**THE ORIGINS OF THE CANADIANA COLLECTION AT THE
METROPOLITAN TORONTO CENTRAL LIBRARY:
THE FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS**

In the 1880's, Toronto was a confident, booming city, swollen with local pride. It was establishing commercial and financial dominance over much of Ontario, and competing with Montreal for the riches of the west. Strongly rooted in the British tradition, it stood at the centre of a rising Canadian nationalism, which combined a belief in Canada's future with loyalty to the Empire. Along with this new nationalism came a cultural flowering which manifested itself not only in literature and the arts but also in an increased interest in the Canadian past. The new historians who emerged to found the beginnings of English Canadian historiography, men such as William Kingsford, Sir George Parkin, J.C. Dent, and Sir John Bourinot, needed source materials for their studies.

In Ontario, there were few institutions which could support scholarly research in Canadian history. The collection at the Library of Parliament in Ottawa had suffered from two fires during the Union period when the Legislature had rotated from city to city. William Kingsford pointed out that although "especial care is taken in the collections bearing upon the history of the northern continent of America . . . in the two fires which I have recorded, the greatest loss experienced in the Library was the destruction of documents of this class, the void of which is still felt in spite of every effort made to replace them."¹ The Public Archives, established in 1872, was a good source of documentary material, but it was hesitant about acquiring new collections.² In Toronto, the provincial Legislative Library was criticized by Kingsford³ although C. Pelham Mulvany had high praise for its collection of old newspapers and "scarce political and historical treatises most valuable to the student of our country's history." In general, library facilities of any kind were lacking in the city:

There is a Mechanics' Institute with a very poor library and an inadequate reading-room, accessible only to those who will pay a considerable en-

¹William Kingsford, *The Early Bibliography of the Province of Ontario, Dominion of Canada, with Other Information* (Toronto, Montreal, 1892), p. 111.

²*Ibid.*, p. 127-128.

³*Ibid.*, p. 125-126.

⁴C. Pelham Mulvany, *Toronto: Past and Present* (Toronto, 1884; Reprinted 1970), p. 72.

trance fee in advance. There is the Parliamentary Library, which is only accessible to a select few, and in the daytime. There are also inaccessible libraries in University College, Osgoode Hall, and a few other places, and they might as well be transferred to the moon for all the public ever sees of them.⁵

The demands of Canadian nationalism for historical materials therefore coincided with the local need for a public library. The man who was able to combine both aims in the establishment of the Toronto Public Library and its special Canadiana collection⁶ was John Hallam.

Hallam had come originally from Chorley, Lancashire, where he had worked as a mill hand. In Toronto, he became a wealthy dealer in wools and leather. Active in municipal politics, he served as alderman almost continuously from 1870 to 1899. Founding the Public Library and improving Toronto's parks and gardens were the two main achievements of his civic career. He donated his large book collection to the new Library, and later left to the City his country estate, Chorley Park in Rosedale. He never became mayor, perhaps, because, as Professor A.H. Young suggests, the city "snobs" could never forgive him for being a self-made man:

Unfortunately, snobbery, which could not appreciate the Sterling worth of the man in spite of occasional difficulty he had with his "h's" and in spite of his wearing now and then a glaringly red tie and yellow boots with the regulation frock coat, frustrated realization of his ambition to fill the Mayor's chair.⁷

With the aid of a fellow alderman, John Taylor, and the support of individuals prominent in Toronto's academic circles — men such as Sir Daniel Wilson, Dr. William Canniff and the Reverend Henry Scadding — Hallam began a campaign in 1881 for a public library in Toronto. By 1882, the provincial government had passed the Free Libraries Act which enabled municipalities to levy tax support for public libraries. On New Year's Day, 1883, a plebiscite held in Toronto approved a by-law to establish the Toronto Public Library.

On February 15, 1883, the newly created Toronto Public Library Board held its first meeting and unanimously elected Hallam to the position of Chairman. At this point the Library existed in name only. There was no building, no chief librarian, no book collection. The first task before the Board was the acquisition of a building. The City Council, however, was not prepared to finance the new, modern quarters which Hallam desired. The problem was solved by the Toronto Mechanics' Institute which transferred its building at

⁵*Toronto Globe*, January 27, 1881, p. 4.

⁶In 1968, the central building of the Toronto Public Library was taken over by the Metropolitan Toronto Library Board. The Canadiana collection is now part of the Metropolitan Toronto Central Library.

⁷A.H. Young, "Toronto: How and Why It Grew," Ontario Historical Society, *Papers and Records*, 30:199, 1934.

Church and Adelaide Streets to the Toronto Public Library on July 1, 1883.⁸

The Library Board now had a building. Its next concern was the selection of a chief librarian. Hallam's own requirements for a chief librarian had been clearly stated in a major address to the Board on February 28, 1883:

It is, of course, absolutely essential that he should be minutely familiar with the history and literature of our own country. He must be thoroughly acquainted with every book and important pamphlet bearing upon our history, polity, and institutions, and must be able to direct the researches of educated and intelligent persons who frequent the library for purposes of reference. He must be well acquainted with the literature of Lower Canada, which implies that he must be able to read it in the original French. He must be a scholar in whose learning and intelligence the public can repose confidence, and who may be implicitly trusted to keep himself abreast of the literary activity of the times. He should be capable of editing and annotating such manuscripts as may from time to time be consigned to the library archives, and which may be thought suitable for publication.⁹

Of the four candidates considered for the position, John Charles Dent and Graeme Mercer Adam appeared to have the best qualifications. Dent, who had been called to the Bar of Upper Canada in 1865, left law for a career in journalism. In London, England he joined the staff of the *Daily Telegraph* and then moved to the *Globe* in Boston. In 1876, he accepted the editorship of the newly founded *Toronto Evening Telegram*, but, a few years later, left it for the *Toronto Globe*, where he remained until George Brown's death. By 1883 he had established his reputation as an historian with the *Canadian Portrait Gallery* (4v., Toronto, 1880-1881), a biography on prominent figures in Canadian political history; and *The Last Forty Years; Canada since the Union of 1841* (2v., Toronto, 1881). The Library Committee which was responsible for personnel was impressed by his qualifications and nominated him for the position.

Adam's career was equally distinguished. When he came to Canada in 1858, he went into publishing, first as a partner in the firm of Rollo and Adam, and then with Adam, Stevenson and Company, booksellers and publishers. From 1869 to 1872, he edited the *Canada Bookseller*, issued by his firm as an organ of the Canadian book trade. He was a co-founder and editor of the *Canadian Monthly and National Review*, and an editor of the *Canada Educational Monthly*. By 1883, he was a prominent figure in Toronto literary circles, recognized as a man of letters and a supporter of Canadian literature. His list of references included Sir John A. Macdonald, Professor George Grant, Sir

⁸Toronto Public Library, *Annual Report*, v. 1, 1883/84, p. 3. Along with the building came the Institute's collection of 10,600 books and \$1166.54 in cash. Founded in 1830, the Institute now ceased to exist.

⁹Metropolitan Toronto Central Library, Toronto Public Library, Board, Minutes, February 28, 1883. Hallam's statements at this Board meeting of February 28, 1883 were published separately under the title *An Address to the Board of Management of the Toronto Free Library* (Toronto, 1883).

Oliver Mowat, Charles Lindsey, and John Lovell.¹⁰ His most notable patron, however, was Goldwin Smith who had employed him as a literary assistant and who warmly recommended him to Hallam.¹¹

On June 26, the Board met to select the chief librarian. The Library Committee recommended Dent. Other members of the Board then proceeded to nominate Adam, James Bain and J.T. Bulmer. A compromise was reached after several votes when James Bain was declared elected.¹²

The affair had created bad feelings. The *Toronto News*, which had originally supported Dent's candidature, attacked Bain's character:

Already rumours are abroad that the gentleman who received the place is, or has been, intimately allied with a firm of book dealers who are not strangers to those clever arrangements which place profitable contracts in their hands.¹⁴

One of the Board members, Captain James Mason, resigned, stating his reasons:

I do not consider the Librarian appointed to be capable of making the Library a success and I am convinced that he is not the free choice of a majority of the Board.¹⁵

A number of letters appeared in the *News* accusing Bain of "maligning the other candidates, spreading the report that Mr. Dent is an agnostic, and without any religious belief"¹⁶ and describing Bain as "a fourth rate commercial traveller, whose education is what might be expected from a man occupying that position, who is full of that empty conceit which is commonly allied with ignorance."¹⁷ Hallam explained to a reporter from the *News* that the outcome of the selection of the chief librarian had been the result of a misunderstanding between the Grits and Tories on the Library Board and that he had been, like Mr. Mason, a supporter of Dent.¹⁸

¹⁰*Testimonials in Favor of the Candidature of Mr. Graeme Mercer Adam for the Position of Librarian of the Free Public Library, Toronto* (Toronto, 1883)

¹¹MTCL, John Hallam, Letters Concerning the Founding and Administration of a Public Library in Toronto, G. Smith to J. Hallam, January 31, 1883. Collection cited hereafter as MTCL, Hallam Papers.

¹²The final vote was 5 to 4 for Bain. See MTCL, TPL, Bd., Minutes, June 26, 1883.

¹³*Toronto News*, June 2, 1883, p. 8 declared that Dent was "the first and best man proposed, for whom The *News* gives its vote first, last, and always."

¹⁴*Ibid.*, June 27, 1883, p. 1.

¹⁵MTCL, TPL, Bd., Minutes, July 6, 1883.

¹⁶*Toronto News*, July 7, 1883, p. 8.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*Ibid.*

Mason was eventually persuaded to withdraw his resignation. Hallam's statement to the *Globe* marked the end of the issue:

He [Bain] was not my choice, but as he was appointed by a majority of the Board I am going to give him all the help and support I can to make the Free Library a success.¹⁹

As things turned out, Bain proved to be most satisfactory choice. He knew the book trade intimately. He had worked in his father's bookstore in Toronto, and by 1860 had joined James Campbell and Son. In 1874, he opened a branch in London, England for the firm. Eventually he joined John Nimmo and Son, and the company was renamed Nimmo and Bain. In 1882 he returned to Toronto as manager of the Canadian Publishing Company. His list of references included a heavy representation from the University, among them James Loudon, George Paxton Young, John Galbraith and William Vandersmissen.²⁰ His stay in England for eight years may have been to his advantage. Unlike Dent and Adam, he does not appear to have been involved in the political ferment of Toronto, and therefore was probably more acceptable as a compromise candidate. He threw himself into library work, becoming an active member of the library profession, a scholar of some distinction, and an enthusiastic collector of Canadiana.

Having acquired a building and a chief librarian, the Board turned its attention to the acquisition of a book collection. Since the beginning of the movement to establish a public library, Hallam had made it clear that he was proposing the kind of library that would include "those rare and costly works which are generally out of reach of individual students and collectors, and which are not usually found in provincial or private libraries."²¹

In the same address to the Board where he specified his qualifications for a chief librarian, he elaborated on his plans for the collection:

A library of this kind, to be valuable as far as our own country is concerned, should contain a full collection of —

1. Manuscript statements and narratives of pioneer settlers; old letters and journals relative to the early history and settlement of Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island, and the wars of 1776 and 1812; biographical notes of our pioneers and of eminent citizens deceased, and facts illustrative of our Indian tribes, their history, characteristics, sketches of their prominent chiefs, orators and warriors.
2. Diaries, narratives and documents relative to the U.E. Loyalists,

¹⁹Toronto *Globe*, July 10, 1883, p. 5.

²⁰*Testimonials to Accompany the Application of Mr. James Bain, Jr., for Position of Chief Librarian to the Toronto Free Library* (Toronto, 1883).

²¹John Hallam, *Notes by the Way on Free Libraries and Books, with a Plea for the Establishment of Rate-Supported Libraries in the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, 1882), p. 33.

their expulsion from the old colonies, and their settlement in the Maritime Provinces.

3. Files of newspapers, books, pamphlets, college catalogues, minutes of ecclesiastical conventions, associations, conferences, and synods, and all other publications relating to this and other Provinces.

4. Indian geographical names of streams and localities, with their signification, and all information generally respecting the condition, language, and history of different tribes of the Indians.

5. Books of all kinds, especially such as relate to Canadian history, travels, and biography in general, and Lower Canada or Quebec in particular, family genealogies, old magazines, pamphlets, files of newspapers, maps, historical manuscripts and autographs of distinguished persons.²²

In contrast to this very ambitious design for a Canadiana collection, Hallam devoted virtually no attention to other areas of book selection. Here it appears that his primary interest in the institution lay in the possibility of establishing a research collection for the study of Canadian history and culture. His future association with the Library only bears this out.

The first acquisition of the new Library was the 10,600 volumes inherited from the Mechanics' Institute. Bain as his first task went through the stock and reported to the Board that 2,000 of the books were worthless and should be discarded.²³ He was given the authority in November to either auction off or sell privately the worn out books from the Institute.²⁴ A few years later another batch of books from the Mechanics' Institute were sold to the Muskoka Mechanics' Institute at 10 cents a volume.²⁵ By the process of natural accretion, the Institute had accumulated over the years some Canadiana. In its catalogue for 1848, it listed among other titles of Canadian interest, Thomas Haliburton's *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia* (2v., Halifax, 1829), Sir Francis Bond Head's *The Emigrant* (London, 1846) and Sir John Franklin's *Narrative of a Second Expedition to the Shores of the Polar Sea* (London, 1828).²⁶ According to the Institute's *Library Catalogue, 1880* (Toronto, 1880), the collection contained, among other items, Paul Kane's *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America* (London, 1859), William Smith's *Canada: Past, Present and Future* (2v., Toronto, 1852) and a number of the Arctic blue books on the search for Franklin. The Institute's books which were retained for the new Library formed the beginning of the collection.²⁷

²²MTCL, TPL, Bd., Minutes, February 28, 1883.

²³*Ibid.*, July 6, 1883.

²⁴*Ibid.*, November 2, 1883.

²⁵*Ibid.*, December 11, 1885.

²⁶Toronto Mechanics' Institute, *Act of Incorporation, By-laws, and Catalogue of Books, of the Toronto Mechanics' Institute* (Toronto, 1848)

²⁷The books are listed in MTCL, TPL, Accession Books, July 1, 1883.

The items of Canadian interest, such as the *Canadian Illustrated News*, the Reports of the Geological Survey of Canada, and titles on Arctic exploration, were not of a unique nor rare character, but constituted an important nucleus for the future Canadian collection.

As early as January 1883, Hallam had issued a circular to booksellers requesting catalogues.²⁸ Over the summer Bain prepared a list of books for both the Central Library, which was closed for renovation, and the two proposed branches. The list was carefully compiled with the help of professors and experts in many fields, and each title was considered by the Library Committee. On September 4th, Bain presented the list to the Board. It consisted of 21,454 books costing an estimated \$29,141, and including "representative books in every department of human knowledge."²⁹ The board was anxious to secure public approval and the list was available for inspection for ten days. To procure the titles, Bain was sent abroad on a buying trip accompanied by Hallam. The two left for England in October and separated on their arrival. Bain filled his orders for the Library in the shops of London, Oxford, Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Manchester. He also did some buying for Hallam's own collection: "I picked up yesterday a nice Utrecht edition of Hennepin and hope to get a Dublin one as well — it cost 15/-."³⁰ What could not be purchased in London, Bain bought in New York before coming home.

The books acquired on this trip were accessioned in the Library records. Many of the titles, especially fiction, were purchased in multiple copies for circulation. The non-fiction, included scientific works, collections of voyage and travels, history titles, etc. The *Week* stated that the books "would make the mouth water of every bibliophile in the country."³¹ Among the purchases, however, there were only two items of rare Canadiana: John Meares' *Voyages made in the Years 1788 and 1789* (London, 1790) and Baron de Lahontan's *Voyages . . . dans l'Amerique Septentrionale* (2v., La Haye, 1706). It is difficult to believe that these two books represented a formal commitment on the part of the Board at this time to acquire Canadiana. They were probably purchased for Hallam's private collection, like the Hennepin item, but because Hallam already owned copies, they went to the Library instead.³²

The real beginning of the Canadiana collection coincides with the official opening of the Central Library which took place on March 6th, 1884.³³ The day before the opening, Hallam announced to the Board that he was donating to the Reference Department of the Library his private collection of 1602 volumes. As the books were already in the building, Bain must have been

²⁸MTCL, Hallam Papers. Dawson Bros., Montreal, wrote to Hallam, January 27, 1883, referring to his circular. I could not locate a copy of the circular.

²⁹MTCL, TPL, Bd., Minutes, September 4, 1883. I could not locate a copy of the actual list.

³⁰MTCL, Hallam Papers, J. Bain to J. Hallam, October 23, 1883.

³¹*The Week* (Toronto), 1 (2): 1, December 13, 1883.

³²When Hallam donated his collection to the Library in 1884, the gift included his own copies of Meares and Lahontan.

³³The renovated building was not actually open to the public until March 17, 1884.

aware earlier of Hallam's plan.³⁴ The timing was perfect, however, and the gift was publicized in the newspapers along with the accounts of the official opening ceremonies.

Hallam's donation laid the foundation of the Library's Canadiana collection. It was described by Graeme Mercer Adam:

The donation, it will be seen, embraces, in addition to its English division, a collection of works on Canada and the New Worlds, of the highest interest to the student of our native annals and of the rich literature of the American continent.³⁵

About a third of the collection contained items relating to Canada specifically or to North America in general. *Travels in the Interior of North America* (London, 1843) by Maximilian, Prince of Wied-Neuwied was in the collection, accompanied by the atlas of *Illustrations* (London, 1844), sketched by Charles Bodmer. There was copy of Pierre Charlevoix's *Histoire et Description Generale de la Nouvelle France* (6v., Paris, 1744). Louis Hennepin's *Nouvelle Decouverte d'un Tres Grand Pays Situe dans l'Amerique* (Utrecht, 1697), purchased by Bain for Hallam six months earlier, and bearing on the boards the arms of William III was also among the donation.

A few days after the Hallam donation, the Library Committee reported to the Board that "a valuable collection of books on Canadian history, travel and topography, has been offered to them by Mr. A. Piddington for the sum of six hundred and ten dollars."³⁶ The Board agreed to purchase the collection from Alfred Piddington, one of Toronto's second-hand booksellers,³⁷ and, in doing so, acquired, among other titles, Louis Hennepin's *Description de la Louisiane* (Paris, 1688), Pehr Kalm's *Travels into North America* (3v., Warrington, 1770-1771), Joseph Lafitau's *Moeurs des Sauvages Ameriquains* (2v., Paris, 1724) and Pierre Charlevoix's *A Voyage to North-America* (2v., Dublin, 1766). The Canadiana collection was off to a good start.

The main efforts of the Board for the next few years were devoted to building up the circulating side of the library, and the reference collection was to some extent neglected.³⁸ By 1887, however, the foundations of the Reference Library were being laid.³⁹ At the end of that year, the Board

³⁴MTCL, TPL, Bd., Minutes, March 5, 1884. At this meeting Hallam mentioned that the books were in the building.

³⁵John Hallam, *Catalogue of Books and Pamphlets Presented to the Toronto Public Library by John Hallam* (Toronto, 1885). Preface.

³⁶MTCL, TPL, Bd., Minutes, March 14, 1884.

³⁷According to Dora Hood, "Brief History of the Second-Hand Book Shops in Canada, Approx. 1870-1960" (Typescript, 1960), p. 4, a copy of which is in the Metropolitan Toronto Central Library, Piddington was the first Toronto dealer to issue a second-hand book catalogue.

³⁸The accession records for 1885 and 1886 indicate that the Library was buying very little in this period, and almost no rare Canadiana.

³⁹TPL, *A Subject Catalogue or Finding List of Books in the Reference Library with an Index of Subjects and Personal Names, 1889* (Toronto, 1889), Preface.

issued a statement in the *Annual report*, adopting a formal policy of collecting Canadiana:

As deep interest is and should be taken by all Canadians in the history and literature of our own country, special efforts are being made to secure for the Library, every work of any consequence bearing upon these subjects, and the gatherings for this year have been numerous and important. This policy, if continued persistently and intelligently from year to year by those in charge of the Library must insure success and result, in the Toronto Public Library, being some day in possession of a Canadian section unsurpassed by any other Library, in the country. There are many books and documents connected with the history of Canada in the possession of private persons which it is highly desirable should be in the safe custody of some Library, and it is hoped that the Toronto Public Library will be given an opportunity of acquiring some of them.⁴⁰

The Board's official decision to give priority to Canadiana was the result of the persistent efforts of John Hallam. As early as 1881, he had advocated the acquisition of rare materials for the Library, and he had donated his own collection to further this aim. Since the Library's founding, he had been the central figure in all its concerns and activities. On January 13, 1888, he resigned from the Board to resume his career as an alderman. He continued, however, to take an interest in library affairs and to make regular donations up to his death in 1900.

With Hallam's departure, Bain became the dominant force in the Library. For the next twenty years, he devoted much of his energies to acquiring Canadiana. He had a reputation for being an aggressive collector:

When the D.W. Smith manuscripts were offered for sale in London some years ago several bids were put in. The Ontario Government was among the bidders. A member of the Ministry⁴¹ happened to be in London at the time, and sallied forth to get the prize. But he and other eager seekers were met with: "You are too late. The manuscripts are now the property of the Toronto Library. Mr. Bain ordered them by cable."⁴²

The Smith Papers were a purchase, acquired, along with some other manuscripts, for £31.10.0 from the sale in London in July, 1888 of the Library of Sir David W. Smith.⁴³ The other major manuscript collections which Bain obtained for the Library were donations. They consisted of the Papers of

⁴⁰TPL, *Annual Report*, v. 4, 1887, p. 2.

⁴¹Identified as Sir Oliver Mowat in *A Standard Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, v. 2 (Toronto, 1938), p. 20.

⁴²A.H.U. Colquhoun, "Canadian Celebrities: Mr. James Bain, Jr.," *Canadian Magazine*, 15: 32, 1900.

⁴³MTCL, TPL, Bd., Minutes, July 13, 1888; TPL, *Annual Report*, v.5, 1888, p. 1.

William Powell, Samuel Jarvis and Samuel Peters Jarvis in 1892; the Laurent Quetton de St. George manuscripts in 1894, the Papers of William Warren Baldwin and his son Robert in 1899; and, in 1901, the collection of William Allan and his son George W. Allan, and, as a result of bequest, the Scadding, Strachan and McGill Papers.

Donors, were an important source for books as well as manuscripts. Gifts on the scale of the Hallam collection were rare events. A steady stream, however of smaller donations contributed to the strength of the book collection. Among the early donors was John George Howard of Colborne Lodge, High Park.⁴⁴ In 1889, George Brown's son donated to the Library a large collection of pamphlets and twenty-three volumes of the *Globe* belonging to his father.⁴⁵ In the later years of Bain's tenure of office the most important gift to the Library came from the Reverend Henry Scadding, Rector of Holy Trinity Church. An antiquarian whose interests embraced history, theology, natural science, philology and numismatics, Scadding was an avid collector who on his death in 1901 left his collection to be distributed among some of the major institutions in Toronto including the Toronto Public Library, the University of Toronto, Trinity College, the Legislative Library, the Ontario Department of Education, Osgoode Hall, Holy Trinity Church, and Wycliffe College.⁴⁶ The Toronto Public Library acquired from the Scadding bequest an interesting association copy of *The Public and General Statutes Passed by the Congress of the United States of America from 1789 to 1827 Inclusive* (Boston, 1827) which had belonged to William Lyon Mackenzie and had been found at Montgomery's Tavern on Yonge Street on December 7, 1837.⁴⁷

In purchasing books, the Library employed a number of methods. The buying trip was one, first undertaken by Hallam and Bain in 1883. In May, 1890, Bain went again to England, this time with \$8,000 to spend.⁴⁸ His comments on the book trade are most interesting:

Since my visit to London in 1883 considerable changes had taken place both in the character of the market and in the class of second-hand books in demand. The tendency of past years has been to centre the book trade in London, so that the sales of great libraries which took place occasionally in Edinburgh, Dublin, the English provincial towns, are now almost entirely held in London. As a consequence, most of the English country booksellers as well as the purchasers for the American and Continental trade, make London their headquarters and so rapidly

⁴⁴Howard's donation is described in his *Catalogue of Paintings in the Gallery at Colborne Lodge, High Park* (Toronto, 1885), p. 15.

⁴⁵TPL, *Annual Report*, v. 6, 1889, p. 4.

⁴⁶Surrogate Court, Metropolitan Toronto Court House, Henry Scadding, Will, Probated June 25, 1901.

⁴⁷The book, presented to Scadding by a friend, August 11, 1873, is inscribed with the details.

⁴⁸MTCL, TPL, Bd., Minutes, May 9, 1890.

are the best books picked up by their resident agents, that unless the purchases made at the sales are closely watched day by day, the accumulation of a number of good books is a matter of time. Many of the American libraries have their special agents there supplied with almost unlimited means, so that the drift of good books to this continent is on a big scale. As the editions of good books are almost always small, every library which purchases, reduces the available stock and so tends to raise the prices. This is especially the case of late years with books on America and Canada, and no bookseller dreams of cataloguing them as he can instantly dispose of them at a large price.⁴⁹

The occasional buying trip abroad was no longer a satisfactory method of accumulating stock, and was not undertaken again on a large scale.

Auctions, however, were a rich source of prizes. The Toronto Public Library was represented at the executor's sale of the Library of Samuel L.M. Barlow, a prominent American corporation lawyer and bibliophile. According to Henry Harris, who wrote the introduction to the sale catalogue, "the works relating to the early history of Canada were among the chief objects of his [Barlow's] solicitude, and he spared neither efforts nor expense to gather as many as he could."⁵⁰ Among the Library's acquisitions were Richard Hakluyt's *The Principall Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation* (London, 1589), purchased for \$40.00, five Jesuit Relations for a total of \$33, and N. de Dièreville's *Relation du Voyage du Port Royal de l'Acadie* (Amsterdam, 1710) for \$2.

In April, 1890, Bain went to Boston to attend the sale of books belonging to Gerald Hart, a founder and president of the Montreal Society for Historical Studies, and a prominent member of the Antiquarian and Numismatic Society. The auctioneers, C.F. Libbie and Company, described the collection in the catalogue:

It includes books from the first printers throughout Canada . . . The collection of autographs contains many original documents of the greatest rarity and of political and historic interest bearing on the history of Canada, especially during the French Dominion.⁵¹

Bain was authorized to spend \$900.⁵² Among his purchases was Gabriel Franchère's manuscript "Journal d'un Voyage sur la Côte du Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique Septentrionale pendant les Années 1811-12, 13, et 14," annotated by Michel Bibaud who had revised and considerably altered the journal for

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, October 10, 1890.

⁵⁰S.L.M. Barlow, *Catalogue of the American Library of the Late Samuel Latham Mitchill Barlow* (New York, 1889), p. vi. An annotated copy at MTCL lists prices for many lots.

⁵¹G.E. Hart, *Catalogue of the Library, Manuscripts, Autograph Letters, Maps and Prints Forming the Collection of Gerald E. Hart, Esq. of Montreal* (Boston, 1890), "Note." An annotated copy at MTCL lists prices for some lots.

⁵²MTCL, TPL, Bd., Minutes, April 11, 1890.

publication in 1820. It was acquired for \$80. Bain also bought a copy of Nicolas Denys' *Description Géographique et Historique des Costes de l'Amérique Septentrionale* (2v., Paris, 1672) for \$52.

Another important sale was that of the Library of Louis Masson, Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec from 1884 to 1887, who had gathered together a collection of manuscripts and books for his history of the western fur trade, *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest* (2v., Quebec, 1889-1890). On his return from the auction, Bain reported to the Library Committee:

Since the last meeting of the Board I have attended the sale in Montreal of the books of the late Governor Masson, and in spite of close competition secured a number of rare and valuable books at reasonable prices. The total purchases consisted of 351 books, pamphlets and manuscripts which realized 216.18 dollars or 62 cts. per volume.⁵³

Among the acquisitions was a copy of Julia Hart's *St. Ursula's Convent, or the Nun of Canada* (2v., Kingston, 1824), the first novel written by a Canadian and published in Canada, for \$18, and James Lynne Alexander's *Wonders of the West* (York, U.C., 1825), the first book of verse printed in Upper Canada.⁵⁴

Second-hand booksellers were the most important single source of Canadiana materials. English dealers were represented heavily in the accession records. For example, the first item in the Library's *A Bibliography of Canadiana* (Toronto, 1934), Giovanni Ramusio's *Terzo Volume delle Navigazioni et Viaggi* (Venice, 1565), containing the first printed record known of Jacques Cartier's first voyage to America, was purchased from Maggs Bros., London.⁵⁵ The Library was also buying from local dealers. One of its earliest purchases of Canadiana had been from Alfred Piddington, a Toronto bookseller. It also bought from John Britnell who, beginning in 1885, put out an excellent series of catalogues, including special numbers on Canadiana and Americana, and from the firm of Williamson and Company which issued, from 1890 on, catalogues containing Canadiana.⁵⁶

A small but valuable source of books were individuals who had items for sale. In 1888, for example, the Library purchased some volumes from Lawrence Heyden, a local lawyer, related by marriage to the Baldwin family. Included in the purchase was François Bigot's *Mémoire* (Paris, 1763), and the first catechism printed for New France, *Catéchisme du Diocèse de Québec* (Paris, 1702), by Jean de la Croix de St. Valier.⁵⁷

By modern standards, the prices which the Library was paying for all rare materials were incredibly low. In 1905, for example, 164 books collected by

⁵³MTCL, TPL, Library Committee, Minutes, May 10, 1904.

⁵⁴L.F.R. Masson, *Catalogue of the Late Hon. L.R. Masson's Magnificent Private Library* (Montreal, 1904). An annotated copy at MTCL lists prices for many lots. There were two copies of the Alexander volume for sale; one went for \$2.75, the other for \$3.75.

⁵⁵MTCL, TPL, Accession Books, June 23, 1900.

⁵⁶MTCL has a collection of these dealers' catalogues.

⁵⁷MTCL, TPL, Accession Books, July 19, 1888.

James Stuart, Chief Justice of Lower Canada, in the early part of the nineteenth century, was sold to the Library at \$1.00 a volume. Six of the books were incunabula. The rest were sixteenth and seventeenth century imprints.⁵⁸

In terms of the Board's budget, however, the books were not so cheap. Except for the first year of operation when the Library had a large amount of money available for books, the annual funds spent on all books, reference and circulating, for both the central collection and the branches, were about \$6,000.⁵⁹ The decade of the 1890's was marred by the constant struggle between the Library Board and the City Council over finances. With a limited budget, the decision on whether to allocate funds for the purchase of rare Canadian materials or to satisfy some of the other collection needs of the Library must have been a difficult one to make. It is not surprising that when John Audubon's *Birds of America* in elephant folio was offered to the Library by the executors of the late Honourable George Allan for \$2,000, payment had to be extended over five years.⁶⁰ But at least the Library acquired the Audubon. Many other items slipped away. At the Barlow sale, for example, 51 Jesuit Relations were sold, the most expensive for \$120, but the Library purchased only five.

Financial considerations appear to have been the cause behind the Library's failure to acquire the Neilson collection, one of the most outstanding collections of Canadiana offered to the Library in this period. On December 16, 1895, Dr. John Neilson of Quebec City attended the Library Committee meeting to offer for sale part of his private library for \$7,000 with generous arrangements for payment and the return of duplicates. Henry Morgan described his collection:

He inherited the rich library of his grandfather, Honourable John Neilson, and of his great-grand-uncle, Wm. Brown (Canada's first printer) which was formed by the purchase of many of the old Quebec Jesuit books and Manuscripts. It now forms a collection of Canadiana, second to none.⁶¹

Bain reported on the Neilson offer at the next meeting on January 7th. There were 1658 volumes, among them Samuel de Champlain's *Voyages et Decouvert Faites en Nouvelle France* (Paris, 1620), three Jesuit *Relations*, and Marc Lescarbot's *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*. (Paris, 1612). Among the pamphlets, there were 97 printed in Canada before 1822, and 316 printed between 1822 and 1855. Between 1808 and 1847, there were 399 broadsheets, proclamations, acts of the Assembly, etc. There were 200 religious and educational books. A set of the *Quebec Gazette* from 1764 to 1849, and the official *Gazette* from 1823 to 1838 made up 120 volumes, "the most valuable newspaper fyle in Canada commencing at a period when nothing of the kind was in existence in

⁵⁸MTCL, TPL, Lib. Comm., Minutes, April 11, 1905.

⁵⁹TPL, *Annual Reports*; *passim*.

⁶⁰MTCL, TPL, Lib. Comm., Minutes, November 11, 1902.

⁶¹Henry J. Morgan, *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time: A Handbook of Canadian Biography* (Toronto, 1898), p. 763.

Upper Canada and lasted during all the political difficulties which beset the Lower Province.”⁶² According to Neilson, the collection had been evaluated by Phileas Gagnon and other experts at \$8,900. Bain, either because he thought Neilson’s price was too high or felt the Library could not afford it, evaluated the collection at \$5,696. Estimating \$1,498 for duplicates he offered Neilson \$4,198. The Library did not get the collection.

There is very little information in the Library’s records about the treatment and storage of the rare Canadiana collection. Manuscript correspondence was normally bound up in volumes. Sometimes the letters were properly guarded before sewing; on other occasions, the originals were actually stitched together. The task of cataloguing manuscripts was time-consuming, and a backlog of unprocessed materials quickly accumulated. Bain was an advocate of the published book catalogue, and in 1889 the Reference Library catalogue was published, followed by a supplement in 1891. Both these catalogues included a special section on Canada and Newfoundland which, the Board hoped, would help fill “the need of a handy Canadian bibliography.”⁶³ As the Library’s collections grew, overcrowding became a chronic problem and was referred to regularly in the Board’s Minutes from about 1895 on. The ventilation in the central building was so bad that there were complaints from patrons, and an inspection was made by the city medical officer.

The biggest problem was the threat of fire. According to the *Annual Report* for 1888, the manuscripts were deposited in a fireproof vault; the doors and openings into the stacks were provided with fireproof doors. The 1890 fire which destroyed the University of Toronto Library, however, frightened the Board into a resolution “to continually urge the necessity of securing a fire proof building to shelter and protect their present collection of valuable books and documents, many of them incapable of being duplicated at any cost.”⁶⁴ The 1904 fire in downtown Toronto which raged only a few blocks from the Library was cause for even greater alarm. In the fire, part of the Library’s new catalogue and 116 volumes of periodicals at Brown Brothers for binding were destroyed.⁶⁵ It is no wonder that a later Board eagerly welcomed Andrew Carnegie’s offer of a new building.

On March 18, 1891, the Library held an exhibition of its valuable books, including both Canadian and non-Canadian items. The affair was quite grand, with admission by invitation only. “The reading-room and library were suitably illuminated and tastefully decorated. Flowers, cut and in pots, palms and ferns abounded, adding not only their beauty but their fragrance . . . All the evening, from eight o’clock until ten, music was supplied by Marcicano’s Italian Orchestra.”⁶⁶ Of the books on display, the reporter from the *Toronto Mail* was most impressed with Hennepin’s *Nouvelle Decouverte*.

⁶²MTCL, TPL, Lib. Comm., Minutes, January 7, 1896.

⁶³TPL, *Subject Catalogue*, Preface.

⁶⁴TPL, *Annual Report*, v. 7, 1890, p. 2.

⁶⁵MTCL, TPL, Bd., Minutes, May 13, 1904.

⁶⁶*Toronto Mail*, March 19, 1891, p. 6.

In 1899, the Library took part in the Canadian Historical Exhibition held at Victoria College. Responsible for the public library room, Bain exhibited material from the Canadiana collection tracing Canada's history:

It was a revelation to students of Canadian history when they saw what a wealth of books, documents and pamphlets relating to that subject were there, contributed by the Public Library, arranged chronologically, as far as possible, and catalogued, by Dr. Bain. In that all but unique collection, books were to be found which threw light upon the whole history of Canada, from the time of Jacques Cartier to Confederation.⁶⁷

Bain also participated in another display at this Exhibition made up of books, maps, engravings and manuscripts "from the libraries of James Bain, Jr. and Robert Jenkins."⁶⁸ This display surpassed in size the one from the Toronto Public Library, covering 17 pages in the official catalogue to the Library's six. In quality, too, this display rivalled that of the Library's; for example, Emmanuel Crespel's *Voyages . . . dans le Canada* (Francfort sur le Meyn, 1742) and Jacques Cornut's *Canadensium Plantarum* (Paris, 1635) were not even owned by the Toronto Public Library at this time. Certainly Bain was himself a private collector of Canadiana of impressive stature.⁶⁹

The reputation of the Canadiana collection at the Toronto Public Library spread rapidly. Hospice A. Verreau, who had "probably the most complete collection of Canadiana in existence,"⁷⁰ expressed to Kingsford as early as 1889 "not only his admiration but his wonder" that Bain had accumulated such a collection in so short a time.⁷¹ The University of Toronto Library, anxious to avoid the cost of duplicating materials following the 1890 fire, recognized the Public Library's Canadiana policy:

It is manifestly desirable to avoid the duplication of costly books of reference in various public libraries accessible to general students; or to make any great expenditure in such special departments of literature as are already provided for in the Ontario Medical Library, and those of Osgoode Hall and the Legal Association of the County of York. In the purchases for the City Library it is also understood that careful

⁶⁷T.E. Champion, "A Great Librarian: The Late James Bain, D.C.L." *Canadian Magazine*, 23: 225, 1908.

⁶⁸Ontario Historical Society, *Catalogue, Canadian Historical Exhibition, Victoria College, Queen's Park, Toronto . . . June 14th to 28th, 1899* (Toronto, 1899), p. 51.

⁶⁹A detailed description of the Bain collection is available at the University of Toronto Library, James Bain, *Catalogue of the Library of James and Robert Bain*, at 393 Brunswick Avenue, Toronto, prepared by James Bain in Jan., Feb., and March, 1906 (Holograph).

⁷⁰Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women*, p. 1040.

⁷¹University of Toronto Library, William Kingsford, *Letters to James Bain*. W. Kingsford reported this remark to J. Bain, April 6, 1889. Collection cited hereafter as U. of T., Kingsford Papers.

attention is given to the rare and costly works in the departments of Canadian History and Literature.⁷²

The correspondence between Kingsford and Bain illustrates the use which was being made of the Canadiana collection for scholarly purposes. Kingsford was preparing his monumental ten-volume *History of Canada* (Toronto, 1887-1898) and his *Early Bibliography of the Province of Ontario* (Toronto, 1892). From 1887 to 1895 a constant stream of questions from him poured into the Library. Bain must have devoted a great deal of his time, and that of his small staff to answering them. Kingsford inquired about such bibliographical problems as the publication history of the journals of the House of Assembly and of the early almanacs of Upper Canada. He had history questions regarding the events of the War of 1812 and the Rebellion of 1837. He asked for publishing information in connection with the promotion and sale of his *Early Bibliography*. One of their most interesting exchanges was in regard to the first work said to be printed in Upper Canada, Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe's *Speech . . . upon Opening the First Session of the Legislature* ([Newark.] U.C., Louis Roy, 1793)⁷³ Kingsford had seen a copy of this pamphlet in Ottawa, and he arranged for Bain to purchase it for the Library for \$10. Bain, however, returned it, claiming that it was a reprint. The details of the bibliographical debate that followed were recounted in Kingsford's *Early Bibliography*.⁷⁴ Certainly the copy that Kingsford saw, lacking the name of the printer, differs from the one described in Marie Tremaine's *A Bibliography of Canadian Imprints, 1751-1800* (Toronto, 1952) and the one presently owned by the Metropolitan Toronto Central Library.

By 1907, Bain, writing to a London dealer who had sent him a catalogue of Americana, expressed regret that he could not make up an order: "Our collection is becoming so large that it is difficult for me to find new material in our special direction".⁷⁵ As the collection grew in stature, so too did Bain's own personal reputation as a librarian and a scholar. He became a respected authority on Canadian bibliography and history, and in 1902 received an honorary doctorate from Trinity University, Toronto. In 1905 with Sir Edmund Walker and Professor George Wrong he founded the Champlain Society. A regular contributor of articles to library journals, he was first president of the Ontario Library Association. His major scholarly work was an edition of Alexander Henry's *Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories between the Years 1760 and 1776* (Toronto, 1901). His most lasting contribution, however, was the development of the Canadiana collection. When he died on May 22nd, 1908, he had accumulated for the Toronto Public Library a wealth of materials on the early history of Canada and had prepared a firm foundation on which his successors could build.

SUSAN McGRATH

⁷²U. of T., Library Committee, Minute Book, June 9, 1890.

⁷³U. of T., Kingsford Papers, W. Kingsford to J. Bain, April 30, May 5, 16, 28, 30 and June 2, 1892.

⁷⁴Kingsford, *Early Bibliography*, p. 9-12.

⁷⁵MTCL, TPL, Letter Book, J. Bain to George Harding, October 15, 1907.