


# George Herbert Locke



 George Herbert Locke, n.d. Credit Victoria University, Toronto

b. Mar. 29, 1870, Beamsville, ON; d. Jan. 28 1937, Toronto, ON

## Education:

1893 BA, Victoria University (Toronto)  
1896 MA, B.Paed, University of Toronto  
1927 (hon.) LL.D, University of Toronto  
1935 (hon.) LL.D, University of Western Ontario

## Positions:

1900-1905 Editor, The School Review, University of Chicago  
1904-1905 Dean, College of Education, University of Chicago  
1907-1908 Professor of Education and Dean, Training School for Teachers, Macdonald College, McGill University  
1908-1937 Chief Librarian, Toronto Public Library

## Publications (major contributions):

### Articles:

Locke, George H. (1904). "Instruction in the Organization and Administration of Schools and School Systems," Educational Review 27 (May): 456-467.

Locke, George H. (1905). "Education and Social Progress," Minutes of Proceedings with Addresses and

Papers of the Fifth Convention of the [Dominion Educational] Association, Held at Winnipeg, July 26-29, 1904, p.113-19. Toronto: The Association.

Locke, George H. (1909). "The Public Library as an Educational Institution," Addresses Delivered Before the Canadian Club of Toronto, 1908-09, p.138-43. Toronto: Warwick and Rutter.

Locke, George H. (1917). "The Privileges and Obligations of Our Public Libraries in These Days of Unrest," Ontario Library Review 1, 4 (May): 96-99.

Locke, George H. (1917). "The President's Address," Addresses Delivered Before the Canadian Club of Toronto, 1916-17, p.220-23. Toronto: Warwick and Rutter.

Locke, George H. (1918). "Canadian Libraries and the War," Canadian Magazine of Politics, Science, Art and Literature 52, 1: 588-91.

Locke, George H. (1919). "Revery of a Bookish Librarian," Canadian Bookman n.s., 1, 1 (Jan.): 42-43.

Locke, George H. (1922). "Recruiting for Librarianship in Canada," Ontario Library Review 7, 1 (Aug.): 4-7.

Locke, George H. (1926). "The Toronto Public Libraries," Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada 3, 3 (May-June): 87-103.

Locke, George H. (1927). "President's Address [at ALA]," American Library Association Bulletin 21, 10 (Oct.): 36-38.

Locke George H. (1927). "Dr. Locke's Radio Talk at Edinburgh," Ontario Library Review 12, 2 (Nov.): 36-38.

Locke, George H. (1927). "The Profession of Librarianship," Library Journal 52 (1 Dec.): 1124-26.

Locke, George H. 1930). "The Library and Adult Education," Libraries 35, 10 (Dec.) 1: 433-37 [address at University of the State of New York, Albany on Oct. 17, 1930]

Locke, George H. (1932). "What Librarians Do," Illinois Libraries 14 (Oct.): 149-54.

Locke, George H. (1933). "Importance of Maintaining Our Social Institutions," American Library Association Bulletin 27, 4 (April): 176-79.

Locke, George H. (1934). "Library and the Public School," Ontario Library Review 18, 1 (Feb): 14-15.

## **Books:**

Locke, George H. (1908). The Education of a People: The Inaugural Lecture Delivered at Macdonald College. Montréal: Witness Press.

Locke, George H. (1919). When Canada was New France. Toronto: J.M. Dent.

Locke, George H. (1923). The Queen's Rangers. Toronto: Toronto Public Library.

Locke, George H. (1926). Builders of the Canadian Commonwealth. 2nd ed. Toronto: Ryerson Press.

Locke, George H. (1930). English history. Chicago: American Library Association.

Locke, George H. (1933). Contributor with John Ridington and Mary J. L. Black. Libraries in Canada; A Study of Library Conditions and Needs. Toronto: Ryerson Press and American Library Association.

Locke, George H. and W. Stewart Wallace, eds. (1934). A Joint Catalogue of the Periodicals and Serials in the Libraries of the City of Toronto. 4th ed. Toronto: King's Printer.

## **Associations (Presidential positions):**

President, Arts & Letters Club, Toronto, 1910-1912  
President, Canadian Club, Toronto, 1916-1917  
President, Ontario Library Association, 1916-1917  
President, Ontario Historical Society, 1919-1920  
President, American Library Association, 1926-1927

## **Honours:**

1931 FLA (honorary), Library Association (UK)  
1939 National Historic Person designation by Canadian government, May 25, 1939

## **Accomplishments:**

George Locke was the most outstanding Canadian librarian of the first half of the twentieth century. He revolutionized the administration, staff, buildings, and services of the Toronto Public Library and brought international attention to Toronto with innovative changes, such as Boys and Girls House, established in 1922. He was designated by the Canadian government as a Person of National Historic Significance in 1939 and a plaque was erected in 1948 to record his achievements. It reads:

"Born at Beamsville and educated at Victoria College and University of Toronto, Locke taught at Toronto, Chicago and Harvard Universities and was Dean of Education at Chicago and at MacDonald College before becoming Chief Librarian of the Toronto Public Libraries. In that position, he transformed a small institution into one of the most respected library systems on the continent. Sometime President of the American Library Association, one of the founders of the Arts & Letters Club, he was a gifted speaker and the author of books and articles on literary, historical and professional themes. He died in Toronto."

Locke was an inspirational force in Canadian librarianship and promoted library services energetically. He was an influential force in the early years of the Ontario provincial training school for librarians (1911-27) and the librarianship program at the University of Toronto. In addition to his contributions as an author and his association presidential positions, he served as an active member of the Canadian Authors Association; Board of Regents, Victoria College; and the Senate, University of Toronto. As an educator, Locke composed many articles while editing 'The School Review' at the University of Chicago, 1900-05. On his passing, the Globe and Mail commented, "He made the public library a vital public business." The George H. Locke Memorial Branch was named in his honour and opened by TPL in January 1949.

## Sources:

G.B.V.B. "What the People of Toronto Read [Locke Interview]," *Canadian Bookman* 1, 2 (1909): 20-22.  
"Memorial Service to the late Dr. George Herbert Locke," in *Annual Report of the Toronto Public Library, 1936*, 33-40 (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1937).

Ray, Margaret V. "Tribute to a Great Name [George Herbert Locke]," *Ontario Library Review* 22, 2 (May 1938): 84-85.

Sanderson, Charles R. "Tribute and Resolve," *Wilson Library Bulletin* 24, 10 (June 1950): 737-38.  
[address at opening of George Herbert Locke Memorial Branch Library]

Wallace, Malcolm W. "Dr. George Herbert Locke (1870-1937)," *Ontario Library Review* 21, 2 (May 1937): 59-60.

Penman, Margaret. *A Century of Service: Toronto Public Library, 1883-1983* (Toronto: Toronto Public Library, 1983) records Locke's achievements at TPL.

Giles, Suzette (2013). "Libraries named after librarians." *ELAN* no. 53 (Spring ): 11.

Lorne Bruce (2020). [\*George Herbert Locke and the Transformation of Toronto Public Library, 1908-1937\*](#) . (Waterloo, ON: Libraries Today).

Toronto Reference Library holds some of Locke's early correspondence, drafts of his speeches and papers, reports to Libraries and Finance Committee, as well as Board minutes on microfilm for the period 1908-38. The TPL annual reports, 1908-37, contain Locke's yearly observations.

ELA biography compiled by Lorne Bruce

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