

A History of the Dalhousie Township Library The Gift of the Earl of Dalhousie

By Reverend James A. Leitch

The following account of the Dalhousie Library at Watson's Corners, written by Reverend James Airth Leitch (1863-1939), was published, in four parts, in the Perth Courier between December 1901 and March 1902. Reverend Leitch was the minister of St. James Presbyterian Church at the hamlet of Hood, Dalhousie Township¹, in 1896-1903. He was, perhaps, a better pastor than historian, but despite his numerous inaccuracies and awkward style, this account of the Dalhousie Library will be of interest to those interested in the history of the Lanark Highlands.

The Dalhousie Library is at present housed in a part of the 'Sons Hall'², Watson's Corners. It was moved there about three years ago from what was known as 'Old Saint Andrew's Hall' to which reference will be made later.

It has a continuous history, dating back to the year 1820 – the early autumn of which the first settlers located in these parts. The library was the outcome of certain conditions that our forefathers were under in coming to Canada. They had acquired an ardent desire to feed their intellects as well as their bodies, and the literary food they sought was of the most wholesome and substantial character. There were very few papers or magazines in those days, and a great discount was put on anything of a fictitious character.

It was this type of Scotchman, coming from the southwest of Scotland, that were the founders of our present library. Most of them were Free Masons and belonged to a society previous to their coming to this country. They had put themselves under the Board of Customs³, which apparently had made provision for emigrants coming to Canada. The sum of £5 was paid by each to this Board of Customs which insured them a free voyage, adequate provisions and quarters on the way. On their arrival [they] were given free grants of land, and a few essential implements to begin their farming with.

There is a communication of which the present library is in possession of a copy, dated June 20, 1820, written by Mr. Alexander Young, who apparently had oversight of some part of this work of emigration⁴, addressed to the Hon. Rev. Charles Stewart⁵, of Montreal, who had taken an active and sympathetic part in the locating and general welfare of those emigrants when they arrived.⁶ The full text of which we insert:-

¹ Dalhousie Township C-2/L-16, about two miles north of Watson's Corners.

² Sons of Temperance Hall.

³ This is probably a reference to 'The Glasgow Committee on Emigration' directed by its Agent and Secretary, Robert Lamond. The committee was responsible for managing the government funds and overall coordination the emigration.

⁴ Alexander Young was more likely associated with the 'Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts'.

⁵ Reverend Charles James Stewart (1775-1837) a leading Church of England churchman in Lower Canada, member of the Lower Canada Legislative Council, representative of the 'Society for the Propagation of the Gospel', and later Anglican Bishop of Quebec (1826-1837).

⁶ Except to donate to the library, Stewart played no role in the Society Settler scheme.

Edinburgh, June 20, 1820

To the Hon. And Rev. Charles Stewart
Montreal.

My Dear Sir – It will not be unknown to you that a most extensive emigration is now taking place from the west of Scotland, and I have just now been giving some assistance to Thomas Scott⁷, the president of a society of Lennahagor⁸, and William Granger⁹, the president of another society from Anderston and Rutherglen, in getting a modification of the quantities of provision which the Board of Customs requires them to lay in for their voyage.

These two bodies are going to Upper Canada, where they have got grants of land about 140 miles above Montreal. As these society have been favourably represented to me by the Duke of Hamilton, I have advised them, as they are very numerous, to keep together as much as possible, to preserve their connection with friends they have left behind them in this country, and to be very careful to send home correct accounts of their station and future prospects.

Recollecting also that the country they are going to is one which had been much benefitted by our unwearied labors in the cause of religion and humanity. I take the liberty of addressing this letter in their behalf to you, to whom I believe no distressed or friendless Scotsman ever made fruitless application, and entrust it the above mentioned Thomas Scott, being well assured that if Providence should cast their lot in that part of Canada where they have occasion to wait upon you and ask your good advice and assistance they will not do so in vain.

I remain with great respect, dear Sir, your most obedient and faithful servant,

Alex Young

The society of which Mr. Thomas Scott was president continued to thrive in this country, all the while maintaining its Scottish spirit.¹⁰ That spirit is still to be seen in their children.

Mr. Scott was grandfather of the present John and Thomas Scott of this neighborhood. This society came under the name of St. Andrew's Society shortly after they landed.¹¹ As soon as means and help were secured, they built a hall which has ever since been called 'St. Andrew's Hall'. Its location is now on Mr. Maxwell Parks' lot, about a quarter of a mile north of Watson's Corners.

⁷ Thomas D. Scott (1783-1867), settled Dalhousie Township C-4/L-12.

⁸ This is probably a typesetting error. Thomas Scott was president of the 'Lesmahagow Emigration Society' group that sailed in 1820. A second Lesmahagow Society party sailed in 1821.

⁹ William Granger did not stay in the settlement, but moved to the USA.

¹⁰ Leitch seems to confuse/conflate the emigration societies formed in Glasgow and the St. Andrew's Society formed in Dalhousie Township.

¹¹ During the winter of 1825-1826 the Society Settlers of Dalhousie Township formed the first St. Andrew's Society in Ontario. Elsewhere on this website see *The Dalhousie Saint Andrew's Society* <https://www.perthhs.org/documents/dalhousie-st-andrews2.pdf>

Previous to their leaving Scotland, they usually made provision for the intellectual and moral side of their nature, each as they were able to lay in a supply of books, which was to them a most essential part of their outfit. They, of course, were well aware that the facilities for reading in Canada were not such as they were accustomed to enjoy at home.

Notwithstanding all the disadvantages incidental to their settling in this country – the chopping of their first clearance and the building of their temporary homes – they did not neglect to make good use of their meagre supply of books. These were chiefly made up of theology, biography, travel, history (church and state) and books of sermons. Such books were strong and stimulating to the spirit as well as the intellect. They were well fitted to supply, in a great measure, the lack of Christian teaching of which they had profitably availed themselves in their homeland. These books, of course, would stand two or three readings, or even more, some of them: and in this respect they were well tested.

It might be well at this point to show briefly the effect of the hearing of his [Earl of Dalhousie's]¹² sympathy and interest on those settlers of 1820. From the fact that two townships, the Society, the Library and the Hall bear his name, it is quite evident that there was a warm and mutual sympathy existing between him and the settlers.

The Township of Ramsay as well as Dalhousie owes its name to him, as will be at once seen from his full name and also a communication received from him and which we insert later. His name is James Andrew Brown Ramsay, Marquis of Dalhousie. We have learned quite recently that the Society of which Mr. Thomas Scott was president was an Immigrant Society and had some affiliation with the Earl of Dalhousie previous to its coming to this country. And what is more interesting, most of its member were tenants on the Dalhousie estate in Scotland. This estate extended into Lanarkshire, and consequently this will make more evident the historical connection of our Lanark with the earl of Dalhousie as well as Lanarkshire. The Townships of Dalhousie and Ramsay received their names also as the natural outcome of this affiliation, which continued to be maintained.¹³ This growth of sympathy will be more manifest as we proceed. Lord Dalhousie's gift to the library was a subscription of \$100 and a donation of 116 volumes including the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and a number of books on agriculture. It will no doubt be of interest at this point to hear his reply to the solicitation sent him for assistance –



George Ramsay (1770-1838), 9th Earl of Dalhousie
Image courtesy of the National Gallery of Canada

¹² George Ramsay (1770-1838), 9th Earl of Dalhousie, Governor-General of British North America 1820-1828.

¹³ It is doubtful that any of the Emigration Societies had a prior connection to the Earl of Dalhousie or his estates. The townships of Dalhousie and Ramsay were named in Dalhousie's honor because, at the time they were surveyed, he was Governor General of British North America

Quebec, 14 Aug. 1828

To Thomas Marshall¹⁴
Perth

Dear Sir, -- A good deal occupied at present in preparation for my departure¹⁵, I have neglected to answer your last letter relating to the Township Library in Dalhousie. When I made the inquiry, had I looked to the map for one moment, I might have seen the impossibility of uniting the name with Ramsay, but in truth it ran in my head that the two adjoined each other.¹⁶

As you assure me the library will be promoted and taken care of afterwards, I have great pleasure in contributing to an object so likely to do good. I beg my name may be put upon the list, and as my subscription, I shall place with Mr. Greer – you can draw for it when you choose – cashier of Quebec Bank, payable to you \$100 to the funds of the library.

I shall send you two boxes of books of various matters, chiefly on agriculture, with a copy of the Encyclopedia Britanica as a foundation stone to future less bulky works. I'll send them by the boat to Fort William¹⁷ and address to you at Perth.

Do me the favour to assure the settlers both of Ramsay, Lanark and Dalhousie, that though distant, I shall never lose sight of those new settlements and always feel a warm interest in their future prosperity.

Yours, my dear Sir, most sincerely and faithfully, Dalhousie

Closely following the above letter, was received [the following] dated September 8, 1828.

Quebec, September 8, 1828

To Thomas Marshall
Perth

My Dear Sir, --

In sending you a book on dairy husbandry for the Dalhousie Library I send also a pack of my arms to be painted¹⁸ on the books as a cognizance of the township which I beg may be adopted as their own.

Yours very truly, Dalhousie

¹⁴ This letter was more likely addressed to Captain William Marshall (1774-1864), not Thomas Marshall. Willaim Marshall served on the staff of the Perth Military Settling Department from late 1815 and was appointed by Dalhousie as Superintendent of the Lanark Settlement in 1820. There was no one named Thomas Marshall among the Society Settlers.

¹⁵ In 1828 Dalhousie was leaving the Canada's to assume the post of Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in India.

¹⁶ Dalhousie had earlier suggested the library be organized and named to serve the settlers of both of his namesake townships, Dalhousie and Ramsay, but was apparently unaware, until corrected by Marshall, that the Township of Lanark lay between the two.

¹⁷ As there was no 'Fort William' located between Quebec City and Kingston, Dalhousie probably sent the books via 'Fort Wellington' at Prescot. In 1828 the only 'Fort William' was located at the head of Lake Superior.

¹⁸ An apparent typesetting error. The arms were on printed labels to the 'pasted' not 'painted' in the books.

Those generous gifts to the library put its promoters under a very great obligation to him, the chief donator, and so they at once honored him by making him its chief Patron, naming their library after him and using his Coat of Arms as he kindly requested.



Earl of Dalhousie

Coat of Arms of the Earl of Dalhousie

give me pleasure to belong to the institution and promote its interests as far as lies in my power.

I shall be happy to send you my subscription and a donation of books as soon as a good opportunity offers for my doing so. I shall recommend the institution to my friends; and earnestly desiring its prosperity, and sincerely thanking you for the handsome manner in which you have applied to me.

*I remain, Gentlemen
Your obliged servant,*

C. J. Quebec

The settlers met together frequently 'sang their auld Scotch songs', told their stories and changed their books with each other. In this way their first books were made to do the best and most enduring service. This little stock of books formed the nucleus of what is now known as Dalhousie Library, and which as we shall see grew till they numbered about 1,000 volumes.

Let us note briefly how this growth was affected.

Another important donation was that of the Honorable Charles Stewart, Lord Bishop of Quebec, consisting of 49 volumes. He also gave a subscription which we learn from his reply: -

Quebec, February 17, 1829

*Mr. Thomas Scott
Mr. Charles Baillie¹⁹*

Gentlemen, --

Pardon my not sooner acknowledging the receipt of your acceptable letter enclosing one to me of an old date from my friend, Alexander Young W. W. Edinburg.

You do me honor in being anxious to place my name second in the list of subscribers as your patron in Canada of the Dalhousie Library. It will

¹⁹ Charles Baillie Sr. (1781-1831).

Their own little stock of books was augmented slightly previous to 1828, except some small grant received from the Government. We learn from a brief note at the head of an old catalogue that the library was “*Instituted April 1, 1828, Earl Dalhousie, Patron*”. It was in the early part of this year that they solicited subscriptions and donations from different parties whom they deemed likely to assist. Their solicitations were not in vain. A hearty response came from many, and some of these were very important personages. And the result was that the library grew till it numbered 500 volumes in the year 1832.

The largest and most interesting donation of all was that of his Excellency the Earl of Dalhousie, whose tenure of office as Governor General of Lower Canada was from 1820 to 1828.

There were several donations in the year 1830, among which the most notable was that of the Glasgow North American Colonial Society,²⁰ 45 volumes. There are no communications extent in connection with this gift. The society which came to these parts was an off-shoot of the Glasgow N.A.C. Society, or, as [it] was previously called “*Emigration Society*”, which no doubt, was the same.²¹ And as was natural, this parent society would cherish a warm interest for its welfare and so assist it generously.

Other gifts of this year were the following: William Morris, Perth, eight volumes; Henry J. Bolton, Perth, four volumes; Mr. Sullivan, York, five volumes. Those of 1831 were as follows; Rev. W. McAlister, Lanark, four volumes; Mr. Malcom Cameron, Perth, one volume; Mr. Alex McInnes, Lanark, one volume. There are only two other gifts of books that are noted, one in 1839 by John Dougall, Montreal, four volumes; and one for 1844 by Malcolm Cameron, M.P.P., Lanark, six volumes.

There is an interesting subscription from York dated 1829. Its value lies not in the amount given, but in the giver and the warm interest that accompanies the gift. It makes evident the fact that this library and its promoters had more than a local interest and significance. Its patrons, as we have seen, were not of the immediate vicinity only, but from distant parts and most of those were significant personages. This interesting subscription from York was by the Rev. Dr. Strachan²², a man whom Canadian history speaks of as exerting great influence in the history of Canada. He was appointed by royal warrant a member of the Legislative Council, and soon emerged into political prominence.

The story of his life is a striking illustration of what may be accomplished by energy of character and persistence of purpose. He was known as the ‘humble school master’. He exercised an assiduous part in the educational scheme under General Simcoe.²³ This indomitable school master opened a school in Kingston under the advice of Rev. Dr. Stuart²⁴, Archdeacon of Upper

²⁰ Elsewhere on this website see *Early Settlement in Lanark County & The Glasgow Colonial Society* <https://www.perthhs.org/documents/lanark-settlement-glasgow-society.pdf>

²¹ Reverend Lietch seems to have a confused understanding of the settlement societies. Elsewhere on this website see *The Third Wave, The Lanark Society Settlers*, <https://www.perthhs.org/documents/neighbour/shaw-third-wave-web.pdf>

²² Reverend John Strachan (1778-1867), Anglican Bishop of Toronto, Tory (family compact) member of the Upper Canada Legislative Council.

²³ John Graves Simcoe (1752 –1806) was a British Army general and the first lieutenant governor of Upper Canada from 1791 until 1796

²⁴ Reverend John Stuart (1740 –1811).

Canada. He studied divinity with a view to taking holy orders in the Church of England. In due course he was ordained and became, in rapid succession, rector of York, chaplain of the Legislative Assembly, member of the Legislative Council, and first Anglican Bishop of Upper Canada. We now give his letter which accompanied his subscriptions: -

York, November 2, 1829

Messrs. Hood and Baillie

Gentlemen –

I have much pleasure in sending you my small mite, £1 5s, enclosed for the benefit of your meritorious institution, and you do me only justice in believing that I retain a warm regard for my countrymen, and some remains of clanship²⁵. In no country are the advantages of education more felt, and appreciated, than in Scotland, nor I believe can any country boast of equal purity in the foundation upon which the education rests.

If the Scotch are a moral and religious people, it is because the truths of Christianity are made the basis of all their knowledge. In learning the letters of the alphabet, they learn their duty to God and man. A library of well selected books must prove of inestimable advantage to your neighborhood. Ignorance is a great enemy to virtue, and I know no greater object of pity than a man who cannot read. Such unhappy persons are, I hope, becoming scarce, and the multiplication of local libraries and schools will, I trust, extinguish them altogether, and in time render it disgraceful for any to be found who are unable to read and write.

Although my name can add nothing to the institution so excellent in itself, and already under men with efficient patronage, I beg to be considered a member and when I come to your part of the country, I shall take the liberty of availing myself of the privilege of reading some of your books. Should an opportunity present itself I shall be glad to be favored with a catalogue of your books, and the rules which you may have adopted for the management of your institution. Believe me, gentlemen,

*Sincerely yours
John Strachan*

We deem it fitting at this stage to give to the readers of this sketch a letter received in reply to one of condolence sent by the promoters of the library to the Dalhousie family on the death of Lord Dalhousie. It lends considerable emphasis to the fact that the institution had more than a local significance, and that its promoters had larger sympathies and interests than that of securing a library. This library was highly appreciated by them, and it still forms a very valuable treasure of the library. It is encased in an antique folding frame of mahogany with glass. The following is full text of it: -

²⁵ Reverend John Strachan (1778-1867) had been born at Aberdeen, Scotland.

Dalhousie Castle
March 29, 1839

To Mr. George Easton²⁶, President
Mr. J. McIntyre²⁷, Secretary,
Of the Dalhousie Library Society, Upper Canada

Gentlemen: -- I had the honor several months ago to receive your letter conveying to me in the kindest terms your sorrow for the loss which I had then recently sustained in the death of my father, Lord Dalhousie, and requesting me to accept in his place "of membership and patronage" of the Dalhousie Library Society, and to continue to it the use of my coat of arms.

The letter did not reach me until late in autumn²⁸ and I judged it better to defer my reply until the opening of the season²⁹. That time has now arrived, and I delay no longer in offering you my truest thanks for this mark of your attachment to the memory of my father.

A token of respect, so feelingly worded, issuing from a far distant spot and yet embracing many familiar Scottish names, would at any time have been most interesting, but now, when the events of the last year – which has swept away from me both father and mother – both of those who connected me with the country in which you live, and in whose society I spent the happiest years of my life – have made me more than usually susceptible of kinship and sympathy.

I feel your letter to be touching and gratifying in the highest degree. The circumstances under which the library was instituted were familiar to me, and having been accustomed to hear Lord Dalhousie speak of its prospects with interest, I rejoice sincerely to learn its great success.

To your request that I would accept of the membership and patronage I accede with pride and satisfaction; and place heartily at your service the arms of my family. The description which you give of the management and contents of the library are very satisfactory, and I trust that you will adhere to the system of admitting to it none but such works of solid instruction and sound piety as will make your children both useful and upright – men of right-based integrity as well as men of knowledge.

I have thought that a Scotchman, as you are, I could not offer a more acceptable addition to your collection than the latest and best history of the land of your birth. There is now one in progress by Mr. Tytler³⁰, which is certainly the fullest and the best that has yet been published. As soon as it has been completed, which may not be, however, for some little time, I will take the liberty of forwarding a copy to the society and I please myself with the

²⁶ George Easton (1784-1848) settled Dalhousie Township C-3/L-16.

²⁷ John S. McIntyre settled Ramsay Township C-7/L-8(W).

²⁸ Dalhousie Sr. had died March 21, 1838.

²⁹ The North Atlantic sailing season.

³⁰ Patrick Fraser Tytler (1791-1849). His *History of Scotland*, published between 1828–1843, covered the period between 1249 and 1603. The second edition referred to by Dalhousie was published in 1841–1843.

hope that this book among others may tend perhaps to preserve in your community the feeling and character of Scotsmen. It will show your children what their forefathers were, and what they did; and so keep alive a Scottish spirit by inspiring them with an honest pride in the merits and fame of those who have gone before them, thus strengthening that natural inclination so strongly marked in all of Scottish descent which makes their hearts graven to the names and the honors of 'Auld Lan Syne'.

With the request that you will convey to the Dalhousie Library Society the expression of my gratitude for their friendship and attention, and in the hope that on all future occasions they will freely make use [of] my services, if in any way I can be of service to them. I have the honor to remain, sirs, your obliged and very obedient, humble servant.

Dalhousie.

The above communication in itself is a strong and memorable attestation to the warm and mutual sympathy that existed between the Earl of Dalhousie and the promoters of the institution. The library, as we have noted, has several most interesting features, and this last is not the least, even among the older members still living.

We turn to another feature of interest, that of the building in which the library was housed for some 72 years. This building has ever since been known as 'St. Andrew's Hall', and latterly as 'Old St. Andrew's Hall'. It was adapted to the more urgent needs of the society and especially those of its annual gatherings which contributed largely to the cultivation of their sociable qualities. A cellar was excavated to store away the general supplies furnished for these annual festivities.

The building was erected in 1827 and has a most interesting history. Many of the older settlers of Dalhousie, Lanark and Sherbrooke that are still living cherish dearly the memory of the many pleasant and happy hours spent within its walls. Not a few of them were baptized, received their schooling, were married, attended township and society meetings, exchanged their books and worshiped there. It was freely used for all these purposes, since there was no other public building within a considerable distance of this point except Lanark.

It was the managers of the library that first took steps to secure insurance. We here insert a copy of a letter sent to Mr. Alexander Morris, Brockville, giving information of the library hall with the object of securing an insurance.

Dalhousie, April 16, 1832

*Alexander Morris, Esq.
Brockville*

Sir – The managers of the Dalhousie Library are wishing to insure the library against loss of fire and have instructed me to write to you for information on that subject.

The library consists of 500 volumes and is wished to be insured to the amount of £200; the house is valued at £50. It is a log building, covered with shingles. The library room is a hall 32 feet by 22 feet within, and is occasionally occupied as a place of worship, holding township meetings and other society meetings, and is heated by a stove. The distance of the house from the bush on the north, north-west, and south-west is from 50 to 60 yards. On the east and south-east there is a clearance of from 30 to 40 acres, with a fine house newly erected in the same clearance intended for a dwelling house but not yet furnished or occupied and stands about 50 yards from the library room.

There is a small house adjoining the library room where there is an occasional fire kept. It has a good stone chimney and the stove pipe from the library room passes into it and come up from hence as high as the roof of the library room. I have now communicated all the particulars respecting the house and library that I can think to be necessary, and beg that you will please to write and inform me when the money is to be paid, and such other information as you know to be necessary.

I am, sir, most respectfully

Your obedient servant,

John McIntyre

We shall now look briefly at the inner working and other matters of interest in the library. The library and the St. Andrew's Society were closely identified; in fact, they were one during a great part of their history, as may be seen from correspondence of the institution and especially from the communication from the Earl of Dalhousie. He speaks of it as the 'Dalhousie Library Society'. Mr. Thomas Scott was president of the library society from its inception until the year 1854, when he removed to Western Ontario. During this long period, he exercised an assiduous part as its chief promoter. He was followed by Mr. Hugh Hunter, who held office for 15 years. The following names held this office in turn for much shorter periods: Messrs. John Munro, James Reid, Andrew McInnes, John J. Paul, John Cumming, William Boyd, and James Park Sr.



In 1906, when St. Andrew's Hall of 1828 was demolished, the Dalhousie Library was moved to the Sons of Temperance Hall (left) and in 1940 moved again to the Present Watson's Corners Community Hall (right).

Previous to the year 1841 there is no record of membership extant. In this year [1841] there were 100 members of whom it will be of interest to many to know their names and which we here give:

Robert Anderson	George Easton	William May
Robert Angus	Thomas Easton	Andrew Morgan
James Bain	William Ellis	James McDonald
James Brown	William Gardiner	George McMillan
William Brown	Robert Gardiner	John S. McIntyre
William Barries	James Gibson	John McCulloch
James Barrie	William Hay	John McIntyre
Charles Baillie	Francis Hamilton	Archibald McLean
Archibald Browning	William Hood	William McKerrow
George Blair	James Horn	William McDonald
Thomas Brooks	Joseph Hetherington	Archibald McDonald
John Brown	Alexsander Horn	William Muir
Thomas Brooks	Hugh Hunter	John McLellan
Duncan Ballantine	James Jack	James McArthur
Edward Conroy	William Laverty	James Muir
Peter Cumming	John Leckie Jr.	James Machan
John Crawford	John Leckie Sr.	Andrew McInnes
William Cuthbertson	Mary Livingston	Duncan McInnes
Neil Campbell	John Livingston	William McInnes
Hugh Cameron	James Lockhart	Hugh McLean
Robert Cumming	Alexander McInnes	Robert Macintosh
John Donald	James McInnes	John McCarton
John Dunlop Sr.	James McDougall	Dr. Munro
John Dunlop Jr.	John McIntosh	

The above names are a good indication of the strength and interest taken in the library. Many of these must have undergone long and wearisome tramps rather than be denied the great privilege of reading.

On the third day of September 1852, the library was incorporated. The following persons were then appointed as a board of management: Thomas Scott, president; James Reid, vice president; Hugh Hunter, secretary treasurer; James Reid, librarian; Peter Cumming, James Park, William Watson, John Cumming, William Penman, Andrew Park, William Ellise, John Craig. A full set of rules and regulations were there upon draughted for its management.

A statement of the nature and amount of the property held by the library included the following: -- 800 volumes, valued at £300; one stove and pipes, valued at £2.10.0; cash in treasurer's hands, £1.15.0. As we have already seen the library reported in 1832 500 volumes, and now in 1852 it reports 800 volumes. This indicates a steady growth from its inception. Books that became the worse of the constant reading – these being a considerable number – were sold. This occurred frequently. In one instance there were over 30 sales made.

From the incorporation of the library and no doubt, long previous to it, down to the present day, books were issued only once every two months. This was evidently due to the long distance many of the members had to come. They had the privilege of taking as many as they could conveniently carry.

It might be of interest to give a few important resolutions drawn up at an annual meeting under day of March 6, 1854. They are an index of the strict working of the library, which was characteristic of it during the greater of its history.

1. That a fee of one shilling three pence be imposed on any committeeman for absenting himself from every meeting of the committee.
2. That the yearly reading be three shillings.
3. That the Librarian shall open the library, on each and every issue-day at the hour of ten o'clock in the forenoon, except on the annual meeting, on which day they shall open it at nine a.m.
4. That the books shall be all in, on each and every issue-day at the hour of 12 o'clock, noon. Any member not having their books in at that hour shall be liable to a fine of three pence for each popular volume, and one penny for any other volume.
5. That any person going to the presses and lifting a book in the time of the issue without special permission of the Librarian shall be fined three pence for each offence and any person secreting a book before their name is called shall be fined one shilling and shall receive no books that day except at the discretion of the Librarian.
6. That any member lending a library book to a non-member shall be fined five shillings.
7. That any member wishing to leave the library, for one year or more, can retain their membership by paying yearly to the treasurer on the first Friday of March a sum equal to one-third of the yearly payments of the reading members in the time of their absence, otherwise their claim will be forfeited.

On nearly every library day the hall would be crowded from early morning till evening, and as has been remarked, "*it was like a fair day*", each in turn anxious to secure their books. The books that chiefly comprised the library were a very substantial type. We shall note a few: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 20 volumes; *Popular Encyclopaedia*, five volumes. Of history there was a generous provision made, such works as Histories of England, by Hume, Smollett, Scott, Macaulay, and Allison's *History of Europe*; Gibbon's *Roman Empire*; Tytler's *History of Scotland*; Rollins' *Ancient History*; Josephus' Works; Mosheim's Church History; Waddington's Church History; and many other works on history. Of Theology and Religion, 15 works of Dr. Cummings, also the works of McCheyne, Butler, Chalmers, Newton and Dwight's Theology; and sermons of Spurgeon, Blair, Chalmers, Wilson and others. To the above, might be added, did space permit, numerous works of a strong type in other departments of literature.

All these books were diligently sought and read, even the *Encyclopedia Britanica* has the marks of much reading upon it. It is reported that one member came prepared once to take away the whole 20 volumes as his portion on issue-day, but to his dismay, his ambitious desire was not gratified. Sorry to say that there is no such danger dreaded today by the librarian, even of the taking of one volume.

There are at present in the library 350 volumes and a membership of 12. The growth and prosperity of the library was, as we have seen, continuous until the 1870s, but since that time, there has been a constant decrease in strength and interest due to several causes. During the last 30 years or more there has been a gradual increase of cheaper reading, such as newspapers, magazines, Sunday school libraries, and other books that have been sold through the country to individuals and families. All these causes have tended to a waning of interest in the library. This lighter reading which bulk so largely in the present day has greatly tended to eradicate the desire for the weightier reading matter of former days.

This present sketch has among other aims chiefly the desire to awaken an interest in our present library of which we venture to say that no library in Canada has a more interesting history. It surely behoves the promoters of this noble institution to put forth a strenuous effort to have it revived and put upon a new working basis. It should not be forgotten what was the chief aim of the original founders and chief donators of the library. The chief aim, as we have learned, was to infuse its members with *“solid instruction and sound piety as will make their children both useful an upright, men of nightly based integrity, as well as men of knowledge”*. Lord Dalhousie was accustomed to speak of its prospects with interest and has rejoiced sincerely to learn of its great success.

The promoters have stated in the rules for the management of the library that the object of the institution was, giving the exact words: *“In order to invigorate the intellectual and improve the moral department of our nature, it is judged a matter of great utility to establish and keep up in all time coming a library in this township, and that the same shall be designated the Dalhousie Library”*.

Surely the descendants of such ancestors ought to put forth an earnest effort to resuscitate and perpetrate such a noble object. It would indeed be a most discreditable and lamentable thing if such should become deficient in a Scotch community. A noble tribute was paid to our ancestors for their sterling intellectual and moral qualities. Dr. Strachan, as we have above quoted, stated that *“in no country are the advantages of education more felt and appreciated than in Scotland”* nor *“could any country boast of equal purity in the foundation upon which the education rests”*.

If the Scotch are a moral and religious people, it is because the truths of Christianity are made the basis of their knowledge. In learning the letters of the alphabet, they learn their duties to God and man. It is indeed a disquieting thought for any Scotchman to entertain, as he is forced to do with the bounds of the present Scotch communities, that this thirst for *“solid instruction and sound piety”* is not what it was in their ancestors.



The restored Dalhousie Library collection c2022

We rejoice to know that years ago the Dalhousie Library, with its stock of well selected books, did "*prove of inestimable advantage to this neighborhood*". Its readers were men of weight and influence, quite ready to talk of history and theology with freedom. It was not at all uncommon, in days gone by, for a lively discussion on these themes to be vigorously entered upon at 'raisings', 'logging bees', and other social gatherings. It is, however, to be regretted at the present time, especially among the majority of our youth that seldom a book is sought by which they might expand their mind and strengthen their piety.

It is earnestly desired by those who appreciate good books and the value of a library in a community that this intellectual inertia may be of short duration. With a quotation from Dr. Strachan, we bring this sketch to a close. He says, "*Ignorance is the great enemy of virtue, and I know of no greater object of pity than a man who cannot read or write*".

(Transcription & notation by Ron W. Shaw 2025)