The Lady Tweedsmuir Prairie Library Scheme, 1936-1940
or, What Does Virginia Woolf Have to Do with Canadian Library History?

Timeline

November 2, 1935: Lord and Lady Tweedsmuir arrive in Canada
August 6, 1936: Tweedsmuir’s embark on a tour of Western Canada
September 14, 1936: Lady Tweedsmuir requests grant from the Carnegie Corporation (unsuccessful)
November 29, 1937: Lady Tweedsmuir receives grant from the Carnegie Corporation
September 10, 1939: Canada declares war on Germany
February 1, 1940: Scheme receives second grant from the Carnegie Corporation
February 11, 1940: Lord Tweedsmuir dies in Montreal
March 17, 1940: Lady Tweedsmuir leaves Canada; The Times (London) records that the Prairie Library Scheme distributed 40,000 books

“The scheme is called The Lady Tweedsmuir Prairie Libraries. It has now been running for a year, and I have sent, personally, over 9,000 books to the Prairie Provinces, and have been instrumental in getting another 5,000 sent there. I run the scheme personally, selecting the books myself.”

Lady Tweedsmuir to F.P. Keppel, December 1, 1937

Robert Darnton’s Communications Circuit in “What is the History of Books?” Daedalus 111 (3) 1982, 68

“Map of Prairie Provinces Showing Railways,” 1936

Geoffrey Little
darntone@concordia.ca
Concordia University Libraries