

The Alcuin Society wishes to welcome the following new members:

Philip Dombowsky, Ottawa, ON

Margaret Mah, Richmond, BC

Jessica Sullivan, Burnaby, BC

Henryk Wojcik, Don Mills, ON



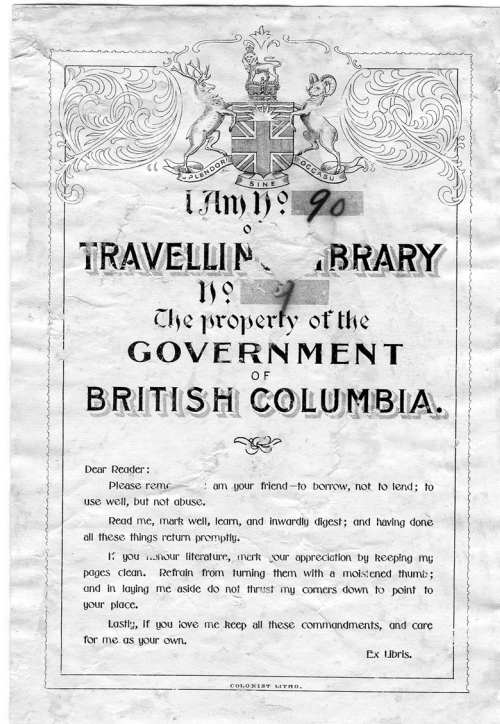
Alcuin Society membership is open to any individual, institution or organization with an interest in the book arts, the history of books, book collecting and reading. An individual

membership is \$50 a year, while institutional membership is \$75 a year. Students may join at the rate of \$25 a year for up to three years. A patron membership is available at the rate of \$125.

Society members within Canada pay in Canadian dollars; foreign memberships must be paid in U.S. dollars. Payment may be made online using PayPal or via cheque or money order made payable to The Alcuin Society, P.O. Box 3216, Vancouver, British Columbia V6B 3X8.



Getting Around



WHILE NOT THE PRETTIEST, this bookplate, which dates to between 1898 and 1900, marks two significant events in the development of British Columbia: the start of library services, with the Travelling Library Department, and the first iteration of the province's coat of arms.

The travelling libraries system began in 1898 to serve rural residents. Each travelling library consisted of a wooden box filled with approximately 100 books, which circulated as a set to a distant school or community, and then three months later were returned to the central location. The community requesting the library paid \$6 for the locked case and key, plus the (not insignificant) freight costs for actually delivering the boxed library. From 1901 to 1917, the Canadian Pacific Railway allowed travelling libraries to be shipped free on any of their trains, while after 1917 the freight fees were paid by the

Provincial Library, which organized the service. In 1919 the Public Libraries Act was passed, creating the Public Library Commission, which took over running the travelling libraries.

Amazingly, this bookplate can be specifically dated to the first two years of the Travelling Library program due to the low library number—No. 9—listed on the bookplate. Twenty libraries were created in the first two years of the program’s existence, a group to which this bookplate belonged. As these early libraries had fixed collections, a catalogue for travelling library No. 9 would provide the exact name of the book in which this bookplate was inserted. Based on the catalogues for libraries 29 to 33, whose 90th books fall in the middle of the biography section, it is possible that this bookplate was also originally placed in a biography.

In 1914, the travelling libraries began to offer “special collections” of texts, including non-English materials for immigrants and collections of literature for lighthouse keepers. In the 1920s the library system began to allow users to specify their needs and have a bespoke library created and sent out to them. Alongside the travelling library system grew the Open Shelf Library, which allowed individuals to request specific books and receive them through the mail. The travelling library system continued into the 1960s, though the demands slowed as communities joined regional libraries and formed municipal libraries. In particular, travelling libraries were sent to one-room schools in rural B.C.

Of additional historical interest is the coat of arms at the top of the bookplate. This coat of

arms represents the earliest phase of B.C.’s coat of arms, designed by Canon Arthur Beanlands of Victoria and accepted by the provincial government in 1895. A problem arose in 1897, however, when the provincial government tried to register the coat of arms in England. Legal precedent required that the official coat of arms be created and handed down by the Crown, with advice from the heralds at the College of Arms.

Unfortunately, several components of the shield design B.C. was using contravened official design policies. In 1906, a modified design was approved—the motto and shield only, with the Union Jack and setting sun switched to their modern positions. In 1987, the supporters and crest were finally approved (though they had been unofficially used all along), with some small changes to the design.

Colonist Litho[graphy], whose name appears at the foot of the bookplate, was a printing company in Victoria, B.C., possibly associated with the *Daily Colonist* newspaper. Though the company’s name may be found on a variety of documents, further information about the shop itself has not been found.

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~ Caroline Crowell is in her third year of the dual Master of Library and Information Studies / Master of Archival Studies program at the iSchool at the University of British Columbia.

The Rare Books and Special Collections Bookplate Collection can be accessed from the UBC Library Digital Collections and Services site, <http://digitalcollections.library.ubc.ca>.

