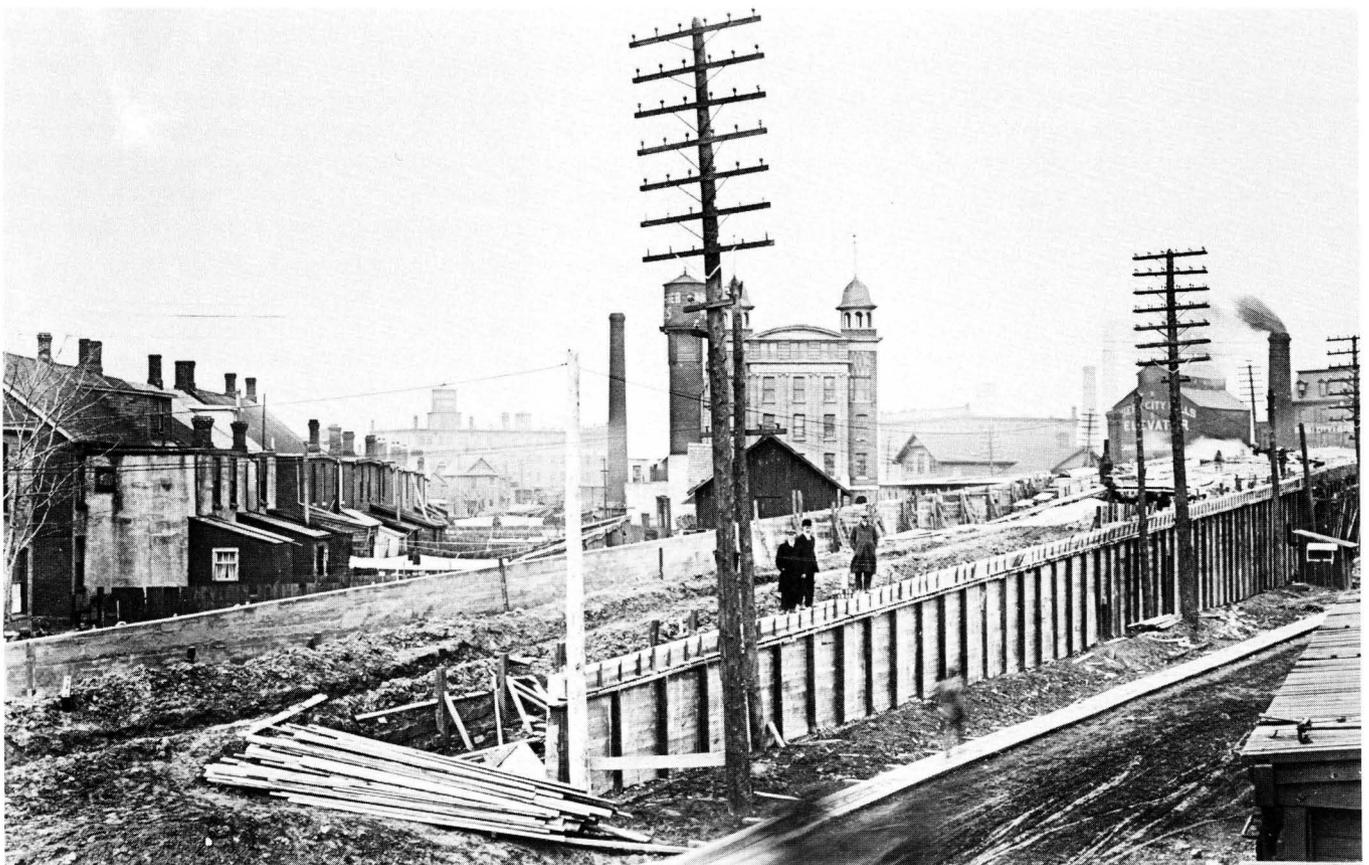
Construction of the second Weston Road bridge, 13 April 1911. The row of houses are on Hook Avenue, where librarian Elizabeth McCallum lived for more than 30 years. It bordered the Junction’s industrial section (from left to right): Heintzman Piano Company, Nordheimer Piano Company, Comfort Soap Works, CPR station, and Queen City flour mills.

practical interest,”⁴⁴ and started a drama league. Miss Millar noted: “We have attempted to maintain a high standard in our choice of plays.”⁴⁵ In 1926, the group read works by Ibsen, Shaw, and Barrie; presented the miracle play *Secunda Pastorum* in Humberside Collegiate’s auditorium; heard an address by Fred Jacob on “Modern Dramatic Tendencies in America” and read his play *Autumn Blooming*.

Yet another book-oriented programme commenced in 1928. It was called “Open Forum . . . at which some of the important books of the year were reviewed and discussed.”⁴⁶ Apparently, Miss Millar was pleased to have citizen involvement in the library:

People taking part in the discussion were members of the community who are interested in literature . . . and their opinions of the new books are becoming more or less an index to us of the taste of the community. This is a welcome idea because it shifts the onus of censorship from the librarian to the leaders of the community, and makes the role of a librarian less like that of a deaconess.⁴⁷

January 1928 saw a milestone pass in the Junction library story. Elizabeth McCallum, whom Rice later called “the most faithful public servant I have ever known,”⁴⁸ retired after 19 years of service with Toronto Public Li-



brary and over 35 years in the west Toronto district. She had stepped down as branch head in 1917/8, and, because of her “advancing years,” had been working part-time for most of 1927 (at \$35 a month).

Elizabeth McCallum is an example of the unhappy fate that often befell single women in the days before adequate salaries and pensions or pay equity. During her working years, her wages were too small to accumulate many investments for her old age, e.g. she rented lodgings, often from relatives the Rosevears, near the Junction’s less pleasant industrial areas (e.g. on Hook Avenue, Union Street). As previously noted, in 1909, when Miss McCallum was single-handedly running the Junction’s library, she earned three times less than the male caretaker. Because she was not initially covered by TPL’s pension scheme, she had to work long past her 65th birthday, and her final pension was only \$35 a month. Anne Wright, who was hired temporarily in 1927 to replace Miss McCallum, recently recalled the old librarian was 82 years old at the time of her retirement!⁴⁹ Sadly, eight years afterwards, Elizabeth McCallum was “declared incompetent to manage her own affairs, having had her estate put under charge of the public trustee.”⁵⁰

The 1920s witnessed a steadily increasing level of staff education at Western. Jean Taylor was hired along with Anne Wright in 1927, and both possessed Bachelor of Arts degrees. Jean McLaurin, a graduate of the Ontario Library School, came to the branch in 1928.

TPL’s first two decades at West Toronto saw the book stock increase 400 per cent from 5,638 volumes in 1910 to 18,887 in 1928; and, over the same period, the circulation of books rise proportionately from 29,248 to 122,460 items. Only in 1918, when the influenza epidemic forced all TPL branches to close for most of October, did Western’s steadily rising circulation dip slightly. (By comparison, in 1988 the branch had a stock of 44,469 books and other materials, and circulated 113,505 items.) In 1922, the branch was closed for August, a tradition that lasted until 1974.

There were improvements to the building as well. In 1915, the branch’s grounds were provided with “an attractive setting of flowers and shrubbery.”⁵¹ The following year, the *Evening Telegram* reported “The interior has been redecorated, new book shelves and electric fixtures have been installed in all the rooms. . . . An illuminated sign is being erected outside the library.”⁵² In 1927, the library was redecorated and the roof repaired.

Library for the Blind, 1911-17

In 1911, the TPL Board granted free use of a basement room at Western to the Canadian Free Library for the Blind. The library relocated from Markham and began operating at the branch on 1 October 1911. In addition to providing the space, the TPL Board “decided to hand over . . . the [50-60] books for the blind which had formerly been included in our Library on Church Street.”⁵³ By 1916, TPL was also providing “a contribution towards the pur-



Canadian National Institute for the Blind

Marion Maynard Robinson operated the Canadian Free Library for the Blind, first from 1908 to 1911 at her Markham, Ontario home (shown here), then from 1911 to 1913 at Western Branch of Toronto Public Library. Her husband, Edgar Bertram Freels Robinson started the library in 1906 and managed it until his death two years later.

chase of the special books.”⁵⁴

Mrs. E. B. F. Robinson, whose husband had started the library, ran it until September 1913 when Sherman C. Swift (1879-1947) took over. Swift, blind from age 10, eventually became “the key person in library work for the blind in Canada and one of the foremost figures in this field on the continent.”⁵⁵ Today the reference library at the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, an organization he was instrumental in establishing in 1918, is named in his honour.

The years from its inception in 1906 to its departure from Western in 1917 saw rapid growth of this special library. Membership rose from 26 to 477, and the number of volumes increased from 81 to nearly 6,000. In addition, there were 1,323 pieces of music by 1917.⁵⁶ While TPL initially thought the library would serve only Ontario, the Toronto *Daily News* of 18 February 1914 reported that braille books “are sent to many blind patrons in all parts of the Dominion.”⁵⁷ During the First World War, the library’s emphasis changed somewhat, as large numbers of soldiers returned home blind. The Toronto *Daily Star* of

of 23 March 1916 noted that the "West End Library is Making Preparations to Teach the Afflicted" by:

. . . fitting these men to secure suitable and remunerative positions. Although the present inadequacy of facilities limit their ambition, classes of young ladies interested in the work have been formed to teach the soldiers to read and write. . . . The local library is already open to place responsible men in a position to earn a modest but certain independence by taking agencies for tea, coffee and cocoa.⁵⁸

The library's ability to serve the blind was hampered by a lack of space. By the end of 1916, however, alternate quarters had been found, as TPL Board chairman Norman Gash noted in his annual report:

We are extremely pleased . . . to know that the Provincial Department of Education, in co-operation with Toronto University, has provided more central and commodious premises for this deserving undertaking, on College Street, in close proximity both to the University and our own Reference Library.⁵⁹

In March 1917, the library for the blind was relocated to 142 College Street, and two years later it amalgamated with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

Western Branch, 1930-61: Peak and Decline

The Depression decade put tremendous stresses on the staff and resources at Western Branch, as it did on most public libraries in Canada. With so many unemployed having enforced leisure time, the circulation of materials at Western increased dramatically during the 1930s, reaching an all-time high of almost 158,000 volumes in 1934. Fortunately, some pressure was removed when TPL opened Runnymede Branch in November 1930 at Bloor Street West and Glendonwynne Avenue. (By this time several other TPL branch libraries were already operating in the west end, e.g. Dovercourt (now Bloor and Gladstone) opened in 1913, High Park in 1916, Earlscourt (now Dufferin/St. Clair) in 1921.) As well, on 13 December 1945, TPL started library service at Runnymede Hospital, "open and wards visited on Thursday."⁶⁰

During the Second World War, circulation at the branch began to decline and this trend continued well into the post-war period. By 1949 use of books had dropped to 92,000, about 42 per cent less than in 1934. Ten years later, circulation had fallen even further, to a record low of 63,792 items in 1959. There are several possible explanations for this sharp decline.

In the war years, many people were overseas, and those at home did not have as much spare time for reading. By the late 1940s, West Toronto's middle-class, traditionally strong library users, were leaving the area for more desirable housing in the new suburbs being created in Etobicoke and York.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the Canadian Pacific Railway, whose operations had originally caused the Junction community to be established, closed most of its shops there and relocated to new facilities in Agincourt. The effect on the Junction was profound. Between 1955 and 1960, some 1,500 men were laid off or transferred. Ray Kennedy, a long-time CPR employee, recently recalled that, during this period, the number of workers at the Lambton roundhouse was reduced from 222 to 49. The CPR's move also started the decline of the thriving commercial strip along Dundas Street, which had catered to railway workers and their families. (By this time, all the railway workers were unionized and relatively well paid.) Many stores and all the movie theatres closed, and by the 1970s, the once-prosperous street had become a collection of discount and second-hand shops.

But there were also problems with the library's collections and services, which were slow to reflect changing community needs and demands. Even before its 1909 annexation to Toronto, the ethnic composition of the Junc-

Cheesman's Lending Library

The Latest in
Fiction, Romance and Mystery



Cigars, Cigarettes, Tobaccos
Magazines and Stationery
PROMPT AND CAREFUL
PRESCRIPTION SERVICE

CHEESMAN'S
DRUG STORE
242 ANNETTE STREET

At Quebec Ave.

Phone JUnc. 5329

In the 1930s, Junction drugstores such as Cheesman's and Owl competed with TPL's Western Branch for readers. The lending libraries at the drugstores offered, for a fee, up-to-date popular books.

tion had started to change, and by the Second World War, there were significant groups of Jews, Macedonians, Poles, Ukrainians, and Maltese. The area was attractive to immigrants because it provided employment in companies such as the CPR and Heintzman Piano Factory, and industries such as meat packing and iron and steel. It also offered inexpensive, yet pleasant housing close to work. Before long, these ethnic groups had established businesses and religious organizations in the neighbourhood.

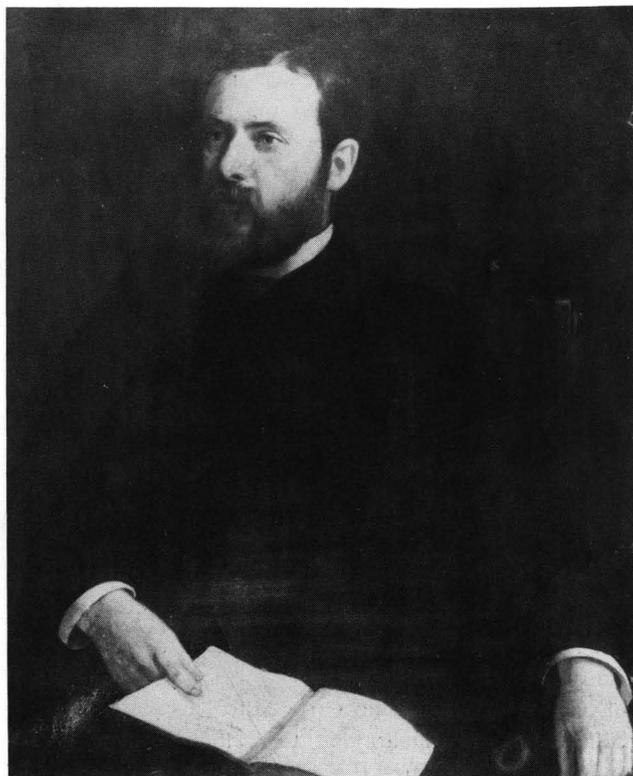
Although TPL had so-called foreign language books at its Central Library from 1885, books in languages other than English were not a part of Western's (or any other branch's) collections until the late 1950s. In 1956, when post-war immigration to Toronto was in full swing, Western still had only 558 "foreign" books. The following year, the situation began to change when TPL's new chief librarian Henry C. Campbell set up a Foreign Literature Centre to order, house, and distribute multilingual books to the branches. By 1963 the collection included sixty-odd languages, and there were 11,000 books in the centre and 22,000 books in the branches.

The TPL Board was slow to provide other services for ethnic groups. On 10 February 1942, it considered a request from Mr. G. Agar of the Community Welfare Council to use the boys and girls room at Western Branch each week for teaching English to new Canadians. The Board decided to turn Mr. Agar down. While believing "his project was admirable in every way," the Board's policy was "not to hand over the use of rooms in Branch Libraries to outside organizations" and, besides it felt "formal instruction was part of the function of the educational authorities of the city, whereas the function of the Library Board was the provision of printed materials for the use of the community."⁶¹

There were some local efforts though. In 1916, the Toronto *Evening Telegram* reported "The Mothers' Club of Ward Seven are supplied with books from this library [i.e. Western] for use in their work. About 50 per cent who attend are Jewish."⁶²

At this time, Western's English language book collection also did not always reflect community tastes. Librarians were sometimes elitist in their selections and declined to buy a lot of popular materials. Moreover, from 1926 until the late 1950s, there were only about 2,000 annual additions to Western's book stock which remained more or less at about 18,000 volumes. The branch may not have had enough current material to satisfy public demand. In the 1930s, Junction drugstores such as Owl and Cheeseman's set up lending libraries where, for a fee, one could borrow "the Latest in Fiction, Romance and Mystery."⁶³ There were, however, some innovations. Western Branch introduced a circulating collection of music records in 1961. Rental fees (and tax) were charged, but it was the only branch in Toronto outside the Central Music Library to have such materials.

Another example of the TPL Board's detachment from the community was its rejection of locally significant arti-



Corporation of the City of Toronto

In 1941, the TPL Board removed from Western Branch and gave away this 1890 J. W. L. Forster oil on canvas portrait of Daniel Webster Clendenan, West Toronto Junction's founder, first reeve, first mayor, and member of its first Mechanics' Institute board. Happily negotiations are in progress for the portrait to be returned to the branch.

facts. Apparently, Western Branch housed several portraits of West Toronto mayors. These were removed during a re-decoration in 1941. Allan B. Rice, still an avid local booster, was concerned that these and other mementos of West Toronto's years as a separate municipality be preserved. On 14 October 1941, he asked the TPL Board to have the mayors portraits re-hung. He also reported "an offer . . . of the mayoral chair used by and presented to Dr. George W. Clendenan, former mayor of Toronto Junction, suggesting that the chair be placed in the Western Branch Library."⁶⁴ His requests met with a cautious response at the Board's next meeting, and the matter was "referred to the chief librarian [Charles R. Sanderson] for further investigation and action."⁶⁵ Evidently TPL decided to turn down the gift of the chair and give the portraits away. Clendenan's mayoral chair was eventually given to the Masonic Temple next door to the library—George Clendenan had been a Mason—where it languished for about 45 years before being thoroughly restored in the mid-1980s. The five mayoral portraits of Daniel W. Clendenan, George W. Clendenan, James Bond, William Pears, and George J. St. Leger were given to the City of Toronto, and are now in its Market Gallery.

During these decades, the only other events at Western to command the attention of the TPL Board were infre-

quent complaints from the community, and requests from staff for building improvements and repairs. Funds were provided for the branch to purchase new electric light fixtures for the rear part of the ground floor in 1930; to replace the boiler in 1937; to redecorate the library and install new book shelves in 1943; and to remove the exterior cornice and cement over the area in 1955.

Children's Services, 1909-61

When Western Branch opened in September 1909, it had 660 juvenile books and these circulated extremely well during the four months the library was open that year (4,122 times). With Lillian H. Smith's 1912 appointment as head of TPL's children's department, branch collections and programmes for boys and girls greatly improved. In November 1912, a separate children's room opened at Western Branch with Miss Bessie Staton in charge. Miss Smith noted "there has been a steady increase in the use of the children's room for reading and reference purposes, and it has been possible to give much individual help in the selection of books."⁶⁶ By 1916 the stock of children's books at Western had almost tripled to 1,643 volumes, and circulation nearly quadrupled to 22,665. The following year, Miss Smith reported that overcrowding in the branch's children's area had "become so acute to necessitate opening a new children's room downstairs."⁶⁷ On 22 February 1917, both the *Toronto Globe* and the *Toronto Daily News* fully reported its opening. "Tea was served to the four or five hundred ladies who came in response to the general invitation."⁶⁸ Apparently, however, "the demand was more for talk than tea, and Miss Smith declared: 'I can't get people away from the books to give them tea.'"⁶⁹ The room itself also drew notice:

Here is a white, well-proportioned room with a colonial fireplace in which a real fire burns and about which Miss Stauffer, the librarian in charge, will gather the children to tell them stories of real lands and fairy lands, of wonderful people of fact and fiction, and of those things that have made their country great. Low white book-cases with open shelves run all around the room, and above them the windows are hung with straight curtains of peacock blue. Long, low tables provide elbow room for little people and space for spreading out the vehicles of romance and history.⁷⁰

After Gladys Stauffer left Western in 1917, she was followed by a succession of other dedicated and well-remembered children's librarians such as Susy Robinson 1922-27, Kitty Burkhardt 1936-52, Helen King 1954-58, and Marion Hagerman 1958-62.

Children's collections and circulations increased steadily at Western in the late 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s. By 1938, there were 6,598 juvenile books and 61,295 circulations, both about two-thirds higher than 1917's statistics. During these years, the circulation fell only twice, both times due

to disease. In 1918, parents prevented their children from using the library because they feared books would spread the influenza contagion. Miss Burkhardt explained the 1937 circulation decrease in her September day book entry, "Owing to a particularly bad epidemic of infantile paralysis school has been closed all month and we are not allowed to have any story hours."⁷¹

By the 1930s, children's work at the branch had settled into a well-established routine. Librarians spent most mornings visiting or receiving school classes, some local (e.g. Annette Street, St. Cecilia's, Keele, Western Avenue [renamed Indian Road Crescent in 1937]); and some a distance away (e.g. St. Rita's, Carlton, Lambton Park, Strathcona, Roselands, Perth, and St. Mathews, "miles away on Lavender Road"). The stories and book talks they presented were, by today's standards, at a high level, e.g. Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* to Senior IIIs (the modern equivalent is Grade 6) at Carlton, and Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* to Junior IVs (now Grade 7) at Keele.

Generally, the children's librarians spent afternoons at the branch, where the room was open daily (except on Wednesdays and Sundays) from 1 (beginning 1918, 2 p.m.) to 6 p.m. On Saturdays, when the children's library was also open mornings from 10 to 12 noon, story hours were a regular feature. Puppet shows were a treat and, in the pre-television age, exceptionally well attended. In 1935, Western's presentation of "Little Black Mingo" attracted audiences of 160 to 200, and was so successful it was taken to several local schools and other TPL branches.

The Second World War affected life in Western's children's department. In 1940, when TPL placed a collection of children's books at Hart House for British boys and girls evacuated to Canada, Western (along with Runnymede and Wychwood branches) provided "650 books clean & in good condition."⁷² The following year, the IODE used a room at Western (and at the Central Library) to store and sort magazines for the soldiers, and the librarians and children helped out. In September 1940, Western had its first evacuee join the library—"a lad from Bristol," and in October a "father in khaki" brought his children to the library, remarking "This is the best fun I've had in my three days leave."⁷³

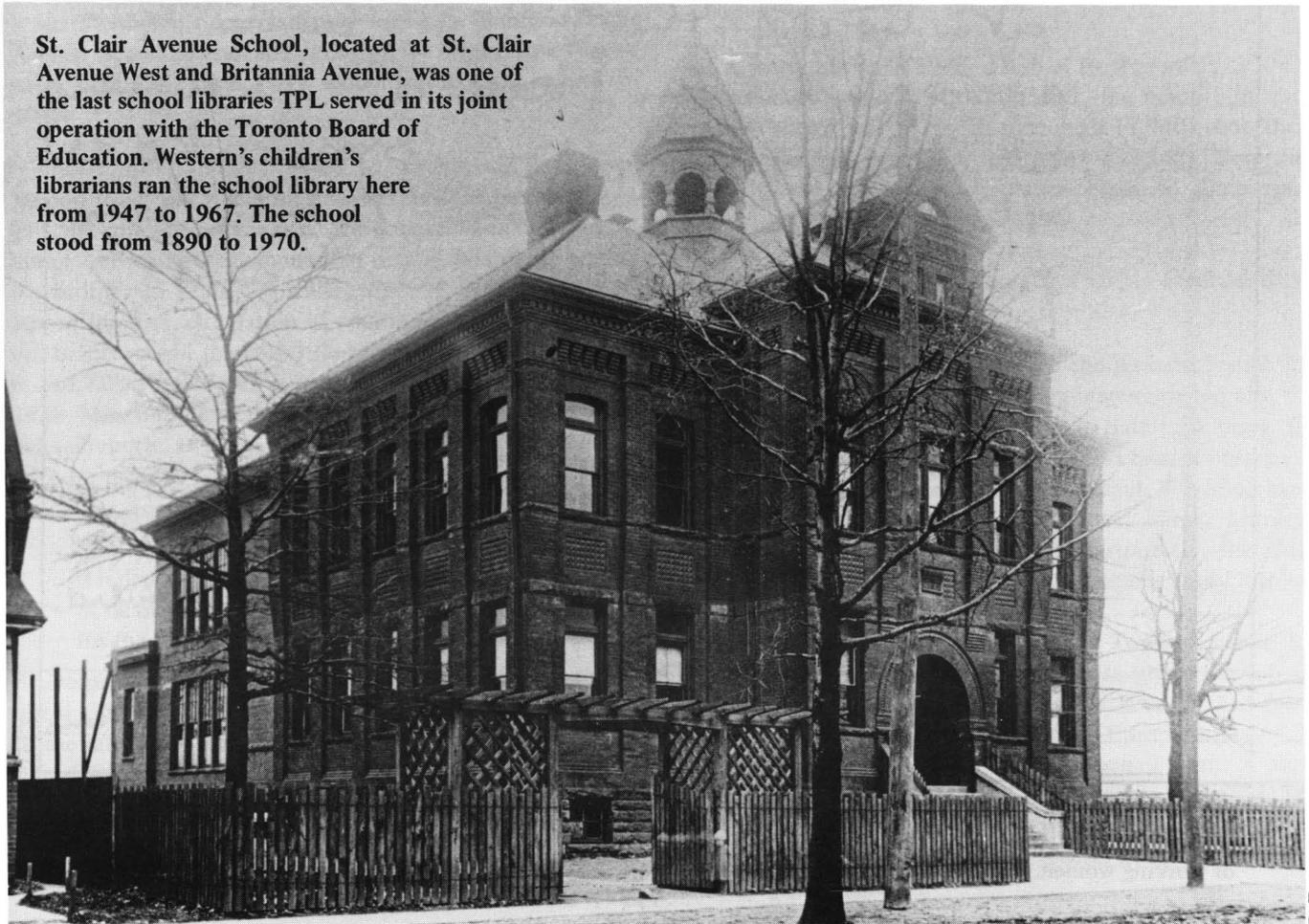
The war years also saw several improvements and innovations in the branch's facilities and services for children. In 1940, a "hazardous floor" was replaced and the children's room was redecorated—red floor, white shelves, and pale green walls. More significantly, during this decade, Western children's librarians began managing libraries in three schools: Perth Avenue in 1942, Carlton (later called Davenport) in 1944/5, and St. Clair Avenue in 1947. (TPL opened its first library in a school in 1926, and by 1960, it was operating libraries in 29 elementary schools, mostly for the Toronto Board of Education who provided an annual grant.) All these schools were located some distance from the branch. In the case of Carlton School, there were additional hazards, as Lillian H. Smith reported in November 1943: "the children must cross open railway tracks and



Carlton Village School Archives

Senior IVth class at Carlton Public School, John Barnes, teacher, 1935. The children's librarians from Western Branch ran the library at Carlton (renamed Davenport in 1945) School from 1944/5 until June 1965.

St. Clair Avenue School, located at St. Clair Avenue West and Britannia Avenue, was one of the last school libraries TPL served in its joint operation with the Toronto Board of Education. Western's children's librarians ran the school library here from 1947 to 1967. The school stood from 1890 to 1970.



TBE

April This has been a very quiet spring, consolidating our work of last year & hope. But the largest snow fall in fifty years or so meant much fun and little reading for most boys & girls.

April 22. Miss St. John brought the Earl's court puppet group this Saturday morning, and our children gave them a most enthusiastic reception. We had only mentioned the coming play at two of the story hours but 225 children heard and were at the Eihay promptly at 10 A.M. The stage on two tables was fixed up in one corner and proved very workable with a curtain across the corner. The play "The Tinder box" was excellently done, the voices lighting, costumes etc splendid, and our crowd of 225 behaved themselves very well during their

TPLA

An excerpt from Western Branch's day book for April 1939. Day books, which all TPL children's librarians were required to keep, provide invaluable historical insights into library work and attitudes, and, incidentally, the life of working women. Fortunately Western's day book from 1935 to 1952 survives.



TBE, W. H. Jackson, 123 Waverley Road

Western children's department managed the library at Perth Avenue School, Perth and Irving (now Antler Street) avenues, from 1942 until a new school building was opened in 1966.

Weston Road and Keele St. intersections.”⁷⁴ Interestingly, TPL did not address the need for both children's and adult library service in the communities east of the railway tracks for another 35 years. Coinciding with the establishment of school libraries, circulation of children's materials at Western branch began to decline sharply in the 1940s. By 1945, it had fallen to 39,900 items, i.e. down 35 per cent from 1938. Miss Burkhardt reported on the situation in her 1945 annual report:

In the past seven years West has lost circulation from Perth Davenport & St. Clair schools, & Strathcona sch. has been closed. Keele feels it is independent of the public library because of its own library, so it doesn't look hopeful for the future.⁷⁵

Despite the post-war baby boom, the trend of declining circulation at Western's children's department continued in the late 1940s and into the 1950s. At various times, the librarians blamed this on the weather (too hot/cold, too much snow/rain, etc.); on competition from schools and other institutions (e.g. in February 1948 Miss Burkhardt learned “High Park united church has a ‘movie’ for the children Sat. afternoons”⁷⁶); or on isolated incidents (repaving

of Annette Street in 1946, a rash of local murders in 1947, power blackouts in 1948). By 1951, the number of children's books was at an all-time high (7,940), but their circulation had reached a record low (32,348). Nevertheless, by the mid-1950s, circulation began to climb again and in 1960 it was at 46,956 items.

Annette Street Library in the 1960s: Remodelling and Renaming

1962 was a significant year for the Western branch for not only was there a major building renovation but also the library's most recent name change to date took place. By that time, Western was one of the oldest branch libraries in Toronto and badly in need of an overhaul. What had been state-of-the-art in 1909 could not meet library demands and needs a half century later. Unfortunately, the renovation was inadequately financed and aesthetically displeasing, and was redone within 20 years.

Albert W. Bowron, then head of Toronto Public Libraries' technical services division, was given the job of planning the branch's renovation. The librarian had spent several months the previous year in Europe studying library architecture under a Canada Council grant. A press release issued by TPL in April 1962 provided details on the remodelling project at Western, which cost about \$15,000 and was done with the aid of a federal government Winter Works programme:

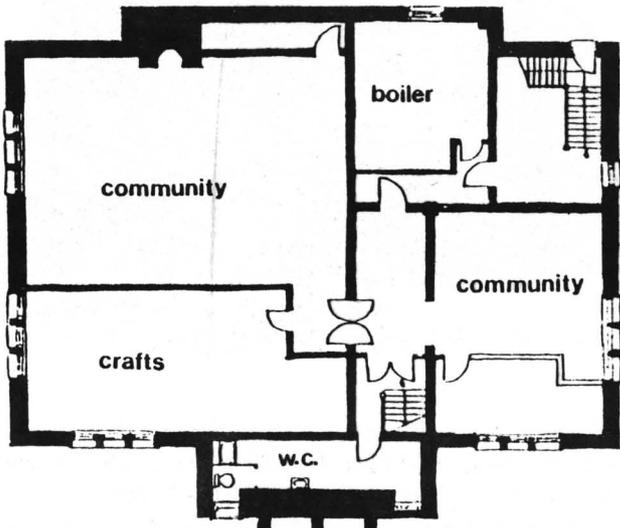
The interior of the Library has been re-decorated and re-lighted throughout. The Boys and Girls library has been moved to the main floor with the Adult and Young People's sections, and a joint photocharging system introduced for checking out both adult and juvenile books. On the lower floor, a new general meeting room and story-hour room has been established. This room will be available to groups and organizations in the area who wish to participate in the Library's programme of activities.

Special features of the Boys and Girls room include a mobile designed by John

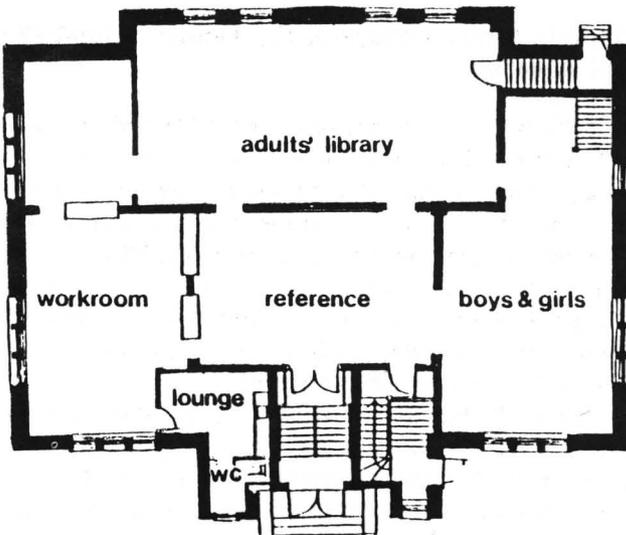
McCombe Reynolds, coordinating supervisor of TV news at the CBC, and a mural painted by seven boys (10 to 13 years old) from the Saturday Morning Class at the University Settlement, under the direction of Miss Libby Altwerger.⁷⁷

The grand opening of the remodelled library took place on Saturday afternoon 14 April 1962. (Helen MacMillan, who was branch head at the time, recently recalled the branch "was open and operating all the time of the face-lifting."⁷⁸) TPL Board chairman Dr. Edmund T. Guest officiated, and other dignitaries attended including Aldermen William C. Davidson and Mary Temple, and chief librarian Henry C. Campbell.

The ceremony also marked the official change of the library's name from Western to Annette Street. The new designation was in keeping with the board's revised policy of naming branches after their street locations, rather than their historical neighbourhoods. It also acknowledged that since there were so many more branch libraries in west Toronto, there was a need for a more precise name.



Basement



Ground floor

Plans of Annette Street Library Renovation, 1962
Albert W. Bowron, designer

Annette Street Library Renovation and Addition. Toronto: Sillaste & Nakashima Architects, February 1979, 9.



At the opening ceremonies of the remodelled Annette Street Branch on 14 April 1962, Alderman Mary Temple presented, on behalf of the library, paint boxes to each of the young artists from University Settlement who had painted a mural to decorate the boys and girls room. Looking on, from left to right, TPL Board chairman Dr. Edmund T. Guest, branch head Helen MacMillan, and chief librarian Henry C. Campbell.

The renovation, along with the introduction of foreign language books, caused a rise in Annette's circulation. By 1963, use of books had reached 146,746 circulations, a level that has not been attained since.

By the middle of the decade, TPL had withdrawn from most of the school libraries, and had turned their manage-



TPLAS

The children's room in the remodelled Annette Street Library, ca. 1962 showing the mural painted by children from University Settlement.

ment and collections over to the school boards. At its 18 November 1964 meeting, the TPL Board decided to cease the joint operation at Davenport School in June 1965, but to continue at Perth and St. Clair schools for a while longer. When a new Perth School opened in 1966, TPL discontinued managing the library there, and by the following year, it had finished running school libraries altogether.

Freed from this responsibility, branch librarians developed new children's services. At Annette, a preschool programme began in September 1967 and a year later there were two groups, each with 15 to 20 children. Staff noted that some mothers were using this time to drink coffee or shop.

In the adult department, the circulating record collection was well used, with borrowers coming from North York, Etobicoke, and the east end. Programmes in 1968 included visits from adult new Canadian classes.

Redirection of TPL Board during the 1970s

The entire Toronto Public Library system experienced a Board-directed transformation during the 1970s. The keystone of this was an effort to equalize library resources among the four geographic areas of Toronto (north, east, west, and central). Until the mid-1970s, north Toronto received 50 per cent more money per capita, for staff and materials than all the other areas combined. This inequality was addressed over the next few years, and by 1982,

the west area's budget was to have an additional 180,000 volumes at a cost of \$1,650,000.

In an effort to attract non-users and to be more sensitive to community needs, the Board also sought citizen participation in planning services and developing collections. This led to dramatic increases in purchases of so-called "popular" or "mass" culture materials and of books in languages other than English. In an eight-year period (1970-78), Annette library's book stock increased 30 per cent (from 25,666 to 33,219 items). As well, for the first time since 1922, beginning in 1974 the branch was open for August. Library programmes were also an important part of service at Annette in the 1970s. In 1977, 8,427 people attended 325 programmes at the branch. All these efforts, however, led to no apparent increase in the use of Annette library's collections—its annual circulation remained at around 110,000 items throughout the 1970s.

Another result of increased community involvement was the establishment of libraries in underserved areas of the city. Since TPL's mid-1960s withdrawal from the library in Perth Avenue School, the Junction Triangle had had no public library service. This neighbourhood, bounded by railway tracks on its east, west, and north sides, and Bloor Street on the south, was virtually cut off from Annette Street Library, its closest branch. The Board had attempted to provide some library service to this area by having its bookmobile (known as Library on Wheels) make regular stops at Pelham Park. This, however, did not satisfy community demand. A committee composed of Junction Triangle residents and library staff (notably west area librarian Malva Kannins and Annette Street Library head

Marlene Archambeau) successfully lobbied the Board to establish a branch library in the Junction Triangle. With funding of \$50,000 from Toronto city council, Perth/Dupont Library opened in a storefront at 1531 Dupont Street on 18 November 1977. For its first three years, it was a "satellite" of Annette library, i.e. Perth/Dupont's operations were supervised directly by the Annette branch head.

After 1965, when TPL pulled out of Davenport School, the old villages of Carlton and Davenport also had no public library service. Facing similar community pressure, the TPL Board opened another storefront library on St. Clair Avenue West near Silverthorn Avenue on 13 June 1981. Although Western, later Annette Branch had operated the school library, St. Clair/Silverthorn Library was, initially, a satellite of Dufferin/St. Clair Library.

In the 1970s, Annette Street Library offered many programmes in its community room, such as this 1972 young people's theatre group. From 1917 until 1962, this basement room, which featured a colonial fireplace, was used for the children's library.

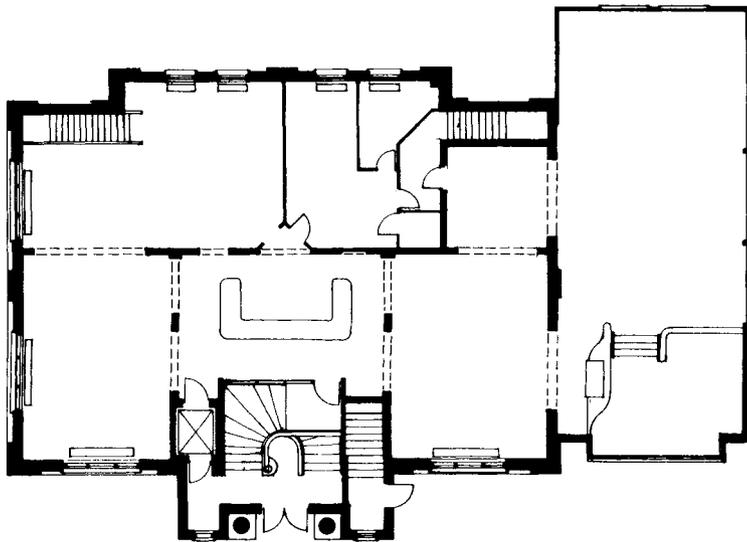
Sillaste and Nakashima Renovation, 1979-80

On 30 July 1979, Annette Street Library closed for almost a year so that it could be renovated. Staff and books were relocated to a storefront on the south side of Dundas Street West between Mavety and Keele streets. Before the temporary library could be opened, however, legal complications forced a second move to another store on the north side of Dundas just west of Pacific Avenue. The library started there on 30 August 1979, and for the first time in its history, it was open mornings. In choosing a site for the interim branch, the TPL Board seems to have recognized that the library's declining fortunes may have been due, in part, to its somewhat out-of-the-way location on Annette Street. Despite the lower cost, the Board was determined not to move into "one of the several churches in the vicinity" where "the Annette Branch would become even more hidden." Instead, it reasoned, a Dundas Street "temporary location will attract new users . . . as well as reducing the risk of losing current patrons throughout the construction period."⁷⁹ The Dundas Street location was

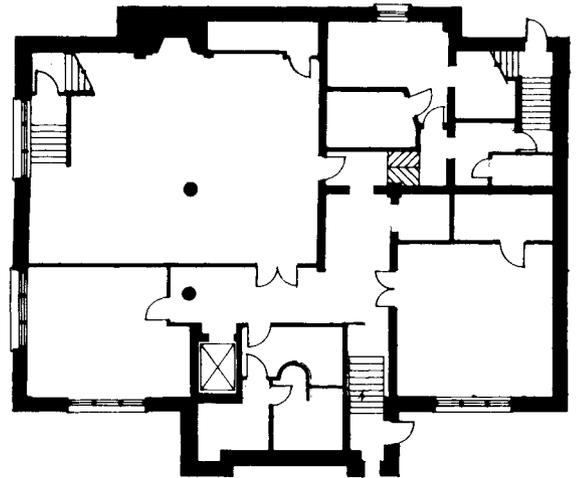


TPLA

Plans of Annette Street Library Renovation and Addition, 1979-80
Sillaste & Nakashima Architects



Ground floor



Basement

Review of Architecture/Landscape Architecture, 1980.

used until 24 May 1980, and the renovated library reopened on 9 June 1980.

Architects Henno Sillaste and Hero Nakashima designed the renovation, working with a building committee composed of local citizens, and TPL Board and staff members. Together they restored many of the library's original architectural details and layout, and introduced several modern concepts that drew attention to the building's best decorative aspects. The main features of the renovated building were an adult reading room/stacks addition on the west end; a restored reception area in which the 1962 suspended ceiling was removed to reveal the original cornice and column capitals; a new circulation desk with the same horseshoe shape of the original, and a new main stair and all-glass entrance. The vestibule level was also dropped to provide a ramp for the handicapped.

The renovated library was only open for four months when in October 1980, TPL staff went on strike closing all branches and departments for three weeks. In April 1981, Annette Street Library was opened on Wednesdays for the first time since 1918. The branch's book stock continued to climb after the renovation until there were 45,595 items in 1985. The improved facilities, expanded hours of service, and larger collections led to a 20 per cent increase in library circulation for 1981-85 over the same five-year period in the 1970s.

The classic exterior architecture and the beautiful interior also attracted the attention of film production companies. In 1986, *The Elephant Show*, a television program featuring the popular Canadian singers Sharon, Lois and Bram, used the branch for a location. The following summer, an ABC television network, *Movie of the Week*, was partially shot here—*Bluffing It* dealt with adult illiteracy and starred Dennis Weaver, a well-known American screen actor.

Not everyone was captivated with the renovation. In 1984, the English/French sign outside the branch generated some local newspaper coverage after a complaint was made to the TPL Board. It refused to change its policy for "each library to have, in addition to its name in English, another sign in the language which is in predominant use in that particular community or, if there is no predominant language, in French."⁸⁰

Local History and Annette Street Library in the 1980s

Preservation of the past has been an important aspect of the work at Annette Branch since 1980. The renovation coincided with TPL's increased interest in local history, and an application for meeting space by the then-fledgling West Toronto Junction Historical Society. The request was granted, and since then, the Society has housed its collections and has had most of its meetings at the library.

Cooperation between the Society and the library has grown steadily during the 1980s. Reciprocal efforts have increased holdings of important Junction historical documents. The 1987 centennial of the Junction's incorporation as a village saw both groups planning, coordinating, and even acting in "The Junction Centennial Follies."

The Society is helping celebrate Annette Street Library's 80th anniversary in 1989. Among its special activities are co-sponsorship of this book; and presentation of awards of merit to Annette Street Library for architectural conservancy, and to the TPL Board for its policy of supporting local history groups.

Summary

The Junction and its library have been closely intertwined in their hundred year histories. Both were born in

the late 1880s during the economic boom, and both suffered badly in the financial crisis of 1896. Both also benefited from the return to prosperity around 1908 when, with Carnegie's grant and West Toronto's increased commitment to library service, the Junction gained its own library building. A year later, when the City of West Toronto was annexed to Toronto, Toronto Public Library gained not only book collections, but a handsome new structure.

The Junction residents' enjoyment of their new library was evident during the next 30 years, with large attendance at programmes and steadily increasing circulation. Reduced budgets during the Depression and Second World War eventually led to lower circulation and activity by the late 1940s. Compounding this, the Board and branch gradually

lost touch with the community. Never catering to those who could not speak English, and always reluctant to permit use of its lecture room, the library was narrowly middle-class, not even aspiring to meet its original goal of educating workers.

The situation did not change substantially until the mid-1970s, when reform-minded library board members instructed the entire system to be more responsive to community needs. Today at Annette, one of the strongest links to the neighbourhood is through active preservation of the Junction's past. Operating from an impressively restored building, the Junction's library is still "the most attractive resort in the town."

L. C. FELL, Pres. & Gen. Mgr.
G. C. DOWDELL, Vice-Pres. & Sec'y Treas.
E. W. KENNEDY, Superintendent.

137 CHURCH STREET
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Reference Toronto, Ont., Feb 1, 1909

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MTLB, Toronto Public Library Collection

When this seal was delivered in February 1909, the library at the Junction had already had three names. Established in 1888 as West Toronto Junction Mechanics' Institute, it was renamed Toronto Junction Library in 1895, then West Toronto Public Library in 1908/9. After Toronto Public Library took over in 1909, it gave the library yet another designation—Western Branch of TPL. The branch's current name of Annette Street was adopted in April 1962.

Appendix A: West Toronto Junction Mechanics' Institute/Library Board Presidents, 1888-1909

Robert L. McCormack	1888
Dr. George W. Clendenan	1889
Rev. J. A. Grant	1890-91
T. B. Phepoe	1892-93
Charles C. Going	1894
R. C. Jennings	1895-98
Capt. Jno. Ross	1899-1900
Franklin C. Colbeck	1901
J. Constantine	1902-03
Allan B. Rice	1908-09

Appendix B: Library/Branch Heads

Library Heads

Walter Thring	ca. 1888-ca. 1893
Elizabeth W. McCallum	ca. 1893-1909

Branch Heads

Elizabeth W. McCallum	1909-17/18
Annie C. B. Millar	1917/18-29
Helen Dean	1929-3?
Elizabeth Gordon	193?-41
Ethelwyn Wickson	1941-?
Marjorie Cooper (later Cuthbertson)	?-1947
Margaret Baird Murray	1947-49
Catherine Fish (later Cruse)	1949-55
Loretto McGarry	Nov. 1955-Dec. 1956
Helen G. MacMillan	Dec. 1956-May 1965
Katrin Soots	June 1965-Dec. 1969
Sandra McCallum	Jan. 1970-Mar. 1972
Bruce Geddes	Mar. 1972-73
Madeline Aalto	1973-74
Ingrid Mednis (now Khasnabish)	1974-Jan. 1976
Marlene Archambeau	Jan. 1976-present

Acting Branch Heads, Nov. 1977-June 1981

Pat Lachine (now Bull)	Nov. 1977-Nov. 1978
Linda Robbins	Nov. 1978-79
Charlene Girt	1979
Adele Kostiak	1980-81

Appendix C: Buildings at West Toronto Junction designed by James A. Ellis and Ellis & Connery

Note: Generally, dates given are for the year a contract was awarded, rather than to the date of a building's construction and/or completion. For buildings still standing, modern street numbers have been used, where possible.

James A. Ellis

1890	Residence for Thomas J. L. Peake, Lakeview Ave. (now Evelyn Ave.) at Evelyn Cres. House for Edward Pim, Bloor St. W., north side, second house west of Quebec Ave. (Demolished.) House of Daniel W. Clendenan, 191 High Park Ave., east side, south of Humberside Ave.
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	3 houses for Mr. Farquhar on Clendenan Ave. Disciples Church, 97 Annette St. southeast corner of Keele St. (now Keele Street Church of Christ). Strachan Shoe Company, Vermilyea St., east side, 1 or 2 south of Glen Scarlett Rd (Demolished?) Vermilyea Corset Company, Vermilyea St., southeast corner of Glen Scarlett Rd. (Demolished?) House for James T. Jackson, Edmund Ave. (now Osler St.)
1891	New 4-room school at Toronto Junction (possibly St. Clair School, or Swansea School). Kilborn Hall, 2822 Dundas St. W., northwest corner of Van Horne St. (now Heintzman Ave.) Heydon House Hotel, 1834 St. Clair Ave. W., northwest corner of Old Weston Rd.
1892	Avenue Hotel rebuilding, 3031-3 Dundas St. W., southwest corner of High Park Ave. Toronto Junction High School, 280 Quebec Ave. (Name changed to Toronto Junction Collegiate Institute 1903, then to West Toronto Collegiate Institute, and to Humber-side Collegiate Institute 1910.) Peacock Hotel stables, Dundas St. W., opposite Royce Ave. (now Dupont St.) (Demolished.)
1893?	House for James T. Jackson, 204 High Park Ave.
1898	H. A. Lozier & Co. (bicycle manufacturers), substantial addition, Keele St. N. (Became Canada Cycle and Motor Co. (CCM), 1899; Weston Rd., east side, north of St. Clair Ave. E.; demolished.) House for William Wilson, principal of the Model School (Annette Street Public School), 98 High Park Ave. (Demolished?)
1899	Davenport Methodist Church, remodelling and enlargements, 1900 Davenport Rd., north side opposite Churchill Ave. (now Perth Ave.). (Now Davenport-Perth United Church and Neighbourhood Centre.)
1900	Remodelling of 3 terrace houses on Union St N. for Charles F. Wright.
1901	Residence for David Kennedy at Kennedy Park, 347 Kennedy Ave., east side at Colbeck St. Western Avenue School, Western Ave. (now Indian Rd. Cres.), southeast corner of Annette St. (Name changed to Indian Road Crescent School, 1937; demolished ca. 1964.)
1902?	House for James A. Ellis, 358 Clendenan Ave.
1906	Residence for Robert L. McCormack, 336 Annette St. (Later Jewish Children's Home; demolished ca. 1935.)

Ellis & Connery

1906	Dominion Carriage Company, Perth Ave., southwest corner of Kingsley Ave. (Demolished.)
1907	Bank of British North America, 2859 Dundas St. W., south side just west of Keele St. (Name changed to Bank of Montreal, 1918.) West Toronto Fire Hall No. 1, Keele Street, west side between Annette and Dundas sts. (Demolished 1953). High Park Sanitarium addition, 32 Gothic Ave. Strathcona Public School, 274 St. John's Rd., northeast corner of Runnymede Ave. (Closed 1943; now Runnymede Hospital.)
1908	West Toronto Masonic Temple, 151 Annette St., southeast corner of Aziel St. West Toronto Public Library, 145 Annette St., southwest corner of Medland St. (Now Toronto Public Library, Annette Street Branch.)
1910	Indian Road Baptist Church, 754 Indian Rd., southwest corner of Humberside Ave. (Closed 1970; now Newgate Korean Presbyterian Church.) West Toronto Curling Rink, Thomas St. (now Jennings Ave.). (Never built? Demolished.)
1911	Knesseth Israel Synagogue, 56 Maria St.

Notes

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- ²*Charlton's Directory of West Toronto Junction, 1890-91/2* (Toronto, 1889).
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- ⁴Margaret Penman, *A Century of Service: Toronto Public Library 1883-1983* (Toronto: Toronto Public Library Board, 1983), 4.
- ⁵A. B. Rice, *West Toronto Junction Revisited*, ed. Joan Miles (Erin, Ont.: Boston Mills Press, 1986), 37.
- ⁶*Ibid.*, 19.
- ⁷"Our Societies," Toronto *Junction Daily Tribune*, 22 November 1890, 2.
- ⁸*Ibid.*, 11 April 1893, 3.
- ⁹"Town Topics," *Toronto Junction Leader*, 17 February 1894, [3].
- ¹⁰A. B. Rice, "Stray Thoughts About Matters of Public Concern," *West Toronto Weekly*, 18 August 1949, 21.
- ¹¹Rice, *West Toronto Junction Revisited*, 47.
- ¹²*Ibid.*, 51.
- ¹³TPLA, *Catalogue of Books in the Toronto Junction Public Library* (Toronto, 1904), [3].
- ¹⁴Rice, "Stray Thoughts," 18 August 1949, 21.
- ¹⁵Margaret Beckman, Stephen Langmead, and John Black, *The Best Gift: A Record of the Carnegie Libraries of Ontario* (Toronto and London: Dundurn Press, 1984), 28.
- ¹⁶Carnegie Corporation of New York, Carnegie Library Correspondence, Toronto Junction [cited hereafter as CLC], 16 March 1908.
- ¹⁷CLC, Rice to Carnegie, 19 March 1908.
- ¹⁸CLC, Bertram to Rice, 6 April 1908.
- ¹⁹CLC, Rice to Carnegie, 22 July 1908.
- ²⁰G. Mercer Adam, *Toronto, Old and New . . .* (Toronto: The Mail Printing Co., 1891), 205.
- ²¹MTLB, Baldwin Room, Toronto Public Library Collection.
- ²²"West Toronto's New Public Library," *Construction*, September 1909, 63.
- ²³*Ibid.*, 64.
- ²⁴*Ibid.*
- ²⁵TPL Board, Library Committee, Minutes, 8 June 1909, 72.
- ²⁶Rice, "Stray Thoughts," 18 August 1949, 21.
- ²⁷TPL Board, Minutes, 16 July 1909.
- ²⁸MTLB, Baldwin Room, Toronto Public Library Collection.
- ²⁹TPL Board, Library Committee, Minutes, 8 June 1909, 72.
- ³⁰TPL Board, Minutes, 16 July 1909.
- ³¹TPL Board, Minutes, 7 September 1909, 74.
- ³²"Opened New Library For West Toronto," *The Toronto Star*, 28 September 1909.
- ³³TPL Board, Library Committee, Minutes, 5 October 1909, 76-77.
- ³⁴"Opened New Library," *The Toronto Star*, 28 September 1909.
- ³⁵Donald Jones, "George Locke Wrote the Book on Running Toronto's Libraries," *The Toronto Star*, 3 April 1982.
- ³⁶TPL Board, Library Committee, Minutes, 5 October 1909, 77.
- ³⁷TPL Board, Minutes, 8 October 1909, 348.
- ³⁸"Branch Library Improved," Toronto *Evening Telegram*, 16 February 1916.
- ³⁹TPL, *Annual Report*, 1915, 16.
- ⁴⁰TPL, *Annual Report*, 1927, 32.
- ⁴¹*Ibid.*
- ⁴²TPL, *Annual Report*, 1928, 23.
- ⁴³TPL, *Annual Report*, 1925, 29.
- ⁴⁴TPL, *Annual Report*, 1926, 34.
- ⁴⁵*Ibid.*
- ⁴⁶TPL, *Annual Report*, 1928, 24.
- ⁴⁷*Ibid.*
- ⁴⁸Rice, "Stray Thoughts," 18 August 1949, 21.
- ⁴⁹Interview with Anne Wright, 27 May 1989, Toronto.
- ⁵⁰TPL Board, Libraries and Finance Committee, 19 April 1936, 801.
- ⁵¹TPL, *Annual Report*, 1915, opp. 16.
- ⁵²"Branch Library Improved," Toronto *Evening Telegram*, 16 February 1916.
- ⁵³TPL, *Annual Report*, 1911, 9.
- ⁵⁴TPL, *Annual Report*, 1916, 7.
- ⁵⁵"In Memoriam Sherman C. Swift, M.A., LL.D.," Canadian National Institute for the Blind, *Annual Report*, 1947.
- ⁵⁶"A Short Historical Sketch of the Canadian National Library for the Blind," in Canadian National Library for the Blind, *Annual Report*, 1917, 8-9.
- ⁵⁷"Library for the Sightless, West Toronto and the Most Wonderful Blind Man in Canada Who is in Charge of it," Toronto *Daily News*, 18 February 1914 (also TPL Scrapbooks, vol. 1, 521).
- ⁵⁸"Blind are Taught to Become Useful," *The Toronto Daily Star*, 23 March 1916 (also TPL Scrapbook, vol. 1, 607).
- ⁵⁹TPL, *Annual Report*, 1916, 7.
- ⁶⁰TPL, *Annual Report*, 1945, 6.
- ⁶¹TPL Board, Minutes, 10 February 1942, 662.
- ⁶²"Branch Library Improved," Toronto *Evening Telegram*, 16 February 1916 (also TPL Scrapbook, vol. 1, 607).
- ⁶³*Hermes; HumberSide Collegiate Institute Yearbook*, 1935, 150.
- ⁶⁴TPL Board, Minutes, 14 October 1941, 620.
- ⁶⁵TPL Board, Minutes, 12 November 1941, 623.
- ⁶⁶TPL, *Annual Report*, 1912, 14.
- ⁶⁷TPL, *Annual Report*, 1917, 16.
- ⁶⁸"New Library For Children Opened," Toronto *Daily News*, 22 February 1917 (also TPL Scrapbook, vol. 1, 646).
- ⁶⁹"Children's Library at Annette Street," Toronto *Globe*, 22 February 1917 (also TPL Scrapbook, vol. 1, 639).
- ⁷⁰*Ibid.*
- ⁷¹TPLA, Western Branch Subject Correspondence, Daybook, September 1937.
- ⁷²Daybook, 12 July 1940.
- ⁷³Daybook, 29 October 1940.
- ⁷⁴TPL Board, Minutes, 9 November 1943, 776.
- ⁷⁵Daybook, 1945.
- ⁷⁶Daybook, 19 February 1948.

⁷⁷“Remodelling of Annette Street Branch Library,” Press Release from Harriet Parsons, Information Office, Toronto Public Libraries, 9 April 1962.

⁷⁸Helen MacMillan, letter to Katrin Soots, 24 May 1989.

⁷⁹TPL Board, Capital Projects Committee, Minutes, 18 April 1979.

⁸⁰TPL Board, Minutes, 6 March 1984, 4.

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Sandra Horvat

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**North elevation, Annette Branch Library, 1979-80
Sillaste & Nakashima Architects**