

Research Incentive Grant Report

by Elizabeth Hanson

In Spring 2007, I received a generous grant from InULA in support of my 2007/8 sabbatical project. As a way to thank the organization for this support—which for me was moral as well as financial—I'm reporting here on my work which InULA helped make possible.

I was able to divide my five-month sabbatical into three segments which meant that I could make three month-long trips to Toronto in September 2007 and April and October 2008. This worked out very well because between trips I could digest the information that I had gathered during my most recent Toronto stay and decide what I wanted to accomplish on the next foray. I also followed up on background reading (thanks to Rita Rogers and her excellent Document Delivery staff) and tweaked the design of my project depending on what archival materials I had located and what I found out hadn't survived.

After much consideration, I've defined my topic as the development of public librarianship in Ontario between 1908 and 1920. For that period, to study this field in Ontario is to actually study it for all of Canada since then few public libraries existed in the other provinces. My choice of years to cover is based on the fact that in 1908 three pioneering Ontario public librarians began their long library careers and also that in 1927, George Locke (Chief Librarian of the Toronto Public Library) brought the ALA conference to Toronto. It is through studying the work of these three librarians, George Locke of TPL, Mabel Dunham of the Kitchener Public Library, and Mary Black of the Fort William Public Library, that I'm exploring my topic. One publisher has expressed interest in my work, and I plan to produce "a slim volume" (as the poets say) which I believe will make a useful contribution to our understanding of the development of our profession in North America.

I'm very grateful for InULA's support of this project. InULA has been a staunch supporter of many IU librarians conducting research, and I encourage even more of my colleagues to avail themselves of this assistance as they explore the facets of librarianship about which they are most passionate.