**A Brief History Of Early Libraries**

**At Assumption College**

When the east-west wing of Assumption College was completed in 1875/1876, a great deal of space was freed up in the old Assumption College building (built 1856). A library, probably the first, was established on its ground floor. However, because the College was so poor, the library contained no books and the space was described as bleak and empty. “The only reading possible was that of the weekly papers the boys received from home. True, there were two long tables with benches on each side of them for the convenience of readers or such as wished to play a game of checkers, dominoes or chess.” (Echoes, v.7, p. 56) The Library was also used by College groups. For example, the Glee Club, under Father Cote, was practising in the Library in Autumn 1889.

In 1890, a new Library was set up in a large room off the “main corridor”, likely of the north-south oriented wing of Assumption College (completed 1884). “The College authorities thought that something should be done towards affording the student body with some opportunity for extraneous reading of a Catholic kind, together with some of the classical English authors. Several of the priests, who had libraries of their own, contributed. A hundred volumes or a little more were presented and the library of Assumption was inaugurated with great gusto.” (Echoes, v. 7, p. 56-57). Over the next 25 years, it seems that the Library moved 2 more times within the same wing, mainly to accommodate the growing number of students. The last room was “fitted up with reading tables, chairs, settees, and there were curtains on the windows. Weekly periodicals as well as the daily papers were added”. (Echoes, v. 7, p. 58). In 1903, the Alumni Association was founded at an informal meeting in the “old students’ library” (Golden Jubilee, p. 113)

In 1915, St. Michael’s Hall was completed and the student library was re-located to its first floor. It was apparently very comfortable, and well furnished, with a good selection of fiction. There were even fines for overdue materials. It seems that this library only opened sporadically. It was also the meeting place for College organizations such as the Foreign Missions Society and St. Paul’s Dramatic Society. As well, it was the location of student debates. (Weekly Assumption Collegian 1921-1922: numerous references).

In 1927, the Dillon Hall building was completed. It was originally called the Classroom Building or the Arts Building. It was not until 1957 that it was renamed in honour of the Basilian priest, Daniel Dillon, president of Assumption College from 1922-1928 and 1931-1932. It contained classrooms and labs as well as a brand new library. This library was intended for College level students only. It was located on the 2nd floor, at the northwest end of the building. Along with an eventual overflow room in the basement, it served as the Assumption College/Assumption University Library until 1958. In Autumn 1929, the high school level library was moved back to a room off the main corridor of Assumption College (which wing is unclear).

Sources

Dionysian: Year Book of Assumption College. Assumption College, 1915. Online at <http://scholar.uwindsor.ca/swodawindsorpub/4>

Echoes of Assumption College by Father Charles Collins; In: Notes on the History of the Congregation of Priests of Saint Basil collected by Robert Joseph Scholard: volume 7, pages 16-86. Online at <https://archive.org/details/historicalnotesc07scoluoft>

Golden Jubilee, Assumption College, 1970-1920. Assumption College, 1920. Online at <http://scholar.uwindsor.ca/swodawindsorpub/3>

Weekly Assumption Collegian 1921-1922. Assumption College, 1921-1922. Soon to be online at: <http://scholar.uwindsor.ca/swoda>