I recommend *A Social History of Books and Libraries from Cuneiform to Bytes*. It is always a fine experience to add a new book to the ambitious roster of sweeping histories that have shaped thinking about library development.¹ This book takes an interesting approach with an emphasis on the context of social and cultural factors.

However, Dr. Valentine’s book continues as do other over-arching histories — he provides a male majority focus. In *A Social History of Books and Libraries*, once again, It’s a Man’s Man’s Man’s World.² Each chapter begins with a series of quotes that lead you on. Valentine cites Francis Bacon, Thomas Carlyle, Umberto Eco, R. David Lankes, José Saramago, Martin Schrettinger, Don Heinrich Tolzmann, Timothy Wu and 26 other men whose observations expand and extend the ideas presented in the *History*. I looked in vain for evidence or impact of Dr. Suzanne Hildenbrand’s important volume, *Reclaiming the American Library Past: Writing the Women in*. It isn’t even included in the bibliography.

Like Dr. Valentine I teach library history. Because the comprehensive histories like his or those cited in endnote number one (below) fail to include the role of women and the development of libraries serving groups outside the mainstream, I must supplement extensively. Men seem to be the gender to take on the entire sweep of the history of libraries. Until a woman does so there will continue to be a single-sex version of the development of libraries. I recommend this book with many supplements.³

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