

Greenfield, J. Katharine. *Hamilton Public Library 1889-1963: A Celebration of Vision and Leadership*. Hamilton: Hamilton Public Library, 1989. Pp. 139. Illustrations. \$19.95

Lorne Bruce

Trends and Questions in New Historical Accounts of Policing
Volume 19, Number 1, June 1990

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1017581ar>
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1017581ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (print)
1918-5138 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Bruce, L. (1990). Review of [Greenfield, J. Katharine. *Hamilton Public Library 1889-1963: A Celebration of Vision and Leadership*. Hamilton: Hamilton Public Library, 1989. Pp. 139. Illustrations. \$19.95]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, 19(1), 66–66. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1017581ar>

Greenfield, J. Katharine. *Hamilton Public Library 1889-1963: A Celebration of Vision and Leadership*. Hamilton: Hamilton Public Library, 1989. Pp. 139. Illustrations. \$19.95

Katharine Greenfield's history is concerned with the 75 years following the passage of a free public library bylaw in Hamilton in 1889, a period that spanned the late Victorian and modern eras of urban public library service. As with many library histories, the author describes the development of the Hamilton library based on chapters revolving around the tenure of its chief librarians: Richard Lancefield (1889-1902), John Kendrick (1902-1904), Adam Hunter (1904-1921), William Carlton (1921-22), Earl Browning (1922-25), Lurene McDonald Lyle (1926-1940) and Freda Walton (1940-1963). A short personal conclusion updates major changes to 1989.

The growth of Hamilton's library services — the advent of open access for the public to the shelves; the establishment of the Carnegie Library in 1913; the creation of children's services; the expansion to branches in Kenilworth, Barton, Westdale, Locke Street, and the Mountain; new cataloguing and classification systems; the organization of an integrated central library and branch system; the progress of audio-visual departments, school library services, special collections, and public relations — is well documented and balanced within the confines of the chronological structure the author uses.

Major events, celebrated or otherwise, that impacted on Hamilton's library are also examined. Lancefield's disappearance in 1902 under suspicious financial circumstances, provincial Inspector William Carson's 1920-21 report that marked the end of Hunter's term as director, the budget cuts of the Depression years, postwar reconstruction after 1945, the renovation of the central library in 1951-52 and subsequent expansion of city services are all chronicled at some length for the first time.

Although the chief librarians, and a few trustees, emerge most often as the visionaries or leaders, it is not clear what leadership they provided. Near the finish, Greenfield relates leadership to "good planning, dedicated citizen participation in leadership" and "judicious government financing". This is incomplete at best, and I would regard a standard definition of leadership in a management sense to mean the process of influencing the behaviour of members in an organization to fulfil their tasks of setting and achieving goals.

In *Hamilton Public Library 1889-1963*, personal leadership traits such as initiative, originality, knowledge, dedication, or patience are often mentioned, but these characteristics describe what leaders are like, not how they use power to influence decisions or events. Similarly, fundamental leadership styles are alluded to — e.g. authoritarian, democratic, and consultative managerial styles — but style highlights the relationship of leaders and staff, not the development of goals or ways of persuading people to achieve defined ends. Nor is there any indication that Hamilton's leaders practised managerial ideas stemming from scientific management or human relations thinking which dominated administrative texts in the first half of this century.

Despite the lack of clarity concerning leadership, *Hamilton Public Library 1889-1963* is a worthwhile addition to the growing literature dedicated to Canadian library history. There is much to commend in this mostly narrative history, especially the depth of research based on the Hamilton library archives which Greenfield has helped organize. The writing is clear and concise. The illustrations are well chosen. One quarrel readers will present is that bibliographic footnotes are not used and that no reference list is presented to assist researchers.

However, without the patient construction of individual library histories and biographies of chief librarians (history in a microcosm) which

the author provides, it would be difficult to improve our understanding of the development of modern public library systems in urban Canada. Greenfield's efforts in this direction are a valuable contribution.

Lorne Bruce
Humanities and Social Science Division
McLaughlin Library
University of Guelph

Dahms, Frederic A. *The Heart of the Country*. Toronto: Deneau Publishers Ltd., 1988. Pp. 191. Illustrations, black and white photographs.

What do place names such as Bayfield, Duparquet, Georgetown, Hartland, Orangeville, Pubnico and Wroxeter have in common? The perceptive reader, versed in geographical trivia, may well recognize the abovementioned as a list of towns and villages scattered throughout Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes. It is the conclusion of Frederic A. Dahms that communities such as these and their many counterparts "form the heart of the country . . . Canada." At first glance this book gives the appearance of a typical travel treatise. As with all good travel books, it is attractively printed and well illustrated with black and white photographs plus explanatory maps for each chapter. The text is also supplemented with first rate sketches by the author's wife, Ruth Dahms. Throughout, we are taken on an armchair journey from the Great Lakes region of Ontario to the Atlantic coast of the Maritimes. Along the way, approximately 100 "dying" and "rejuvenated" towns and villages are described and subjected to historical and demographic analysis. In the author's own words: "Only by examining the past and contemporary character of [these] towns and villages can we completely appreciate the reasons for the recent changes in historic migration trends, and their implications for the future of our settlement patterns. The history of our villages and hamlets is long and complex. Many have