Over one hundred photographs are interspersed with the text or presented in a portfolio concluding the book. Individually, the photographs which have been selected for reproduction are interesting; however, as a group they fail to represent adequately Oliver's career. The selection is based almost exclusively on extant collections in southern Alberta and the content of the material presented is largely regional.

Jameson had access to a considerable amount of textual documentation, a rare situation, since most often only photographic records themselves have survived. Material utilized included diaries, letters, personal interviews, an unpublished manuscript, and photographs. Regrettably, sources for specific items of information have not been acknowledged consistently throughout the book, leaving the reader occasionally wondering what is fact and what is conjecture. Also questionable is Jameson's presentation of Oliver as a man with no faults in personal, business, or artistic affairs.

The greatest criticism of *W.J. Oliver* pertains to the completeness of research, for although Jameson made use of many excellent primary sources, she did not investigate other potentially valuable records such as those at the Public Archives of Canada. A particular point can be made with regard to photographic records. Jameson states that the National Parks collection held by the National Photography Collection includes "a large proportion of original Oliver negatives and prints" which were "largely unprobed." Given that photography was Oliver's life work and that his work was national in scope, neglect of this material is inexcusable. It is a serious mistake to accord the photographic records produced by a photographer any other than top priority in research into that photographer's life and work.

In spite of these shortcomings, *W.J. Oliver: Life Through a Master's Lens* fills a void in the study of the history of Canadian photography. Oliver was one of a generation of photographers in twentieth-century Canada who vigorously recorded life and land and whose work largely went uncredited. Oliver's work transcends the regional and the ordinary, and it is therefore most fitting that his life and legacy are honoured in this publication.

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The Best Gift. A Record of the Carnegie Libraries in Ontario. MARGARET BECKMAN, STEPHEN LANGMEAD, and JOHN BLACK. Toronto and London: Dundurn Press, 1984. 192 p. ISBN 0-919670-82-2 $29.95.

Andrew Carnegie believed that "the best gift" any community could receive was a free public library, and through his philanthropy 2,509 library buildings were constructed throughout the United States and the British Commonwealth between 1899 and 1917. Although Carnegie himself directed funding at the beginning, in 1901 he turned over the library building grant programme to the Carnegie Corporation, the agency responsible for his philanthropic work, where it was administered by James Bertram, his secretary. From the outset two conditions had to be met before a grant was made: the community had to provide land for the library building and to provide through taxation not less than 10 per cent of the cost of the building for annual maintenance of free library service. Library planning left to elected officials and local architects frequently resulted in

unsuitable and costly designs. Many communities found the initial grant insufficient to cover building costs because of poor and often grandiose architectural plans. As a result, Bertram made the approval of building plans a condition for funding in 1907. After 1911 a printed guide was sent to applicants which included six model plans for library buildings which reflected the object of the grant programme: simple library buildings suited to the size of the community providing economical arrangement and effective working space. The Carnegie Corporation terminated the building grants programme in 1917 because some communities did not keep their pledges to maintain the buildings and some did not use them as free public libraries.

In 1900 there were 118 free public libraries in Ontario and 253 subscription libraries. Most were tiny. Few Ontario communities had adequate facilities for library service, and only three had library buildings. Between 1901 and 1917 Carnegie building grants were made to 111 municipalities in the province. Most went to small communities which ranged in population from fewer than 1000 to 15,000 and did not have a library building. With the development of library service, and as a result of the grant programme, the province introduced sound library legislation and appointed an Inspector of Public Libraries to oversee its application and to assist communities seeking grants.

The goal of the authors of this book was not to write a history of these libraries. They provide an overview of the mechanisms and achievements of the grant programme based mainly on correspondence between municipal officials and James Bertram. The archival records available shaped the work. Research was based upon library board minutes and documents from local archives. The authors relied heavily upon the files of the Carnegie Library Correspondence which were made available to the authors by the Carnegie Corporation in New York. The task of searching these records was clearly a large one; the Ontario Carnegie Library Correspondence is scattered through thirty-five microfilm reels and is integrated alphabetically with records relating to some 2000 American and Commonwealth towns and cities. The Carnegie files include a record of correspondence from the first letters requesting consideration for a building grant, the letter of promise from Bertram, the standard survey questionnaire, and the formal resolution pledging maintenance required of each town council by the Carnegie Corporation. The Carnegie files were used as the authority when conflicting information was found in other sources, such as newspapers. The examination of architectural plans, photographs, and the surviving buildings was also essential.

Considering the excellent qualifications of the authors, it is hardly surprising that this book is well written, well documented, and well illustrated. It features beautiful watercolour representations of some of the libraries as well as a few conceptual sketches and a number of splendid colour photographs. The authors are clearly masters of their material and artists at presenting it. Margaret Beckman, who is Chief Librarian at the University of Guelph, has an outstanding record in the field of library building planning. She and Stephen Langmead, a professional architect, have lectured in library planning at the University of Western Ontario and conducted seminars in library design in Canada and abroad. They are co-authors of a textbook on library building design as well as several articles on the subject. The photographer, John Black, is Associate Librarian at the University of Guelph, and with the other authors is a principal of their consulting service to public, academic, and special libraries. Funding for the book from such agencies as the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council attests to the expertise and reputation of the authors.

Anyone who grew up in Ontario will certainly have a strong sense of nostalgia when looking through this beautiful book, and anyone who has ever worked for an elected or appointed board will certainly enjoy a few chuckles when reading it. But *The Best Gift* is obviously more than an illustrated romp though an interesting aspect of Ontario library history. It is a solid piece of scholarship which warrants attention and emulation. It is to be hoped that this book will prove to be a seminal work. There is clearly a need for other investigations of the effects of the Carnegie grant programme on small town politics and culture, expressed in the same intelligent, intelligible, and confident style.

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Canadian Archives in 1982: Survey of the Heritage Institutions. PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF CANADA, Planning and Programme Evaluation. Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services, 1985. v, 18 p. ISBN 0-662-53659-2.

In 1982, Statistics Canada undertook a survey of heritage institutions in Canada. This booklet contains some material from the survey which pertains to archives. In their foreword, Françoise Houle and William Smith claim that although the material in this report was aggregated for the senior management at the Public Archives, its publication would be helpful to others involved in archival work. This study, whose unstated purpose appears to be to illustrate that archives are underfunded in comparison to other heritage institutions attempts to draw very broad comparisons from often scantily explained statistics gathered from an extremely heterogeneous population.

It would, no doubt, be very useful for all who work in archives to have some idea of the range of archival institutions in Canada, the services they provide, the facilities within which they are located, and the funding they receive or generate. It is questionable, however, to attempt to learn much of value by comparing archives to all other heritage institutions (defined for the purposes of this number-gathering mission as "those publicly and privately owned institutions and parks whose purpose is to acquire, preserve, study, interpret and make accessible to the public, for its instruction and enjoyment, objects, specimens, documents, buildings and land areas of educational and cultural value.") The problems with using such highly aggregated data are many. For example, in comparing staff sizes across heritage institutions, the point is made that while heritage institutions in general have an average staff size of twenty-nine people, archives, including the PAC, average twelve; excluding the PAC, the average archival staff would be five. Obviously, the average size of staff for all heritage institutions would also diminish significantly if the employees of the National Gallery, all National Museums, and all Parks Canada Historic Sites and Park employees were excluded from the total. What, then, is the point of this comparison? The authors of the report are on much safer ground, statistically as well as intuitively, when they inform us that archives provide more reprography services to their clientele than any other kind of heritage institution surveyed.

Even in using statistics to compare only archival institutions, the report sometimes provides poorly explained data. A breakdown of archives by mandate (provincial, municipal, religious, corporate, and so on) purports to provide figures on average annual wages in the institutions. Are these numbers generated from both full and part time employees' wage figures? Do the archives used in the survey of annual wages include