

Strange Career

Reconciling Race and Profession in American Librarianship

by Steven Harris

Librarianship in the United States has struggled to diversify the ranks of its profession in a manner that satisfies the goals of organizational leaders in the American Library Association (ALA) and members of diverse racial and ethnic groups themselves. Despite the formation of the ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services (or rather the reformation of previous offices into ODLOS with the inclusion of diversity in their charge) and the development of various equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives, the ethnic makeup of librarians in the U.S. remains largely unchanged since the 1990s, with roughly 88% of librarians identifying as white.¹ More recently, Schonfeld and Sweeney (2017) have found that academic libraries show a slightly lower overall percentage of white librarians (71%), but the administrative and leadership ranks are still near the

¹ See “Equity, Diversity & Inclusion” on the ALA ODLOS website: <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/diversity/edi>. The Strategic Directions listed there articulate several goals, including, “Commit to ameliorating marginalization and underrepresentation within the Association and the communities served by libraries through increased understanding of the effects of historical exclusion,” and “Expand the work of ALA and its allies in building a diverse and inclusive profession.” Also see Denise M. Davis and Tracie D. Hall, *Diversity Counts: Office for Research and Statistics, Office for Diversity* (Arlington, Va.: Compiled by the American Library Association, Office for Research and Statistics, Office for Diversity, 2007) and the 2012 update of this report on the ODLOS website: <http://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/diversity/diversitycounts/divcounts>.

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88% level.² The dissatisfaction with this ongoing situation is attested by voices gathered in various works like *Unfinished Business: Race, Equity, and Diversity in Library and Information Science Education* and *The 21st-Century Black Librarian in America*.³ This situation suggests that American librarianship needs to reconcile its dominant narrative of openness and inclusion with the facts of its history, which, in the United States, might more accurately be characterized as indifferent, if not openly hostile, to diversity and inclusion. In much the same manner that Michael Harris endeavored to de-mythologize the foundations of the public library movement in the United States,⁴ we must look beyond the accepted narrative, and, perhaps, realize that the narrative actually serves to reinforce ideas of race that are not healthy for the profession of librarianship. A second, and equally important, part to the process would be that the library profession reconcile with groups and individuals who have been wronged and harmed: to provide some form of restitution of professional value and dignity—even to those who are no longer living. This two-part need for reconciliation should be open-ended with no specified closing date. The history of racism in the library profession should continue to be investigated and published, and our professional organizations should continue to acknowledge the contributions of librarians of color and the role professional organizations played in thwarting and suppressing those contributions throughout our history.

The model of reconciliation that is most prevalent in recent history is that of the nation of South African, which formed a Truth and Reconciliation Commission following the abolition of Apartheid and the election of Nelson Mandela as President. The report of the Commission describes a two-part goal as well: establishing as complete a picture as possible of the history of Apartheid and creating a mechanism for people to voice the suffering they endured under the racist regime and for the nation to acknowledge that suffering.⁵

² Roger C. Schonfeld and Liam Sweeney, *Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity: Members of the Association of Research Libraries* (Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, 2017).

³ Maurice B. Wheeler, ed., *Unfinished Business: Race, Equity, and Diversity in Library and Information Science Education* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2005), and Andrew P. Jackson, Julius Jefferson, and Akilah Nosakhere, eds., *The 21st-Century Black Librarian in America: Issues and Challenges* (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc, 2012).

⁴ Michael Harris, "The Purpose of the American Public Library. A Revisionist Interpretation of History," *Library Journal* v. 98, no. 16 (1973): 2509–14.

⁵ Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report* v. 1 (1999): 104. Accessed February 17, 2019 <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/index.htm>, accessed February 17, 2019.

While not all formal reconciliation processes in recent world history have been as successful as that in South Africa, Bar-Tal and Bennink observe that reconciliation, in many cases, is a necessary step beyond simple conflict resolution because "...the majority of society members may not accept the negotiated compromises, or even if they do they may still hold worldviews that have fueled the conflict." Furthermore, they recognize that "[r]econciliation requires changing societal beliefs about one's own group."⁶ This need goes to the heart of two works by Rosemary Du Mont from 1986—a need that has still not been met in American librarianship. "Many black librarians," she observed, "realize that if their contribution to the profession is to be fully recognized and respected, whites must be encouraged to learn about the black librarian experience and understand it as best they can from the black point of view." By 1986, white librarianship already had ample opportunity to learn about the black librarian experience. Students of Virginia Lacy Jones in the library program at Atlanta University were encouraged to study the information needs and black experience in libraries. Over 100 theses describing library research in the African American community were written at Atlanta between 1951 and 1986.⁷ Wiegand (2017) describes the lack of citations these studies of the black experience have received in the professional literature. "One can image," Wiegand writes, "the sense of frustration Atlanta students and faculty felt as they shared findings, and their disappointment with a profession that claimed to be in favor of free access but did little to bring it about in the South. The soaring rhetoric about intellectual freedom and opposition to censorship that resonated in ALA conference speeches did not match the reality they experienced and the research they generated."⁸

Another source of learning about the black experience was the work of E. J. Josey. By 1986, he had already served as editor of two compilations of personal narratives from black librarians and one

⁶ Daniel Bar-Tal and Gemma H. Bennink, "The Nature of Reconciliation as an Outcome and as a Process," in *From Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation*, ed. Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁷ See the Digital Commons of the Atlanta University Center, Robert W. Woodruff Library: <http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/>. Accessed February 25, 2019.

⁸ Rosemary Ruhig Du Mont, "The Educating of Black Librarians: An Historical Perspective," *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 26, no. 4 (1986): 233–49; Rosemary Ruhig Du Mont, "Race in American Librarianship: Attitudes of the Library Profession," *Journal of Library History* 21, no. 3 (1986): 488–509; Wayne A. Wiegand, "Any Ideas?: The American Library Association and the Desegregation of Public Libraries in the American South," *Libraries: Culture, History, and Society* 1, no. 1 (2017): 1–22.

handbook that documented many of the historical events in the development of black professional librarians.⁹

Although in recent years there has been a growing interest in the history of civil rights and libraries (stimulated, perhaps, by Tucker's *Untold Stories* collection of essays¹⁰), the historiography of this period has focused on the desegregation of libraries and access to libraries by the public and tells us little about the desegregation of the *librarian* or the integration of the profession of librarianship. Du Mont and Peterson (1996) are among the few examples of scholarly discourse addressing this topic in our literature.¹¹ This deficiency in the record is probably representative of the general cultural imprecision found in all considerations of libraries versus librarians. Examinations of libraries are often conflated with librarians; the practice of librarianship is often documented through the physical evidence of libraries. In the history of librarianship, we are presented with, on the one hand, *segregated* libraries, and then, after a period of social turmoil, *integrated* libraries, but rarely are we introduced to the professional or personal conflict within librarianship itself that contributed to the social change. The examination of segregation within librarianship and the history of its integration is a story that is only spottily told. The author cannot make a claim to a sociological study of race and the library profession; this paper examines, rather, a few specific historical touchstones in the professionalization of librarianship, in a narrative fashion, with the aim of furthering a reconciliation between history and aspiration. Throughout the paper, the term "librarianship" is used to refer to the profession, the processes of entering and being active in the profession, and aspects of professionalization—which are often racialized—rather than simply to library praxis or tasks commonly employed in libraries. The focus will be on people and organizations, particularly during the twentieth century, leading up to and including the Civil Rights Movement. As such, the primary concern is the access of African Americans to the field of librarianship. The stories of other racial and ethnic groups gaining access to the profession, though worthy of

⁹ E. J. Josey, editor, *The Black Librarian in America* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1970); E. J. Josey, editor, *What Black Librarians Are Saying* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1972); E. J. Josey, and Ann Allen Shockley, editors, *Handbook of Black Librarianship* (Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1977).

¹⁰ John Mark Tucker, ed., *Untold Stories: Civil Rights, Libraries, and Black Librarianship* (Champaign, Ill: Publications Office, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, 1998).

¹¹ Lorna Peterson, "Alternative Perspectives in Library and Information Science: Issues of Race," *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 37, no. 2 (1996): 163–74. Tucker's *Untold Stories* is a more historiographic collection of works.

further research, are not examined here.

One cannot write of civil rights and the evolution of librarianship without referencing external social forces in American history. The arc of segregation in the library profession is also traced by three consequential legal events. The first of these is the Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson* of 1896, which was the culmination of eroded civil rights that had begun immediately after the Civil War, and continued throughout Reconstruction and beyond.¹² This case established “separate but equal” as accepted legal practice throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Subsequent to *Plessy*, as Woodward (1974) has documented, the notion of Jim Crow (the cultural practice of segregation) was a growing and nationwide phenomenon: “as...the South veered toward proscription and extremism, Northern opinion shifted to the right, keeping pace with the South, conceding point after point, so that at no time were the sections very far apart on race policy.”¹³ And, thus, prior to 1965, one could fairly say that the idea of “separate but equal” pervaded librarianship in all parts of the country.

The second major historical event in this arc is the Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* of 1954, which is often thought to have overturned “separate but equal,” and is widely recognized as the pivotal event in bringing about the end of segregation.¹⁴ It was, perhaps, the tipping point in the national consciousness regarding segregation, and, certainly, the galvanizing event of midcentury that inspired many people with hope for better things to come, but the author believes its role in desegregation, outside of public education, is largely overstated. *Brown*, it must be remembered, also galvanized opposition to desegregation and inspired the reactionary countermovement known as Massive Resistance—through which organizations like the (white) Citizens’ Councils fought, both publicly and covertly, to maintain racist social structures.¹⁵ Though it was pivotal raising expectations regarding equal rights, *Brown* alone did little to desegregate public libraries or the library profession.

The final event in this arc is the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, which, in fact, invalidated (and made illegal) most *de jure* discrimination and segregation in the public arena, including public libraries.¹⁶ Professional organizations, however, as private entities, were not directly compelled

¹² *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896).

¹³ C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 3d revised edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 70.

¹⁴ *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

¹⁵ Numan V. Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance: Race and Politics in the South During the 1950's* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969).

¹⁶ *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, Pub.L. 88-352, 78 Stat. 241 (1964).

to integrate under the Act, and, thus, the law held no direct sway over library organizations. In their time, these touchstones neither necessitated a segregated library profession nor later brought about its integration. They simply established the culture within which librarians were compelled—or chose—to operate. Access by African Americans to the fruits of professional librarianship are bounded by these social events. They dictate or predict many of the relationships of professional library organizations, especially those of the American Library Association (ALA) and its affiliates, during the Civil Rights Movement, and the conflict those organizations experienced brought about by the struggle for racial equality.

Race and Professions

Professionalism is, as described by Freidson, “a set of institutions which permit the members of an occupation to make a living while controlling their own work.” And further, that this state of privilege “cannot exist unless it is believed that the particular tasks they perform are so different from those of most workers that self-control is essential.”¹⁷ Self-control, therefore, is only maintained through strict regulation of admission to the profession. The literature on the development of professions and professionalization, as with the professionalization of librarianship, is largely silent to the history of segregation as a regulatory mechanism in the professional ranks. Even though the prevalent models for analysis of professions focus on elitism and exclusion, (Abbott and Larson as two examples)¹⁸ these concepts are handled primarily in economic and class, rather than racial terms, with an emphasis on division of labor as the principal instrument of professionalization. New groups are admitted to professions, Abbott observes, but these typically are oriented around the “task demand” of particular occupations that gain admittance to an existing profession, not as a result of the membership being opened up to diverse cultural, ethnic, or racial groups.¹⁹

Abbott’s study of professions as systems relies on the analysis of eight first events in the development of 130 American and British professions:

1. (National) professional association
2. Governmentally sponsored licensing legislation

¹⁷ Eliot Freidson, *Professionalism: the Third Logic* (Oxford: Wiley, 2001): 17.

¹⁸ Andrew Abbott, *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Magali Sarfatti Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

¹⁹ Abbott, 91.

3. Professional examinations
4. Professional school separate from some other profession
5. University-based professional education
6. Ethics code
7. National-level journal
8. Accreditation of schools (U.S.) or certification by association (England)²⁰

These milestones map fairly well to librarianship, though a few do not bear directly on this case. The story of how African Americans have participated in these events reflect, in many ways, the exclusion they have endured. A simpler model that relates more directly to American librarianship will be used in this study to describe African American access to four elements within librarianship:

9. Admission to professional-level education
10. Admission to professional organizations
11. Participation in organizational conferences
12. Access to professional publication outlets

These four elements are entwined together in librarianship in a way that makes an enumerative and chronological narrative difficult. They also weave into the African American experience in complicated ways.

Other professions have participated in segregation in similar ways to librarianship. Typically, this discrimination has included constraints on access by African Americans through both the professionally prescribed education and the professional organizations themselves. Of the medical profession, Watson (1999) states, “Among the many expressions of these constraints were attempts by some whites to obstruct access by African Americans to medical education and their subsequent practice and mobility within the profession.”²¹ The rise of professionalism and participation in professions by African Americans, as Hine (1989) observes, actually occurred in parallel with “the solidification of racial segregation and discrimination” in the United States.²² The rise of segregation and the rise of professionalism mirror one another. Many of the greatest improvements in access by women and minorities during the twentieth century, Sokoloff (1992) found, were driven by overall growth within particular professions, although these tended to be professions with lower pay and prestige (teaching

²⁰ Ibid., 16-17.

²¹ Wilbur H. Watson, *Against the Odds: Blacks in the Profession of Medicine in the United States* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1999), vii.

²² Darlene Clark Hine, *Black Women in White: Racial Conflict and Cooperation In the Nursing Profession, 1890-1950*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 89.

and social work, rather than law and medicine).²³ Librarianship goes against this pattern (if one considers it to be a “lower-prestige” profession as defined by Sokoloff) in that it has not become a site of greater access for ethnic minorities. Sokoloff also found that the growth of professional access was driven by “separate but equal” services to the African American community. Black teachers, lawyers, doctors, and nurses served a black clientele.²⁴

In education, law, medicine and other professions, because of restrictions placed on their participation, African Americans formed their own state and national associations. Many of these were created in the two decades on either side of 1900. The National Medical Association (still in existence today) was founded in 1895 to serve the professional needs of African American physicians, who were excluded from the American Medical Association. The American Colored Teachers Association (with several subsequent name changes) was formed in 1906 for similar reasons, as was the National Negro Bar Association (1909). This is the essence of segregation: it is inherently unfair and unequal, but it also creates a space that is unique to the given racial/ethnic group. Most of these African American professional organizations were also the nexus for the launch of a professional journal.²⁵ Librarianship follows many of the patterns of development seen in other professions, but it is also exhibits peculiar differences.

American librarianship evolved in a society that was built on and later racked with the pain of slavery and its aftermath. Although a war had been fought to eliminate the practice of slavery, Reconstruction demonstrated that few white Americans, regardless of whether they were Northerners or Southerners, had any sense of or interest in what racially inclusive equity or justice would look like, much less how it should be created. Some came to this position through ignorance but many came through racism. The same holds true for white librarians of the era. With the simultaneous inauguration in 1876 (as Reconstruction was unraveling) of the American Library Association and *The Library Journal*, Melvil Dewey, who had worked so hard to realize both, pronounced the coming of age of American librarianship.²⁶ “The time has at last come,” he writes in that first issue,

²³ Natalie J. Sokoloff, *Black Women and White Women in the Professions: Occupational Segregation by Race and Gender, 1960-1980* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 120.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁵ David H. Jackson, Jr., “The Growth of African American Cultural and Social Institutions,” in *A Companion to African American History*, ed. Alton Hornsby, Jr. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 313–16.

²⁶ Wayne A. Wiegand, *The Politics of an Emerging Profession: The American Library Association, 1876-1917* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 6-8.

“when a librarian may, without assumption, speak of his occupation as a profession,” and later, “[w]ill any man deny to the high calling of such a librarianship the title of profession?”²⁷ But the era—and this founding generation of librarians—was fundamentally dominated by white Anglo-Saxon Protestant males like Dewey himself. Though a belief in the redeeming qualities of reading is part of the DNA of librarianship, and the profession was born from an interest in serving and uplifting all members of society, many of its organizational responses to inequality were paternalistic and shockingly tone deaf and have continued to be up to the present. “Uplift” itself, it should be noted, was more of a code word for “control.”²⁸ Yet, even in the nineteenth century, many members of ALA did express great concern about access to libraries for African Americans in the South (and other parts of the country) as well as the rights of African American librarians to participate fully in professional organizations.²⁹ In practice, however, ALA mostly exhibited conciliation to local practice and culture. Southern librarians, while exhibiting widespread concern about opening libraries to all the citizens within their jurisdictions and providing, as best they could, some level of service, were, nonetheless, mostly unconvinced by a call for racial equality or incapacitated by local laws, fear of reprisal, or their own racism, and ultimately did not participate to any great extent in the civil rights activism that later marked the 1950s and 1960s in America.

Throughout the early twentieth century, because of *de jure* and *de facto* institutions of segregation, library services to African Americans were very limited, especially in the South. Many communities offered no services whatsoever. Others offered some form of segregated service. In the best cases, like the Louisville Free Public Library, there was an entire well-staffed and well-stocked branch available to African Americans. In other cases, access to branch libraries was limited by day and time, and black users were generally not welcome or entitled to the full range of services that whites enjoyed. Often, African Americans

²⁷ Melvil Dewey, “The Profession,” *The Library Journal* 1, no. 1 (1876): 5–6.

²⁸ Michael Harris, “The Purpose of the American Public Library. A Revisionist Interpretation of History,” 2510.

²⁹ For description of library services to African Americans in nineteenth century Kentucky, for example, see Reinette F. Jones, *Library Service to African Americans in Kentucky, from the Reconstruction Era to the 1960s* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2002); for the founding and integrated policies of the Enoch Pratt Library in Baltimore, which opened its doors in 1886, see Cheryl Knott Malone, “Accommodating Access: ‘Colored’ Carnegie Libraries, 1905-1925,” (Ph.D., The University of Texas at Austin, 1996): 4-5, and Philip Arthur Kalisch, “The Social History of the Enoch Pratt Free Library,” (Educational, The Pennsylvania State University, 1968).

only had access to bookmobile service and even that was from a separate (and not very equal) vehicle from the white bookmobile. In almost all cases where integration of library services had already taken place (before the main actions of the Civil Rights Movement) it was affected in a “quiet” way, which is to say it was not publicized in either the black or the white community.³⁰

Access to Library Education

Because there were few library services offered and because educational opportunities for African Americans were also limited, entry to the library profession was very restricted. Therefore, notable examples for young people to revere and emulate were few. There were very few African-American librarians in the South or any other part of the country. In no cases that the author can identify in the South during the time of *de jure* segregation were there African American librarians working in otherwise integrated library services. Even in other parts of the country where the service did not discriminate against library users of different races and ethnicities, African American librarians in those facilities were not allowed to perform public services and were often restricted to “back of house” duties. Thus, to the eyes of most library users, librarians were white—except in segregated branch services, in black elementary schools, and in historically black college libraries. Even in the latter, many positions for faculty, librarians, and administrators were filled by whites. Louis Shores is a notable example, having served as library director at Fisk University from 1928 to 1933. The President of Fisk at the time, who recruited Shores, was also white. There are many other such examples that negate any notion that African Americans *could* be librarians.³¹

Thus, education for librarianship evolved in a segregated fashion, and for the purpose of providing librarians to serve Negro populations in segregated library settings. Education to fulfill this need was often through certification programs at separate Negro branch libraries like that run by Thomas Fountain Blue at the Louisville Free Public Library. In this manner, training for black librarians was largely

³⁰ Cheryl Knott Malone, “Unannounced and Unexpected: The Desegregation of Houston Public Library in the Early 1950s,” *Library Trends* 55, no. 3 (2007): 666.

³¹ Other examples include Margaret Burke, librarian in the 1930s at Xavier University and Nathaniel Stewart at Dillard University, both in New Orleans. Orvin Lee Shiflett, *Louis Shores: Defining Educational Librarianship* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 1996), 17-42. Also see Steven R. Harris, “Civil Rights and the Louisiana Library Association: Stumbling toward Integration,” *Libraries & Culture* 38, no. 4 (2003): 324-325.

seen by the white professional establishment as a vocational venture, running counter to the prevailing movement towards professional credentials until the historically black Hampton Institute established a library program in 1925, offering a bachelor's degree. ALA was intimately involved in the founding of the Hampton library program and later its closure in 1939, in favor of the graduate program in librarianship at Atlanta University (now Clark Atlanta University) in 1941. The transition of ALA endorsement from Hampton to Atlanta entailed a bit of strife between Louis Shores (who wanted the program moved to Fisk) and ALA secretary, Carl Milam, ALA's regional field agent for the South, Tommie Dora Barker, and University of Chicago Dean (and former UNC Chapel Hill Librarian) Louis Round Wilson.³² Throughout the conflict, however, little effort was made to solicit African American input on the decision, which was not much different than the scenario when the Hampton program had been established. Hampton's program had been under the direction of white librarian Florence Rising Curtis. The Atlanta program had three preeminent (or soon to be) African American librarians: Eliza Atkins Gleason (dean of the program), Wallace Van Jackson, and Virginia Lacy Jones. Hampton, Atlanta, and the library certificate programs were all demonstrations of the impulse toward "separate but equal" education for African Americans. Despite the success of some African American librarians like Eliza Gleason and Dorothy Porter (and later Jones herself) at graduate programs outside the South, others were not especially encouraged or welcome to attend. The director of the University of Michigan program, in response to an inquiry about the admission of Negroes, responded that "their presence is a distinct embarrassment."³³ The University of Chicago graduate library program was one of the few that had a track record of admitting African Americans and generating research that documented the needs of African American library users.

Even during the years following World War II, when there was a marked shortage of librarians, ALA made no particular effort at recruiting racial and ethnic minorities into the profession. No doubt,

³² In a campus report, Shores overstated the support he already had from ALA and various charitable foundations. His plans for a Negro librarian conference without ALA approval, described later in this paper, also shifted sentiment away from Fisk, as described in Robert Sidney Martin and Orvin Lee Shiflett, "Hampton, Fisk, and Atlanta: The Foundations, the American Library Association, and Library Education for Blacks, 1925-1941," *Libraries & Culture* 31, no. 2 (1996): 299-325.

³³ William W. Bishop to Miss Anita M. Hostetter, 23 April 1929, American Library Association Archives, quoted in Du Mont, "Race in American Librarianship," 492.

ALA was right to encourage the education of African Americans in the South at institutions close to home, but this plan came about in part because the will did not exist within the organization to encourage the admission of African American students to library programs outside the South.³⁴

The reversal of separate but equal by the *Brown* decision ultimately impacted segregated library education programs, but the transition was uneven, and one can question if true integration was ever completed. In 1966, ALA formed an ad hoc committee to investigate access to education only after the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, twelve years after *Brown*. The committee found that less than five percent of library program graduates in the preceding five years were African American and that more than half of these were from the Atlanta program. (This appears to be a slight improvement from 1940, based on survey data from 1938, when Van Jackson reported that 72% of the African American graduates of library programs were from Hampton.) The 1966 committee report recommended the recruitment of African American candidates into library programs throughout the country to make them fully integrated. This plan seemed to have a temporary effect. African American graduation from library programs rose during the late 1960s and early 1970s but tailed off considerably after that.³⁵ ALA has maintained an agenda for the recruitment of minorities since this time, but a search of articles on the topic in *American Libraries* is sadly repetitive. The same arguments have yielded the same poor results.

Access to Professional Associations and Conferences

If gaining access to the library profession through formal education programs was difficult for African Americans, then continuing to pursue professional development within library organizations proved equally so. As with the development of library education, the white establishment within librarianship was loath to admit minority librarians into the professional fraternity as full participants. As

³⁴ Robert Sidney Martin and Orvin Lee Shiflett, "Hampton, Fisk, and Atlanta: The Foundations, the American Library Association, and Library Education for Blacks, 1925-1941," *Libraries & Culture* 31, no. 2 (1996): 299-325; O. Lee Shiflett, "The American Library Association's Quest for a Black Library School," *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 35, no. 1 (1994): 68-72; Du Mont, "Race in American Librarianship," 492-495; regarding shortages of librarians, see Dennis Thomison, *A History of the American Library Association: 1876-1972* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1978), ??.

³⁵ Rosemary Ruhig Dumont, "The Educating of Black Librarians: An Historical Perspective," *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 26, no. 4 (1986): 233-49; Wallace Van Jackson, "Negro Library Workers," *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* 10, no. 1 (1940): 95-108.

previously noted, before 1964, even while striving to overcome unequal library services, professional activities for African American librarians were essentially separate. This is illustrated in many ways by the ALA's Work With Negroes Round Table, not least of which is the name of the organization, which speaks of exclusion and the establishment of an "other," rather than inclusion of African American professionals. The primary instigator of the Round Table was Ernestine Rose, whose concern and knowledge, as the head of the NYPL Harlem branch, cannot be questioned, but she was, nonetheless, white. Louis Shores was also active in the group. Most of the participants were white. At the Detroit meeting of the Round Table in 1922, Thomas Fountain Blue, the only African American in attendance, read a paper about the training program at Louisville.³⁶ The Round Table existed for 3 years, 1921-1923, but, as Louis Shores notes, "inter-sectional feeling ran so high that no further attempts at organization were made." Jenkins (1990) suggests that Ernestine Rose's activist style was in conflict with the "go-along-to-get-along" methods of the Southern librarians.³⁷ Sadly, there are no transcripts of those discussions.

Despite the demise of the Work With Negroes Round Table, ALA set out to develop a better gauge of library services to African Americans and the staffing needs of Negro library services in public libraries around the country. At the same time that the Hampton program was gearing up to launch in 1925, a letter of inquiry was sent by ALA to 34 libraries in 17 states dispersed across the South, Northeast, and Midwest. (No Western states were polled.) Twenty-six libraries responded. A common theme in the responses was the difficulty in recruiting qualified African American librarians to work in segregated service branches, and the need for greater access to education. More remarkable, however, is the lack of compunction about commenting on the fitness of the African American staff in what we today could only call racist terms—and of ALA's willingness to present these responses in a public document. Imagine the feelings of the Little Rock, Arkansas assistant who may have read that she was "well liked and trusted, not of 'pushy' variety." These kinds of responses were not limited to the South. The Minneapolis report stated that the African American assistants were "very sensible and non-aggressive." Though the services were reported to have no segregation, of these assistants it was said the library intended to "keep them from immediate contact

³⁶ Lillian Wright, "Thomas Fountain Blue, Pioneer Librarian, 1866-1935" (master's thesis, Atlanta University, 1955), 25-26.

³⁷ Shores, Louis. 1932. "Library Service and the Negro." *The Journal of Negro Education* 1, no. 3/4 (1932): 376; Betty L. Jenkins, "A White Librarian in Black Harlem," *The Library Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (1990): 224-225.

with public in justice to them and to spare prejudices of public.”³⁸

Other documents of African American librarianship throughout the twentieth century reflect similar paternalistic attitudes by the white establishment towards black colleagues. Woodson’s narrative from the 1930s about black professionals describes a scenario common in Negro branch libraries where the service was ostensibly managed by an African American librarian, but the decisions of this person were often contravened by the (white) central library management, or where advisory boards for Negro branches attempted to recommend qualified African Americans for librarian positions, but were thwarted by that management.³⁹

These kinds of frustrating interactions held sway in professional associations as well. Conversations about the desegregation of library organizations were liable to degenerate into little more than race-baiting. “Who is stuffing these Negroes down our throats?” asked W. S. Hoole, the Librarian of the University of Alabama, during one organizational discussion of whether steps towards integration should be taken by the Alabama Library Association.⁴⁰ In another example, the “Libraries for Negroes” column of the *Bulletin of the Louisiana Library Association*, published during the 1930s and 1940s, was edited at all times by white librarians, even in cases where they worked at historically black colleges. In one instance, the white editor writes with frustration in the column about the difficulty of getting news updates from Negro library services and questions whether the librarians there are too “lazy” to send reports.⁴¹ Surely, that attitude discouraged any sense of collegiality among the target audience, though truthfully, they were probably not readers of the *Bulletin* anyway because few were members of the Louisiana Library Association. *The Black Librarian in American* reports many more instances of racist attitudes: E.J. Josey summarizes a few of these situations in the introduction of the book, such as when a white library school student felt “concern” about being taught by an African American, an African American job candidate was asked if she knew “how to talk to white folks,” and a white library

³⁸ American Library Association, *Negro Library Service*. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1925), 2-6.

³⁹ Carter Godwin Woodson, *The Negro Professional Man and the Community: With Special Emphasis on the Physician and the Lawyer* (Washington, DC: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, Inc, 1934), 299-300.

⁴⁰ Carrie C. Robinson, “The Alabama Association of School Librarians,” in *Handbook of Black Librarianship*, ed. E. J. Josey and Ann Allen Shockley (Littleton, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1977), 47-51.

⁴¹ Margaret Burke, “Libraries for Negroes,” *Bulletin of the Louisiana Library Association* 1, no. 3 (1938): 14; also see Harris, “Civil Rights and the Louisiana Library Association,” 324.

user went to great lengths to avoid the African American librarian when reference needs arose.⁴²

Professional organizational activities were *obviously*, though not *necessarily*, segregated in the South. No law or statute in the South actually compelled the segregation of professional organizations.⁴³ The use of any public facilities, however, was constrained by both *de jure* and *de facto* segregation. Though many library organizations in the South claimed to have no restrictions on membership, African-American librarians were rarely made to feel welcome at committee meetings, conferences, or, especially, social activities. Hotels, restaurants, schools, and public buildings were all operated under strict Jim Crow cultural norms. Little if any effort was made by organizations to hold meetings in places where segregation did not hold sway. But just as library services in other parts of the country were equally segregated, so too library associations were nearly equally so. Under these conditions, most African-American librarians chose not to participate in the “white” library association.⁴⁴ As in other professions, African Americans developed their own professional associations. In some states there were separate library organizations for Blacks, but in several states African American librarians organized themselves within their respective segregated education associations. In Louisiana, for example, the Louisiana Colored Teachers’ Association (later, though still segregated, called the Louisiana Education Association) had a “libraries” division in which public, school, and academic librarians were members. Georgia and Virginia had similar arrangements within the black teachers’ organizations.⁴⁵ Librarianship was different in this regard from teaching, law, and medicine, in that a national-level Negro association did not form independent of the prevailing (white) library association. Organization was strictly at a state and local level.

Soon after the founding of the Hampton library program, Thomas Fountain Blue of the Louisville Free Public Library collaborated with the school to organize the Negro Library Conference, held March 15-18, 1927 in Hampton, Virginia. Blue provided the keynote address on the topic of “arousing community interest in the library.”⁴⁶ Three years later, from June 14 to July 25, 1930, a “Library Institute” for

⁴² E. J. Josey, ed., *The Black Librarian in America* (Metuchen, N.J: Scarecrow Press, 1970), ix-x.

⁴³ Janet Riley, “The Effect of Segregation Laws on Louisiana Library Association Activities,” *Bulletin of the Louisiana Library Association* 13, no. 3 (1950): 71.

⁴⁴ Harris, “Civil Rights and the Louisiana Library Association,” 335.

⁴⁵ E. J. Josey and Marva L. DeLoach, *Handbook of Black Librarianship* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 51-57.

⁴⁶ Wright, “Thomas Fountain Blue,” 26-27.

African Americans, funded by the Rosenwald Foundation, was held at Morehouse College in Atlanta. It was a training program rather than a conference, but further served to establish ties within the African American library community.⁴⁷ Another Negro Library Conference was held in 1931, this time at Fisk University, planned by Louis Shores. Because of his previous conflict with them, Shores' idea for this conference was looked upon with suspicion by the powers of ALA. ALA executive secretary, Carl Milam, writing to Tommie Dora Barker about the plans for the conference, said, "This looks like a stick of dynamite to me." Barker, Milam, and others in the ALA upper echelons felt that negro library development must be conducted within (if not subordinate to) the larger library development plan they had in mind. Milam managed to get Shores and Barker together in a meeting, where the schedule for the program became "whiter," as it were. No African American input was sought.⁴⁸

It was in these kinds of circumstances that ALA held its annual conference of 1936 in Richmond, Virginia. After the Richmond conference, many non-Southern attendees were struck by the segregated nature of the event. Although there were African Americans in attendance, they were made to sit separately in most auditoriums and meeting rooms and they were not allowed to attend any meal events. An editorial from outside the profession posed the question, "Why should any civilized association, with Negro members, undertake to hold such a convention in Virginia or any other state that makes such distinctions?" Members of the Association raised objections as well, voicing their disapproval in the *Library Journal* and other professional publications. The result was the formation of the ALA Committee on Discrimination. Based on a report of the Committee, a resolution of ALA Council was passed later that year which required that conference facilities recognize the "full equality" of all members. The resolution, in essence, forbade the use by the ALA of facilities or locations that would require observation of Jim Crow laws. (See Du Mont, for an extended examination of these events.)⁴⁹ Although this made a statement about the rights of African-American librarians within the ALA, it said nothing about the rights

⁴⁷ Casper LeRoy Jordan and E. J. Josey, "A Chronology of Events in Black Librarianship," in *Handbook of Black Librarianship*, ed. E. J. Josey and Ann Allen Shockley (Littleton, Colo: Libraries Unlimited, inc, 1977), 15–24; Van Jackson, "Negro Library Workers," 96.

⁴⁸ Martin and Shiflett (1996) "Hampton, Fisk, and Atlanta: The Foundations," 313.

⁴⁹ Du Mont, "Race in American Librarianship," 495–496; also Jean L. Preer, "This Year — Richmond!": The 1936 Meeting of the American Library Association," *Libraries & Culture* 39, no. 2 (2004): 137–60.

in general of those librarians within their own communities or local library associations, thus maintaining some element of acquiescence to local practice. ALA would avoid those conference locations that clung most particularly to Jim Crow, but it did not speak out about the provision of library services or the treatment of librarians within those segregated communities.

It should be noted that ALA had held its annual conference in Southern cities eight times prior to Richmond, ten, if one counts the thoroughly segregated St. Louis of the time. Few, if any, in the library establishment made note of those transgressions at the time, though the African American library population had already made their own accommodations through other professional conferences.

It was almost 20 years before ALA made any additional efforts to enforce a level of equal rights within the Association. In 1954, a revision of the bylaws restricted states to a single ALA chapter organization. This meant that both white and Negro chapters would not be permitted to serve as affiliates of ALA in representing a single state, in hopes that the notion of separate but equal library associations could be squashed. The Negro chapter in North Carolina dissolved itself to allow the historically white NCLA to seek ALA chapter status.⁵⁰ (I do not think the story has yet been fully told of the level of equality held by African American librarians after that action in North Carolina and the other states whose Negro state chapters of ALA were dissolved.) Alabama and Georgia could not come to any agreement about a single state chapter, and, thus, chose not to seek recertification of their status as ALA chapters.⁵¹ Some states like Louisiana, although their state ALA chapters were not truly integrated, did not have separate associations for Blacks, and thus flew under the radar of ALA for several more years.

After *Brown*, as the growing level of protest in the Civil Rights Movement began to infiltrate the national consciousness, many librarians also became more sensitive to inequalities within the profession. One of these, Eli M. Oboler, chief librarian at Idaho State University, undertook an informal study to survey other professional associations about their integration policies, asking especially whether attendance at conferences was integrated. Responses were received from American

⁵⁰ Albert P. Marshall, "The North Carolina Negro Library Association." In *Handbook of Black Librarianship*, eds. E. J. Josey and Marva L. DeLoach (Landham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 54-57.

⁵¹ Cresswell, "The Last Days of Jim Crow in Southern Libraries," 566; also see Kayla Barrett and Barbara A. Bishop, "Integration and the Alabama Library Association: Not so Black and White," *Libraries & Culture* 33, no. 2 (1998): 141-61.

Chemical Society, American Dental Association, American Association of University Professors, The American Institute of Architects, American Psychological Association, American Medical Association, American Nurses' Association, National Association of Social Workers, and National Education Association. Oboler saw some cause for hope in that ALA was not as "bad" as some of these organizations. He concluded his article with a question about whether "we as a profession are willing to stand up and be counted and assume the responsibilities which every profession worthy of the name should assume."⁵²

As the 1960s dawned, African American activist librarians undertook a smoldering letter-writing campaign with various organizational leaders within both state associations and ALA itself, to demand access and participation.⁵³ One result of this activism was that the Library Bill of Rights was amended by the Association in 1961 to include the statement, "The right of an individual to the use of a library should not be denied or abridged because of his race, religion, national origins or political views." Here, the ALA was finally taking a stance about the provision of library services on a national scale, and not making allowances for local practice. The ALA, however, had little power to enforce the right, and in truth did little to persuade member libraries or organizations to integrate their services.⁵⁴ In 1960, the ALA executive board also directed the Intellectual Freedom Committee to inquire more pointedly whether Southern ALA chapters were, in fact, fully open to all librarians. The IFC got tepid responses from the states. Ironically, in the Fall of 1961, Florrinell Morton from Louisiana took office as the President of ALA. The survey of black participation had revealed that the Louisiana Library Association (the state ALA chapter) was not truly integrated. The ALA executive board and the IFC went to some pains to insure that Morton was not *too* embarrassed during her Presidency by any ALA demands that her own state association integrate. In fact, the board report to ALA Council in January of 1962 continued to recommend a cautious and deliberate approach to chapter desegregation. The ALA Council response was immediate and negative. (Note of emphasis: the differences between the executive board and ALA Council is somewhat analogous to the differences between a national presidential cabinet and that nation's

⁵² Eli M. Oboler, "Attitudes on Segregation: How ALA Compares with Other Professional Associations," *Library Journal* 86, no. 22 (December 15, 1961): 4233-39.

⁵³ See especially the correspondence between Ernest Wagner, librarian at Dillard University, and LLA leaders, including Florrinell Morton, and then later, Wagner and ALA leadership, described in Harris, "Civil Rights and the Louisiana Library Association," 336-337.

⁵⁴ Cresswell, "The Last Days of Jim Crow in Southern Libraries," 566-567.

elected legislature.) Lawrence Powell called the report “monstrously cynical.” Jerome Cushman, from New Orleans, however, warned that a “social legislation” policy would result in the secession of Southern chapters. At the Annual conference of 1962 in Miami, the Council issued a “Statement on Chapters and Institutional Members,” which specified the particular rights all members of these organizations must be granted in order to maintain ALA affiliate status and gave no more than a three-year grace period for implementation. The LLA executive board asked for an indefinite extension, to which they received a firm “no.”⁵⁵

Both the Louisiana Library Association and the Mississippi Library Association were unable to meet the requirements of ALA chapter status and officially withdrew.⁵⁶ The library associations in Alabama and Georgia had already withdrawn during the “single state chapter” process of 1954 but were also unable to meet the new ALA requirements of equality for all members. Again, it must be said in all these cases, that it was not that any state or local law required that the associations be segregated, but that Jim Crow gave white librarians the power and license to make it virtually impossible for African Americans to participate in these organizations without some mitigating efforts by anti-racist white members. By this time, the forces of Massive Resistance had also become so strong and visible, that many librarians feared to be the object of its wrath. New Orleans public schools, for example, had just recently been the object of widespread mob violence in 1961 after a court order for integration had been issued. In 1961, the Louisiana Attorney General also told teachers and librarians that they must resign from the National Education Association, as membership would violate a 1956 state law prohibiting participation in any organization that advocated integration. The story was similar across the Deep South. Public attempts at integration were met with angry resistance.⁵⁷

Another product of the 1962 conference in Miami was that ALA undertook a study to evaluate access to libraries throughout the country. The “Access Study,” published in 1963, became something of a hot-button topic for the association. It identified widespread abridgement of access based on race, including discrimination in many cities of the North and West. The authors of the report employed an interesting methodology (what today we might call GIS—geographic

⁵⁵ Harris, “Civil Rights and the Louisiana Library Association,” 338-341.

⁵⁶ Clarence W. Hunter, “The Integration of the Mississippi Library Association,” *Mississippi Libraries* 56, no. 3 (1992): 69-70.

⁵⁷ “Louisiana School Librarians Told to Leave NEA,” *School Library Journal* 8, no. 3 (October 1961): 110; also see Numan V. Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance: Race and Politics in the South during the 1950's* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969).

information systems) to point out that the placement of public libraries in many communities was segregated and racist, regardless of whether the facilities themselves were integrated. The study was roundly criticized by the profession from all points of the compass. It seemed that librarians outside of the South did not like having it pointed out that their services were not integrated either. Three months after the release of the report, the advisory committee for the study issued a retraction of sorts, saying that “the use of ... the report be limited and that no generalizations be made about the cities studied.” In the end, no concrete actions were generated by the report, but it did serve to further highlight equal access as a national issue.⁵⁸

The secession of the four Southern library associations (Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi) continued throughout 1963 and 1964. In 1964, the Mississippi Library Association won an ALA award for its National Library Week program. How this was possible is not clear, being unaffiliated, but it stimulated a great deal of anger about the hypocrisy of ALA. Georgia librarian E. J. Josey became further distressed when he learned that ALA officers had recently attended the Georgia Library Association Conference, which Josey himself, as an African American, could not attend. These events demonstrated the indifference and lack of recognition of the problem by ALA governance. Josey presented these issues to the ALA Council at the 1964 annual conference and a resolution was quickly fashioned, which prohibited ALA officers from taking part in segregated activities.⁵⁹ Although Josey and others remember this as the last stand of segregation in Southern library associations, segregation continued to exist in the Southern associations throughout the fall of 1964 and into 1965.

Coincidentally, during the ALA conference of 1964, a civil rights bill had finally worked its way through the U.S. Congress and was signed into law as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 on July 2 by President Lyndon Johnson. This bill was certainly applauded by many librarians who were interested in the spread of equality throughout the profession, but the full import for Southern librarians may not have been immediately apparent. The law made the segregation of public accommodations and public spaces, including libraries, illegal. Fear of

⁵⁸ American Library Association and International Research Associates, *Access to Public Libraries: A Research Project Prepared for the Library Administration Division, American Library Association* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1963); “The Access to Public Libraries Study,” *ALA Bulletin* 57, no. 8 (1963): 742–45; “The Access to Libraries Study,” *ALA Bulletin* 57, no. 11 (1963): 1042; Du Mont, “Race in American Librarianship,” 503–504; Wiegand, “Any Ideas?,” 14.

⁵⁹ E. J. Josey, “A Dreamer-With a Tiny Spark,” in *Black Librarian in America*, ed. E. J. Josey (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1970), 297–323.

change (and perhaps racism) still lingered among Southern librarians. ALA officers immediately began writing to the leaders of the Southern associations expressing belief that the “obstacles” to chapter status had been removed, but most of the officers of the Southern associations did nothing throughout the Fall of 1964. Finally, in the spring of 1965, the separate Southern associations recognized the new order of things and began to submit requests to ALA for chapter recognition. The conflict between ALA and its state chapters was over at that point, but issues of participation and recognition persisted.⁶⁰

Most librarians, including those in the South, are public employees, serving at the will of the public, as it were. Therefore, local Jim Crow laws always exerted great force over library services in the South. Although segregation did not directly govern professional organizations, librarians were loath to behave professionally in ways that ran counter to local racist custom. This became even more evident during the violent spasms of Massive Resistance in the late 1950s. Thus, librarians’ places of employment in the South were segregated and their professional organizations remained so as well. Although many worked behind the scenes to improve the provision of library services to African Americans, few white librarians in the South stood up in public to declare their opposition to segregation. In this, librarians were no different than other professionals, including educators, lawyers, and doctors. What the Civil Rights Act accomplished was the outlawing of the culture of segregation. The law forbade segregation in the places where librarians were employed, but it also forbade employment discrimination itself. Another carrot (or stick) it held out, was that federal money would be denied to entities that continued to discriminate.⁶¹ When the culture of segregation was toppled, the need to maintain professional segregation also came down. This change did not happen instantly, of course, and the racism that drove segregation simply changed its ways to be more covert. The presidential elections of 1964, immediately after the Civil Rights Act had been signed, saw the states of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi (the same states that had seceded from ALA) cast majority votes for Barry Goldwater, who ran on a platform, essentially, of outrage over the Act. Even in 1966, there were still segregated public libraries in Louisiana, in complete defiance of the Law. After a sit-in protest in 1964 (*before* the Civil Rights Act was signed), one Louisiana public library closed altogether, rather than offer integrated service. (*Brown v. Louisiana*) But at last, with the ability to conduct organizational

⁶⁰ Harris, “Civil Rights and the Louisiana Library Association,” 343.

⁶¹ Robert D. Loevy, *The Civil Rights Act of 1964: The Passage of the Law That Ended Racial Segregation* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), 333-336.

business in non-segregated ways, Southern library associations gradually saw an increase in African American membership. All the psychological barriers took longer to dissolve and perhaps have not yet completely disappeared. As with many aspects of American culture, the degree to which full integration and true equality have developed within the library profession remains to be seen.

Though a separate national library organization for African Americans, the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) was founded in 1968 to address some of these ongoing issues of professional participation. E. J. Josey, the guiding influence in the foundation of the group, later wrote:

Those black professionals in every discipline who were members of national professional organizations realized at the close of the 1960s that white racism was embedded in their professional organizations. They further saw that, if black people were to have an impact on their professions and their professional development, it was necessary for them to band together, in a black caucus or an all-black organization, in order to ensure their contributions to the liberation of black people in general, and the liberation of themselves as professionals, in particular.⁶²

He writes further, “that ALA would not adequately respond to the needs of black professionals and that the Black Caucus would give professional black librarians a chance to take control of their professional destinies.” As Josey notes, the BCALA had an early germ in alumni dinners hosted by the Atlanta University library program. Its full birth from 1968 to 1970 was driven primarily by a desire to nominate black candidates for ALA offices. The initial effort with candidate Albert Marshall was unsuccessful in 1971. In 1976, one hundred years after its founding, ALA elected an African American librarian, Clara Stanton Jones, to its presidential office.⁶³ During Jones’ term, ALA adopted the “Resolution on Racism and Sexism Awareness” which had been proposed by the Social Responsibilities Round Table, and read in part, “...ALA has professed belief in the principle of equality yet has failed to aggressively address the racism and sexism within its own professional province...”⁶⁴ Five African Americans have been elected to ALA’s presidential post as of 2017 (and two Hispanic librarians and one Native American).

The BCALA has held its National Conference of African

⁶² E. J. Josey, “Black Caucus of the American Library Association,” in *Handbook of Black Librarianship*, eds. E. J. Josey and Ann Allen Shockley (Littleton, Colo: Libraries Unlimited, inc, 1977), 66–77.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁶⁴ “SRRT Resolution - Resolution on Racism and Sexism Awareness,” accessed November 5, 2017, <http://libr.org/srrt/resolutions/1976-1-racism.php>.

American Librarians (Culture Keepers) ten times since 1992. A Joint Conference of Librarians of Color has been held two times (2006 and 2012), and an organization incorporated itself as the Joint Council of Librarians of Color in 2015, and has held three national conferences as of 2018.⁶⁵

Access to Publishing

As an addendum here, the history of access to professional publication venues by African American librarians is a short, sad story. An examination of *American Libraries* and its previous titles shows no record of authorship for noted African American authors such as Thomas Fountain Blue, Daniel Murray, George Forbes, Eliza Gleason, or Ann Allen Shockley. One will, on the other hand, see many works by their white contemporaries such as William Yust, Louis Shores, Louis Round Wilson, and Jesse Shera. This, of course, is not necessarily a reflection of exclusion (Shockley chose to publish in literary journals, for example), but the absence of African American voices in the organizational venue is telling. *The Library Quarterly* did publish Gleason and other authors on topics of African American interest. Many articles about libraries were also published in *Journal of Negro Education* and *Journal of Negro History*. *Phylon*, published by Atlanta University, was also friendly to library topics. Since the 1970s, Josey and others have had greater success in the book publishing market. *American Libraries* is now much more open to work by minority authors on race- and ethnic-focused topics, and the Internet creates space for alternative voices through blogs and social media, but still there is no national level journal from the voices of librarians of color.

Conclusions

The history of librarianship in the United States is a history of exclusion, by the white majority, of African Americans from the activities of the profession, and the subsequent creation of separate African American professional institutions and activities. The white majority took an active role in excluding African Americans from four important elements of professionalism: the means of professional education, participation in professional organizations, meaningful attendance at professional conferences, and access to venues for publication. Since the passage of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* overt forms of exclusion have been eliminated, but the history of paternalism and racism have never been widely acknowledged or resolved. Adoption of Cultural

⁶⁵ "Joint Council of Librarians of Color," accessed November 6, 2017, <http://www.jclcinc.org/>.

Humility, as developed in the healthcare professions, could serve to make librarianship a more inclusive, healthier profession. Hook, et al. (2013) observe in the psychotherapy environment that the “therapist must be able to overcome the natural tendency to view one’s own beliefs, values, and worldview as superior, and instead be open to the beliefs, values, and worldview of the diverse client.” Gallardo (2013), similarly, describes cultural humility as “a lifelong process of self-reflection, self-critique, continual assessment of power imbalances, and the development of mutually respectful relationships and partnerships.”⁶⁶ Gallardo further notes (and any casual consumption of the news confirms) that our notions of a post-racial society are entirely false. He describes his own disappointment within the psychology profession, upon reading in professional discussion lists job announcements asking for Spanish language proficiencies only to see those ads mocked online, ostensibly by colleagues, and to see the people who remark that the comments are racist get attacked for being irrational or too sensitive—their views dismissed and devalued.⁶⁷

It is part of our failed narrative of diversity and inclusion in librarianship that we are shocked to learn that similar things happen in the online venues of our profession. In “Library Think Tank” (ALATT), the largest library group on Facebook, a member recently posted to describe the group as racist. The ensuing responses were more vitriol than discussion, with many commenters quick to denigrate the original post as “trolling” and espouse a “not all white people” defensiveness.⁶⁸ Whether or not the post was trolling, these kinds of responses harken back to arguments around the ALA *Access* study of 1963 about whether library services outside the South could *possibly* be racist, or to the paternalistic responses from the white library leadership to African American plans for library development in the 1930s. They might more appropriately be called cultural hubris, rather than cultural humility. We are also shocked to learn that these kinds of racist actions still happen at face-to-face meetings of ALA conferences. ALA councilor April Hathcock was verbally attacked by a fellow councilor in public at a Council Forum meeting during the 2019 ALA Midwinter conference. Her attacker described her as a

⁶⁶ Joshua N. Hook et al., “Cultural Humility: Measuring Openness to Culturally Diverse Clients,” *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 60, no. 3 (July 2013): 354; Miguel E Gallardo, *Developing Cultural Humility: Embracing Race, Privilege and Power* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2013), 15.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶⁸ Sloane Cornelius, “This group is incredibly racist,” Facebook: Library Think Tank #ALATT, October 20, 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ALAtHINKTANK/permalink/1718352371570909/>.

hypocrite, *unprofessional* [emphasis mine], and a “nightmare” because of her outspoken assessment of racism in librarianship. She received no support from those in attendance at the meeting and also was later visited by ALA legal counsel, who attempted to make her downplay the incident. The ALA Executive Board later issued a statement condemning the actions of the attacker and pledging to take steps to improve the environment for diversity and inclusion, although stating that “[t]his work can be messy” may not have struck the supportive tone they intended. The Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL—a division of ALA) also issued a statement, saying, “Our profession needs to talk about the way that racism and systems that privilege whiteness have permeated our profession and our professional events.”⁶⁹

Yet, there has been talking. There have been initiatives to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion like those directed by the ALA Office of Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services (ODLOS) and the ACRL Diversity Alliance. These do not touch the heart of continued prejudice and racism within the profession. Librarianship needs a stronger response. “To achieve critical consciousness,” as Gallardo writes, “we need to understand race with our current discourse and enhance our understanding of what this means to individuals and communities.”⁷⁰ The success of this kind of reconciliation would depend on being widely discussed and recognized within the profession, rather than just being fodder for research by a few historians. While the existence of diversity committees and offices dispersed across all divisions and sections of ALA is valuable, the work of reconciliation needs to be the central and sole task of a single office or commission. As in South Africa, this commission should be charged with a two-pronged approach to reconciliation: making the past and present nature of our racism visible and giving voice to those who are harmed and recognizing their value and dignity within the profession. The commission should also have extensive and varied avenues for publication, including those that are

⁶⁹ April Hathcock, “ALAMW: What Happened, and What Should Happen Next,” *At the Intersection* (January 30, 2019), <https://aprilhathcock.wordpress.com/2019/01/30/alamw-what-happened-and-what-should-happen-next/>. Accessed February 24, 2019; ALA Executive Board, “ALA Executive Board releases statement regarding incident at Council Forum,” (January 31, 2019), <http://www.ala.org/news/member-news/2019/01/ala-executive-board-releases-statement-regarding-incident-council-forum>. Accessed February 24, 2019; ACRL Board of Directors, “ACRL Board Statement Against Racism, Harassment, and Discrimination in the Profession,” *ACRL Insider* (January 31, 2019), <https://www.acrl.ala.org/acrlinsider/archives/17145>. Accessed February 24, 2019.

⁷⁰ Miguel E Gallardo, *Developing Cultural Humility: Embracing Race, Privilege and Power* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2013), 19.

unique to the commission and those that reach the entire membership, such as *American Libraries*. Some of this task is addressed by the ALA Council “Resolution to Honor African Americans Who Fought Library Segregation,” adopted in June, 2018, which recognizes the contributions of librarians engaged in the struggle for civil rights and acknowledges the guilt of ALA in the disenfranchisement of African American professionals. Yet this charge needs to be an ongoing commitment, not a single resolution. The charge also needs to be separate and differentiated from outreach and recruitment, whose tone often goes something like, “If only you knew us better, you would recognize what a wonderful profession we are.” Recognizing that we are NOT a wonderful profession for most racial groups would be an important first step in making us a better profession. Only through an honest process of truth and humility can librarianship in the United States hope to attain a state of reconciliation with all of its colleagues and potential colleagues. A commission for reconciliation could help bring us to a state of clarity about ourselves and provide a path toward healing that would make us a more whole and inclusive profession.