

The History of Youth Services Librarianship: A Review of the Research Literature

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Youth services librarianship—a term that encompasses all library services to youth (children and young adults, ages zero to eighteen) in school and public library settings—has long been considered the classic success story of American libraries. This classic success, however, has received little attention from library history scholars. Further, past and current research in the history of children's, young adult, and/or school librarianship is scattered through scholarly and mass market publications in library and information science, history, education, and English. This essay provides a review of the existing research literature of this multidisciplinary field and suggests a research agenda for future scholars in this area.

Introduction

In considering the historiography of youth services librarianship, one is struck by how often a call for further research in this area has been sounded and how limited the response to that call has been. Margo Sasse's 1973 article examining biographical reference tools found that youth services librarians were rarely included in either standard biographical reference tools or in the specialized resources focused entirely on women.¹ Mary Niles Maack, Suzanne Hildenbrand, and Lillian Gerhardt have repeated Sasse's call for more and better research on the history of youth services librarians and librarianship in 1982, 1989, and 1999, respectively.² Although this body of work has indeed grown in the years since Sasse's initial challenge, the growth has been slow, and a field of study declared wide open in 1973 continues to be as wide open as ever.

One emblematic instance of the lack of research focused on any aspect of youth services librarianship is the *Public Library Inquiry*, the exhaustive study of American public libraries conducted in the late 1940s. The study, supervised by sociologist Robert D. Leigh, was the project of a team of social scientists who published their findings in a series of seven books. The approach of the *PLI* to library service to the young is perhaps best typified by Oliver Garceau's volume, *The Public Library in the Political Process*, which describes the children's room as "one of the busiest, as well

as one of the pleasantest places in the library” and credits children’s librarians with primary responsibility for the development of modern children’s literature.³ This, however, is the sole mention of children’s services in Garceau’s 239-page text. Likewise, Leigh’s summary report on the *PLI* contains his oft-quoted declaration that “children’s rooms and children’s librarians have been the classic success of the public library,” yet no part of the *PLI* was directed to the study of this classic success story.⁴ As Frances Henne stated in her critique of the *PLI* at the Chicago Graduate Library School’s 1949 symposium devoted to the study, “it was quite disappointing for children’s librarians to find that children’s work—which, according to the Inquiry, accounted for over half of the public library circulation—accounted for less than 1/250th of the Inquiry itself.” She added dryly that perhaps the *PLI* staff “felt that public library service to children had reached a stage of relative perfection that obviated the need for careful analysis.”⁵ Like many other activities involving women and children, youth services librarianship has been simultaneously revered and ignored, and the origins and history of school and public library service to youth are only beginning to be seriously examined by library historians.

Much of the early research in this area is in the form of broad historical overviews written for a practitioner audience. Many of these are in themselves primary sources of data. These writings will be reviewed first in order to lay the groundwork for an examination of the more scholarly (and generally more recent) research, which has a narrower focus and an intended audience of historians, researchers, and academicians. The literature will be categorized and examined according to particular aspects of youth services librarianship, using Fannette Thomas’s definition of youth services librarianship as a framework. According to Thomas, youth services librarianship is evidenced by the fulfillment of five conditions: (1) specialized collections, (2) specialized space, (3) specialized personnel, and (4) specialized programs/services designed for youth, (5) all existing within a network of other youth services organizations and agencies.⁶ Given this definition, this review does not include research on the collections or uses of Sunday school libraries, social libraries, circulating libraries, or other public library forerunners to which children may have had access before the advent of public youth services librarianship as we know it today.

Primary and Secondary Sources, Scholarly and Otherwise

An overview of the history of youth services librarianship requires both primary and secondary sources. Professional texts that are in themselves primary sources, while often not particularly scholarly, provide a glimpse

into the profession's "common wisdom" about itself during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Here it must be noted that the model of youth services librarianship as it is currently configured first evolved in American and British public libraries—thus the emphasis on library development in the United States. A baseline account of public library service to young people in the United States can be found in *Public Libraries in the United States of America* (1876), a thirty-nine-chapter government-sponsored report that includes two chapters on youth services: Samuel Warren and S. N. Clark's "School and Asylum Libraries" and William I. Fletcher's "Public Libraries and the Young"; the former is a report on funding legislation for common school libraries, the latter an essay arguing for the elimination of age restrictions that barred young readers from public libraries.⁷ Useful early primary sources include Arthur Bostwick's 1910 text, *The American Public Library*, which contains two fairly comprehensive chapters on youth services in school and public libraries; W. C. Berwick Sayers's 1911 manual for British librarians, *The Children's Library*; J. W. Emery's 1917 text for Canadian librarians, *The Library, the School and the Child*; Alice I. Hazeltine's 1917 anthology of selected writings on children's librarianship from library literature; Sophie Powell's 1917 text on the educational role of public and school libraries; and the two invaluable ALA-sponsored textbooks on youth services in public libraries by Effie L. Power and in school libraries by Lucile F. Fargo, both published in 1930.⁸ Another useful primary source is a four-volume series of yearbooks (1929–32) published by the ALA's Section for Library Work with Children that covers specific developments in youth services at that time.⁹

A detailed and thorough picture of youth services librarianship during the 1940s as viewed from a social science perspective is provided in *Youth, Communication and Libraries*, the proceedings of the University of Chicago's 1947 Library Institute, edited by school library leaders Frances Henne, Alice Brooks, and Ruth Ersted.¹⁰ School librarianship was a rapidly expanding field in the postwar baby boom years, and its attractive salaries and regular hours threatened to draw librarians away from public library children's work. In an attempt to recruit public librarians, the ALA's Division of Libraries for Children and Young People sponsored the publication of Harriet Long's *Rich the Treasure: Public Library Service to Children* (1953), an informative—though understandably rosy—picture of the profession's history and accomplishments.¹¹ A 1954 thematic issue of *Library Trends* on public libraries featured articles on public library service to children by Elizabeth Nesbitt and to young adults by Jean Roos.¹² While neither piece is long or detailed, both reveal how youth services librarians viewed themselves and their work during the 1950s. As noted above, the first two volumes of the *Public Library Inquiry* were published in

1949, and public children's librarians were understandably concerned about the *PLTs*' overall lack of coverage of youth services. The ALA's Division of Libraries for Children and Young People responded to this lack by commissioning a study of children's work in public libraries.¹³ The study was conducted by Elizabeth Gross, who based her report on past and current library service to children on data gathered from a mail survey of more than five hundred public libraries in 1957–58.¹⁴ Dorothy Broderick's *Introduction to Children's Work in Public Libraries* (1965) and Gross's *Public Library Service to Children* (1967) contain descriptive hands-on information about U.S. public youth services librarianship during the mid-1960s.¹⁵ All of these texts were written by current or former practitioners for a practitioner audience, and all include some account of the profession's history.

More substantive coverage began appearing in the 1920s with the publication of Gwendolen Rees's *Libraries for Children* (1924), which has several chapters on the history of school and public library service to children in the United States and Great Britain.¹⁶ Frances Clarke Sayers's succinct but useful essay on the origins of library service to children appeared in a 1963 thematic issue of *Library Trends* on youth services librarianship.¹⁷ The best known, however, is Harriet Long's oft-cited *Public Library Service to Children* (1969), an account of youth services librarianship in the United States from the Colonial period to the outbreak of World War I that contains both an overview and a case study of the Cleveland Public Library from 1900 to 1914.¹⁸ Although brief and relatively undocumented by modern standards, Long's work was the first substantive historical study to place youth services history into the larger context of the Progressive Era child welfare movement. The output of history inspired by the American Library Association's Centennial in 1976 included two library history anthologies, both of which featured articles on youth services librarianship: Clara O. Jackson's article in the library history anthology *Century of Service* (1976) and Sara Fenwick's article in a *Library Trends* issue on "Trends in Libraries and Librarianship: 1876–1976."¹⁹ Jackson's is an institutional history, while Fenwick's study stresses the interactions between youth services librarians, the schools, and other contemporaneous child welfare agencies.

Scholarly Historical Research

Scholarly research in the history of youth services librarianship began to emerge in the 1970s and 1980s, though this literature still remains sparse. Most works have been published in journals or by presses that specialize in library literature. However, there have also been three historical monographs published by trade and university presses with

greater visibility among history academicians: Dee Garrison's *Apostles of Culture: The Public Librarian and American Society, 1876–1920* (1979), Abigail Van Slyck's *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries & American Culture, 1890–1920* (1995), and Alison M. Parker's *Purifying America: Women, Cultural Reform, and Pro-Censorship Activism, 1873–1933* (1997).²⁰ Although not their major focus, each book includes a chapter or more on some aspect of youth services library history. Unfortunately, each work illustrates some of the analytical pitfalls that scholars have encountered in writing women's history. Also unfortunately, as a result of their visibility, these texts are likely to be the sole information sources on the history of youth services librarians and librarianship encountered by most historians. All three are discussed and critiqued in the appropriate sections below.

Studies by Manuel Lopez and by Fannette Thomas trace the nineteenth-century development of children's public libraries in the United States and Great Britain in order to identify the essential elements of children's libraries.²¹ Both describe the historical development of separate collections, separate rooms, and separate personnel; Thomas also documents the specific services offered by the eight children's libraries she identifies as pioneers in the field. Thomas's outstanding study of the genesis of library service to children from 1875 to 1906 continues to be one of the richest and most valuable works in this area. Sybille Jagusch's dissertation describes the late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century history of youth services but focuses primarily on the lives of Caroline Hewins and Anne Carroll Moore, probably the two most influential youth services librarians of the time.²²

Thus far, few historical studies of library service specific to young adults have appeared. Two very different works deserve mention: Marie Inez Johnson's 1940 master's thesis from Columbia is on the development of separate service for young people in public libraries during the 1920s and 1930s.²³ Miriam Braverman's 1979 book provides concrete details—how and when services were founded, what was offered, and so on—to document the history of American public library service to young adults from the 1920s to the 1960s.²⁴ Braverman based her work on primary source documents, plus interviews of librarians in three large urban library systems, and places her study in the context of both the developmental needs of adolescents and the particular social conditions facing urban teens during the 1950s and 1960s.

Although school district funds have supported libraries in a sporadic fashion since the nineteenth century, school libraries as they are currently configured grew out of early public library service to schools in the late 1890s and early 1900s. Thus, much of the early history of school librarianship must be gleaned from sources that focus on public library history. Lucile Fargo's textbook, *The Library in the School*, first published in

1930, provides a useful baseline for school libraries as they were envisioned by the first generation of school librarians.²⁵ There have been a number of master's theses and Ph.D. dissertations on the institutional history of school libraries in a particular state or region; most are descriptive rather than analytical and fail to place their subjects in the sociopolitical context of their times. Among the exceptions are two well-documented and thoughtful reports on the history of school libraries in the South by Margaret Rufsvold (1934) and Frances Lander Spain (1946).²⁶ In addition, both Frederic Aldrich's and Constance Melvin's accounts of the development of school libraries in Ohio and Pennsylvania, respectively, are institutional histories that, while not comprehensive, place the narrative into the larger legislative history of the state.²⁷ Another interesting approach may be found in Henry Cecil and Willard Heaps's survey of U.S. school libraries, which includes a chapter on history embedded in an in-depth portrait of the field in 1940.²⁸ Two texts focus on developments in the field specific to media and technology: Paul Saettler's encyclopedic account of the evolution of educational technology explores the impact of advances in social science research and educational media on school libraries, and Gene Lanier's dissertation examines the conceptual and philosophical shift that changed school libraries into instructional material centers during the 1950s and 1960s.²⁹ Kathy Latrobe's anthology, *The Emerging School Library Media Center: Historical Issues and Perspectives* (1998), offers by far the most comprehensive history of the field, while the first chapter of Morris, Gillespie, and Spirt's textbook on school library administration gives a succinct overview of school library history from 1876 to the 1990s.³⁰

Finally, there are dissertations by Patricia Pond and by Charles Koch on the history of U.S. school librarians' national organization, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL). Pond's comprehensive and well-documented account of school librarians' efforts to organize within three national associations (the National Education Association [NEA], the National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE], and the ALA) from 1896 to 1951 contains a wealth of information and is one of the only examples of a truly contextualized history of youth services librarianship.³¹ Koch's work is an authorized history of the AASL from 1950 to 1971 and has the strengths and problems associated with officially sanctioned works.³²

General Public Library History: City, State, and National

In a passage in Joanne Passet's *Cultural Crusaders: Women Librarians in the American West, 1900–1917*, a Wyoming librarian recalls a child “who wandered forlornly through the stacks [hunting for] . . . the few juvenile

books distributed among the common shelves.”³³ This striking image serves as a metaphor for the historian’s search for documentation of youth services librarianship within institutional histories of public libraries. Much of the published history of youth services librarianship consists of several paragraphs on the children’s room and/or early children’s services (often under “special user groups”), plus the name of the library’s first and/or most notable children’s librarian. Among the few exceptions to this pattern are Phyllis Dain’s history of New York Public Library; C. H. Cramer’s history of the Cleveland Public Library; Rosemary Dumont’s study of big city public libraries, focusing on Boston, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and St. Louis; and Chieko Tachihata’s history of public libraries in Hawaii.³⁴ Anniversary years of library systems’ youth services departments are often celebrated in print with an abbreviated retrospective of the library’s past; while these texts are created for a general audience, the vintage photos that are traditionally used to illustrate them may be of value to the library history scholar.

Library service to youth as it is currently understood originated in the United States and Great Britain, but today library collections and services for young people may be found throughout the world. Their histories are just beginning to be written and available to an English-speaking audience. Fortunately, over the last several decades the International Federation of Library Associations has published four volumes of *Library Service to Children* from 1963 to 1983.³⁵ Each volume contains individual reports on some fifteen to twenty-five countries detailing the context, history, and current status of library services to youth. Some countries are included in each volume; others appear only once. More recent scholarly historical studies of youth services librarianship in France, Norway, Russia, Canada, and Puerto Rico have appeared in refereed journals.³⁶

Specialized Library Collections

A separate collection of library materials for young people is the first condition for youth services librarianship. Children’s literature scholar Anne Pellowski notes that the “history of U.S. children’s libraries cannot be separated from that of children’s literature.”³⁷ Youth services librarianship began with specialized collections. Specialized space, personnel, services, and networks began with the establishment of public libraries. Collections, however, greatly predate the other elements of youth services librarianship, and the librarian’s knowledge of the collection—the texts—is the bedrock of expertise upon which the profession rests.

There is a vast and interdisciplinary literature on the history of children’s and young adult literature, with research located primarily

(though not exclusively) in the fields of education, literature, and library science. While all of it may be of interest to practicing librarians, there are areas within this body of scholarship that are particularly relevant to historians of youth services librarianship. These areas include historical research in children's and young adult literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; children's and young adult book reviewing and evaluation, notably the evolution of critical standards as applied to children's literature; children's and young adult book publishing; children's and young adult popular culture/series books; children's and young adult book censorship; and children's and young adult literature and services for special user populations.

There are numerous historical accounts of various aspects of literature for young readers, several of which provide a broad view of this very large field. Among the most comprehensive are two on children's literature, one on children's publishing, and one on children's book reviewing. *A Critical History of Children's Literature* (originally published in 1953 and revised in 1969) is a lengthy literary history from the collective perspective of its four authors: a children's author, a public children's librarian, a school librarian, and a children's book reviewer. Anne Pellowski's massive volume, accurately titled *The World of Children's Literature* (1968), is the most comprehensive source for historians with an interest in children's literature and library collections, containing forty-five hundred annotated references to monographs, bibliographies, and articles on all aspects of children's literature, including youth services librarianship, in eighty-four countries throughout the world.³⁸ A useful entry into the specific historiography of twentieth-century children's book publishing is provided by Robin Gottlieb's *Publishing Children's Books in America, 1919-1976*, an annotated bibliography of more than seven hundred references to information and research on all areas of children's publishing history. Finally, *The Rise of Children's Book Reviewing in America, 1865-1881* by Richard Darling provides a very detailed picture of the genesis of children's book reviewing.³⁹

Children's and young adult literature textbooks commonly include the history of various genres of books for young readers. Among the studies of particular relevance to research on library collections for young readers is Barbara Bader's comprehensive history of children's picture books, which emphasizes twentieth-century literature.⁴⁰ Betsy Hearne analyzes the canon of twentieth-century American picture books as identified by scholars, reviewers, and practitioners.⁴¹ Studies by Jagusch and Bader and essay collections in honor of Anne Carroll Moore and Lillian H. Smith cover various aspects of the intertwined histories of children's literature and librarianship from the 1920s to the 1990s.⁴² Three useful

sources—two popular and one scholarly—give a comprehensive grounding in the history of young adult literature: Alleen Pace Nilsen and Kenneth Donelson's *Literature for Today's Young Adults* (1993), Michael Cart's *From Romance to Realism* (1996), and Susan McEnally Jackson's dissertation on the history of the junior novel (1986).⁴³ The first two provide conversational yet informative accounts of this history; the third examines the evolution of the literature that became the core of early library collections for young adult readers. Terri Butler's research looks at the history of audiovisual materials, a later addition to children's library collections.⁴⁴

The Newbery and Caldecott Medals for excellence in writing and in illustration, respectively, are chosen each year by an ALA committee of children's librarians and are awarded amidst great ceremony at ALA's annual conference. Youth services librarians have always been responsible for the selection of the medal winners, but this professional jurisdiction has not gone unchallenged; Christine Jenkins's study follows the critical course of one such challenge in the late 1930s.⁴⁵ Irene Smith's *History of the Newbery and Caldecott Medals* (1957) contains valuable information about the evolution of the awards and their accompanying rituals.⁴⁶ *Horn Book Magazine* has published a series of volumes containing descriptions of each year's winners, plus the texts of each recipient's acceptance speech.⁴⁷ Award winners are frequently studied as representative examples of publishing and evaluation trends over time. One of the richest analyses is Lyn Ellen Lacy's survey of trends in Caldecott Medal winners' illustration and book design.⁴⁸

The evaluation of library materials for young readers is a part of the daily work of youth services librarians. Sheila Egoff provides an overview of reviewers' evolving critical standards for children's books, while Julia Lord contends that librarians' critical standards have actually changed very little over time, an unfortunate state she blames on children's librarians' romanticized notions of children and childhood.⁴⁹ Although Lord's collection of primary source professional literature is extensive, her conclusions do not appear to be based on the evidence she cites. Several journals dedicated to reviews and critical writing on children's literature have played—and continue to play—an important role in librarians' book evaluation process.⁵⁰ *Horn Book Magazine*, founded by Bertha Mahoney Miller in 1924, and the *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, founded in 1948 and edited by Zena Sutherland from 1958 to 1985, are two of the oldest and best-known arbiters of excellence in children's publishing.⁵¹ *Horn Book's* seventy-fifth anniversary issue was published in September 1999 and contains several articles of interest to historians: Barbara Bader traces the history of the journal itself, while Kathleen

Krull looks at its role in the evolution of children's book reviewing. In a joint examination of the canon of professional/inspirational texts written by and for earlier generations of children's librarians, Betsy Hearne and Christine Jenkins identify the beliefs about children's literature and about children, respectively, that have informed the professional ethos of twentieth-century youth services librarianship.⁵²

Throughout their history, youth services librarians have promoted critically acclaimed children's literature through collaborations with other groups with an interest in children's books and reading. For example, in the early decades of the twentieth century, children's books were most commonly purchased and received as Christmas or holiday gifts. Children's Book Week was inaugurated in November 1919 as an annual children's book promotion campaign in anticipation of holiday shopping. The week was a collaborative project by three influential people with a professional interest in children's books: Franklyn Mathiews, librarian of the Boy Scouts; Frederic Melcher, publisher and editor of *Publishers Weekly*; and librarian Anne Carroll Moore. To Mathiews, Children's Book Week was part of a moral crusade against dime novels and "cheap reading"; to Melcher it was an opportunity for children's book publishers to give their products maximum visibility for holiday sales. To Moore, it supported librarians' ongoing campaign to encourage children's library use and to heighten public awareness of the variety and value of good literature for young readers.

Historical research on children's book editing and publishing, children's popular print culture, and children's intellectual freedom are all connected to the history of children's librarianship. In 1918 Macmillan hired Louise Seaman Bechtel to head its new juvenile division, and Macmillan Children's Books began publication in 1919.⁵³ The professional relationship between children's book editors and children's librarians has traditionally been a close one. Indeed, children's book editors were often former children's librarians themselves. Betsy Hearne's article on that interconnected world is based on interviews with editor and former librarian Margaret McElderry.⁵⁴ Over the past several years *Horn Book Magazine* has published a series of interviews with long-time children's book editors by Leonard Marcus.⁵⁵ Marcus has edited a collection of the professional correspondence between children's editor Ursula Nordstrom and the well-known authors and illustrators she worked with in her thirty-three years as director of Harper's Department of Books for Boys and Girls.⁵⁶ Marcus has also written a biography of children's author Margaret Wise Brown, whose life included close connections with publishers and with progressive educators.⁵⁷

The selection of "the best" children's literature implies a larger pool of books that are *not* selected. The Stratemeyer Syndicate's popular written-

to-order children's series books were particularly problematic for early librarians, and Edward Stratemeyer, publisher of thousands of mass-produced children's series titles, was the *bête noire* of children's librarians throughout his long career.⁵⁸ For example, when Effie L. Power devoted several pages of her 1930 textbook *Library Work with Children* to a section on "fiction which fails to meet accepted standards," she included a representative critique of *The Bobbsey Twins and Their Schoolmates*.⁵⁹ Studies by Paul Deane and Faye R. Kensinger put series books into their historical context, including run-ins with critical librarians.⁶⁰ Several studies on the history of children and comics have included information on children's librarians' varying responses to comics during the 1940s and 1950s.⁶¹

Children's librarians have also been enmeshed in the struggles surrounding children's book censorship. Joseph Bryson and Elizabeth Detty trace the legal history of censorship in school libraries.⁶² Alison Parker's history of the procensorship activism of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union draws upon ALA journals and proceedings, including extensive quotes from Anne Carroll Moore and Caroline Hewins, to make a case for censorship as business as usual in Progressive Era American libraries.⁶³ Three studies look at ALA children's librarians' conflicted relationship with censorship as they moved from their earlier role of child protector to their more recent one of child advocate.⁶⁴ This evolution is highlighted in Christine Jenkins's study of the ALA Youth Services Divisions' anticensorship activities in the years between the ALA's adoption of the Library Bill of Rights in 1939 and its adoption of the School Library Bill of Rights in 1955.⁶⁵ Ralph Wagner traces a very different history of Catholic high school librarians who attempted to incorporate the Church's standards by including their negative evaluation of seventy-five books listed in the 1942 edition of the *Standard Catalog for High School Libraries*.⁶⁶

The intertwining history of literature and libraries for youth has rarely focused on the reader. One exception is the study of library services to African-American children, whose history as library users and readers has been complicated by racial segregation, discrimination, and limited access to publishing resources. The "all-white world of children's books" described by Nancy Larrick in 1965 was—and remains—symptomatic of patterns of discrimination and inclusion/exclusion woven into the American social fabric and thus into American youth services librarianship.⁶⁷ The traditional marginalization of African-American children necessitates an especially diligent focus on the user by historians, and this focus has informed reflective and nuanced scholarship in this area. Joseph Alvarez and Barbara Bader look at the contributions of Arna Bontemps, an African-American librarian and children's book author

whose works reflected the lives and experiences of African-American children, and of Carter Woodson, prolific writer and publisher/owner of Associated Press, which published a number of African-American children's books.⁶⁸ Beryl Banfield relates the history of the Council on Interracial Books for Children, whose *Bulletin* reviewed and analyzed children's literature with an eye toward representations of minority status groups.⁶⁹ Violet Harris, Rudine Sims, Kay Vandergrift, and Dorothy Broderick examine literary representations of black characters in children's literature.⁷⁰ Broderick's detailed analysis of all children's books with African-American characters included in the classic library selection tool, H. W. Wilson's *Children's Catalog*, is particularly relevant to library historians as an examination of the titles likely to be included in children's library collections. Nancy Tolson looks at early efforts by librarians and booksellers in promoting African-American children's literature, and Cheryl Knott Malone examines library service to black children in the segregated branches of Louisville's public library system.⁷¹

Specialized Library Space

Specialized space is the second condition for youth services in libraries. The children's room itself, as a physical space and a location, is often treated as a given by historians rather than as an element of youth services librarianship with a distinct history. Library children's rooms as they are currently configured were greatly influenced by the Carnegie library building program, particularly the architectural plans available to communities with Carnegie library grants. George Bobinski's historical study of Carnegie libraries reproduces the six floor plans provided by the Carnegie Corporation, four of which include a separate children's reading room that often matched the adult reading room in size.⁷² Unfortunately, these illustrations are the only coverage of children's rooms in Bobinski's research. Abigail Van Slyck's book is superior to Bobinski's in laying out a contextual and well-illustrated architectural and institutional history of the American public library from 1890 to 1920, including two chapters relevant to youth services.⁷³ Chapter 5 examines the library as a workplace, focusing in large part on the children's room as a purposeful space for youth services librarianship. Chapter 6 is a less successful attempt to describe children's library experiences based upon published writing: several writers' memoirs of childhood visits to Carnegie libraries, plus several librarians' accounts of daily life in the children's room. Thomas's dissertation on the genesis of public library children's services contains a chapter on their establishment in both remodeled and newly built space, while her 1990 article provides a more succinct account of the history of early children's rooms.⁷⁴ Finally,

Gerald Greenberg's account of public libraries' innovative response to summer's hot weather describes the evolution of open air "reading rooms" on public library roofs, in city parks, and at beaches. All were heavily used by children.⁷⁵

Specialized Personnel: Youth Services Librarians

Specialized personnel—librarians assigned specifically to work with young library users—is the third condition of youth services librarianship. Thus far, biographical research on youth services librarians is growing but still very uneven—a handful of subjects is studied extensively, but the lives and work of many equally intriguing subjects remain unexamined. The best sources of biographical scholarship on individual youth services librarians are two standard reference books, *Dictionary of American Library Biography* (1978) and its *Supplement* (1990).⁷⁶ In Goedeken's prosopographical study of these texts, he notes that 301 subjects (87 women and 214 men) were chosen for the initial volume and 51 individuals (13 women and 38 men) for the *Supplement*.⁷⁷ In the first volume, 25 (24 women and 1 man) of those 301 subjects—8 percent of the total—are known chiefly for their involvement in some aspect of school or public youth services librarianship. In the *Supplement*, 6 (6 women and 0 men) of the 51 subjects, or 12 percent of the total, are youth services librarians. Overall, the two volumes profile 352 subjects (100 women and 252 men), including 31 (30 women and 1 man) in youth services. Youth services subjects comprise 9 percent of the full total, which is a larger proportion than might be expected, given the generally low profile that youth services librarianship and its practitioners have had in library history scholarship overall. Not surprisingly, the full group of youth services subjects is 97 percent female. Both statistically and anecdotally, the female-intensive nature of children's librarianship is evident throughout its history.

Public Librarians

As the only work on this subject from a trade publisher, Dee Garrison's *Apostles of Culture* has long been the most readily available history of librarianship as a female-intensive profession.⁷⁸ Although published in 1979 and long out of print, Garrison's book (plus her earlier article, "The Tender Technicians," on which the book's final section is based) is probably the most-cited historical work on women in librarianship. Garrison includes children's librarians in her examination of the status and economic problems associated with female-intensive service professions. Unfortunately, her analysis of youth services librarians and librarianship

is based on a selective and decontextualized reading of prescriptive articles and essays from a handful of professional journals. Thus, her conclusions are flawed as well.

Jagusch's title for her biographical dissertation on Anne Carroll Moore and Caroline M. Hewins is "First among Equals," which aptly describes the founding mothers of youth services librarianship. According to Davis and Tucker's *American Library History*, accurately subtitled *A Comprehensive Guide to the Literature*, there were fifteen biographical studies of Anne Carroll Moore of varying lengths available in 1988; since that time, several more have appeared.⁷⁹ A look at the best of these reveals fuller coverage of her life and work than of any other youth services librarian. Cumins, Lundin, and Bader focus on her impact on children's publishing and reviewing, while McElderry's piece is a brief but vivid memoir of her work under Moore's supervision.⁸⁰ Poor, Sayers, and Jagusch contribute full-length biographies that, taken together, depict a charismatic and tyrannical leader who is in large part responsible for the central position children's librarians have occupied in the world of children's publishing throughout this century.⁸¹

Biographical studies of youth services librarians appear infrequently and predictably focus on librarians with national visibility. For several reasons, including Anne Carroll Moore's long tenure as superintendent of children's work and the proximity to the New York City publishing houses, there is a strong trend among subjects toward involvement in the New York Public Library and in the American Library Association. Caroline M. Hewins was a prolific writer, an active member of the ALA, and the author of the first widely circulated bibliography of high quality books for children, *Recommended Books for Boys and Girls* (1882).⁸² She also mentored Anne Carroll Moore. Mary Gould Davis, New York Public's head of storytelling, was originally hired by Moore.⁸³ Frances Clarke Sayers, librarian, teacher, and professional leader, was Moore's successor at the New York Public Library from 1941 to 1952.⁸⁴ Originally hired by Moore in 1937 as a branch children's librarian, Augusta Baker served as head of youth services at New York Public from 1961 to 1974.⁸⁵

The bulk of Lutie Stearns's professional work was for the Wisconsin Free Library Commission.⁸⁶ She was an early youth services advocate within the ALA and was especially active in efforts to abolish the age restrictions that hindered children's library access during the 1870s and 1880s. Effie Power worked as a children's library administrator in St. Louis, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh and wrote the ALA-published textbook on children's services in the late 1920s.⁸⁷ Sarah Bogle's career included positions as a public librarian, director of Pittsburgh's Training School for Children's Librarians, and ALA executive.⁸⁸ Mildred Batchelder was

the coordinator of the ALA's youth divisions.⁸⁹ Before going into juvenile publishing, Margaret McElderry worked as a children's librarian under Moore's supervision.⁹⁰ Siddie Joe Johnson's fame was more regional, but she was also an active member of the ALA's Children's Library Association.⁹¹ Pura Belpre, the New York Public Library's first Puerto Rican librarian, was known for her pioneering work with Latino/Latina children as a storyteller, writer, and librarian.⁹² Virginia Haviland was a children's librarian at Boston Public Library and a reviewer for *Horn Book* who went on to become head of the Children's Book Section at the Library of Congress.⁹³

A recent book about Edith Guerrier stands out as an exception to the relative abundance of biographies of well-known professional "founding mothers."⁹⁴ Essentially a scholarly edition of Guerrier's autobiography, the work details the career and accomplishments of a librarian in the Boston Public Library who did extensive work with library-sponsored clubs for teenage working girls. Guerrier's interest in improving members' work lives led to the founding of the Paul Revere Pottery to provide employment to the club girls.

School Librarians

Biographies of school librarians are less plentiful: Mary Peacock Douglas was a long-time school library activist in North Carolina and in the ALA; Mary Gaver was a school librarian who became a library educator and was elected ALA president in the 1960s; Alice Harrison was one of the twenty-four school library pioneers included in the first edition of the *Dictionary of American Library Biography*.⁹⁵ Sayers's article on Anne Eaton is more of a tribute than a biography; Eaton was also known for her work as a reviewer and bibliographer of recommended children's books.⁹⁶

Young Adult Librarians

Young adult librarianship—that is, public library work directed specifically toward secondary school-age youth—is a relatively recent development, and its ranks are thin when compared to school and children's librarianship. All three biographical studies of young adult librarians to appear thus far—by Atkinson, Campbell, and Hannigan—are group biographies; all profile Margaret Alexander Edwards and Mabel Williams, while two of the three include Margaret Scoggin and Jean Roos.⁹⁷ It appears that these four women may be the "first among equals" of young adult librarianship.

Organizational History

As Effie L. Power stated in her inaugural address as chair of the ALA's Children's Library Association, "The consciousness that none of us is working alone in her endeavor to bring worthwhile books to children should strengthen us."⁹⁸ Many school and public librarians were the sole professional youth services librarian in their building or institution; they created and maintained collegial connections through library associations and conferences, professional journals, personal correspondence, and formal and informal networks of colleagues and friends. Thus, research on individual librarians inevitably leads to research on professional networks. Batchelder's article is a memoir of national youth services leadership, while Bush traces the connections between four well-known women—Moore, Hewins, Alice Tyler, and Bertha Mahoney Miller—in their various roles as reviewers, librarians, and children's literature advocates.⁹⁹ Anne Lundin surveyed teachers of youth services and literature working in library and information science schools for information on coverage of history in their courses and learned that some of the courses included the study of some of the youth services biographees listed above.¹⁰⁰

Specialized Programs and Services

The fourth component of youth services librarianship is specialized services and programming. The ultimate purpose of youth services library programming in both school and public libraries is the promotion of reading and literacy. This goal underlies a wide range of activities, all designed to facilitate connections between young people and texts. Some of these services involve the provision of books to children who cannot come to the library themselves through such innovations as home libraries, traveling libraries, and bookmobiles.¹⁰¹ Library history contains many accounts of librarians as secular missionaries delivering books to readers of all ages via horseback, sleigh, and foreign aid package, traveling in person to developing areas to reach children who lack library service, or rebuilding and restocking libraries ravaged by war.¹⁰² Early public library outreach in urban settings focused in large part on providing book collections—and librarians—to public schools, laying the groundwork for the establishment of school libraries as they are currently configured.¹⁰³

Other library services and programs directed toward young readers' recreational reading include story hours, summer reading programs, young author programs, audiovisual programs, storytelling, and other performances.¹⁰⁴ Reference work with children contributes to children's informational reading.¹⁰⁵ Youth services librarians publish book reviews,

distribute reading promotional materials, celebrate Children's Book Week, and write columns and articles on children's reading for newspapers, magazines, and other publications that reach a broader public.¹⁰⁶ Some of these activities have been studied by historians, but most have not.

Storytelling is one of the oldest forms of library programming with young people. While this craft is older than print itself, library storytelling occupies a unique niche within the much larger field. *The World of Storytelling* by Anne Pellowski provides a comprehensive and well-documented history of storytelling. Alvey's lengthy dissertation on the history of storytelling contains useful information on library storytelling, and Greene's text includes two succinct chapters: one on the general history of storytelling and one on the specific history of storytelling in a library setting.¹⁰⁷ "Story-Telling around the World," a five-part symposium published in 1940 in *Library Journal*, gives a picture of storytelling's international history from the professional perspective of youth services librarians.¹⁰⁸

There have been several biographical studies of prominent storyteller-librarians; among them are works treating Mary Gould Davis, the New York Public Library's first superintendent of storytelling; and Augusta Baker, New York Public Library librarian and storyteller; as well as co-author of the first two editions of Greene's book.¹⁰⁹ The foundation of library storytelling is a knowledge of traditional folktales and folklore collections. DeNegro's study analyzes the coverage of folklore and the art of storytelling in the nine editions (1947–97) of Arbuthnot and Sutherland's classic text, *Children and Books*, and in doing so traces the evolution of storytelling as a library activity and of folklore texts as story sources for librarians.¹¹⁰

If the history of library programs and services for children is insufficiently studied, the history of library programs and services for young adults is nearly nonexistent. The works of Braverman and of Craver are exceptional in this respect. Braverman's best-known work is her 1979 study of the two major types of library programming—social service and cultural—for young adults.¹¹¹ Her 1981 study used this model as a framework for analyzing young adult librarians' provision of career information during the 1960s.¹¹² The latter study provides some useful data to those tracing the history of library services to teens, but it is apparent that the study was conducted to bolster arguments for the continuation of this service rather than to create a nuanced picture of library service to teens during that time. Craver's work builds on Braverman's service model to examine young adult public library programming during the 1960s in greater depth.¹¹³ She found that libraries initially provided both social service and cultural programming, but subsequent funding cuts

caused the social service function to be dropped, while the less costly cultural programming based on book-related subjects continued, despite its apparent lack of broad appeal.

A Network of Child Welfare and Social Service Agencies

The fifth and final condition for youth services librarianship is fulfilled when the first four conditions—specialized collection, space, personnel, and services—are located within a network of child welfare organizations and agencies. State, regional, and national professional organizations can provide the necessary infrastructure for professional networks. For example, Catherine Burr's study traces the history of a state organization, the Missouri Association of School Librarians, from 1950 to 1975.¹¹⁴ Elizabeth Burr's history of Wisconsin public library service to children describes a heterogeneous network of state-based organizations and agencies working collaboratively.¹¹⁵ Anderson's dissertation on Batchelder provides excellent coverage of the ALA's Youth Services Divisions during her lengthy career as the executive of the ALA's Youth Services Divisions from 1936 to 1966.¹¹⁶ The professional network of ALA youth services librarians is described in Marilyn Karrenbrock's history and analysis of *Top of the News*, the ALA journal published from 1942 to 1987 that functioned as a national forum for youth services librarians to share their professional work and concerns with colleagues and peers.¹¹⁷ The research of Pond and Koch covers the several national organizations for school librarians that eventually evolved into the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) in 1950.¹¹⁸ Jenkins's work on the history of the ALA's Youth Services Divisions from 1939 to 1955 also pictures their professional networks within the ALA.¹¹⁹

Youth services libraries have collaborated with various social welfare agencies, but schools were the first and most critical institution in this regard. As noted earlier, the first school libraries were extensions of public library service. Large urban libraries often had an office or department with one or more librarians assigned exclusively to work with schools. In some cases, school/library cooperation eventually led to the establishment of public library branches within the school. Sometimes, however, common interests and goals meant that librarians were competing for the same funding sources. There have been numerous suggestions by advisory and legislative bodies that children's library service should be provided by one agency rather than two to eliminate what was perceived as costly duplication. For example, a report issued by the State of New York's Commissioner of Education recommended that all library service to children be transferred to elementary school libraries. This was never enacted, but the ensuing responses and discussions highlighted the

complex nature of school/library cooperation. J. Gordon Burke and Gerald Shields's text begins with the text of the report, followed by responses from five youth services library leaders in New York at that time.¹²⁰ Budd Gambee's study (rather eerily titled "An Alien Body") describes problems in school/public library relations from 1876 to 1920.¹²¹ In the late 1940s conflicts between the school and public library sections of the ALA resulted in the formation of a separate school library organization, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), in 1950. The story of this conflict is told from various perspectives in four different dissertations on the activities of the ALA's youth services leadership at that time.¹²²

Studies that place the history of youth services librarianship in the larger social context are beginning to appear. Among them are Virginia Mathews's autobiographical account of connections between libraries and other agencies from a political perspective, along with Eileen Cooke's article on the legislative history of funding for youth services in libraries.¹²³ Barbara Brand investigates the early connections between the female-intensive social welfare professions of librarianship, social work, and public health from 1870 to 1920.¹²⁴ Jella Lepman's autobiographical account of her activities during the 1940s and 1950s in establishing an International Youth Library in Germany is a chatty narrative and travelogue describing the range of alliances she forged with social welfare and political organizations in pursuit of her library goal.¹²⁵

Young Library Users

The five elements of youth services librarianship—specialized collections, rooms, personnel, and services in a network of other agencies and organizations—are assembled in order to provide libraries and library services to young people. Thus, the final element in this review is the young people themselves—the library users that provide the "why" of youth services librarianship. Unfortunately but not surprisingly, this most important component is also the least studied by library historians. Only a handful of historical studies have focused on young library users. Christine Pawley's outstanding historical dissertation on the reading and library use of the residents of Osage, Iowa, in the 1890s has yielded two articles that examine children's reading patterns.¹²⁶ Judith Gutman examined Lewis Hine's photos for the New York Child Welfare Exhibit of 1911 to glean information about the young library users being photographed.¹²⁷ Abigail Van Slyck uses adults' memoirs of their childhood public library experiences to describe the children's room, collection, and librarian from the perspective of a young library user.¹²⁸ *Reading Rooms*, a lengthy (486-page) anthology of fiction and nonfiction about public

libraries, is not a study, but it also includes a number of autobiographical accounts by professional writers of themselves as young library users.¹²⁹

Research Agenda

A passage from Sidney Ditzion's respected text, *Arsenals of a Democratic Culture: A Social History of the American Public Library Movement in New England and the Middle States from 1850 to 1900*, provides a telling starting point for considering the state of historiography of youth services librarianship. The years he describes from 1850 to 1900 saw the establishment of all five conditions of youth services librarianship: the first collections, space, personnel, and services for young library users in a network of other child welfare agencies and organizations. American public libraries pioneered this work; the library facilities and services they created continue to be a model for children's libraries worldwide. Despite these momentous developments, a single sentence in Ditzion's 200+-page book describes the genesis of youth services librarianship: "The children's room proper was an innovation of the last decade of the century."¹³⁰ Historians of youth services in libraries may feel daunted by the vast quantity of research that needs doing. On the other hand, by using Ditzion's words as a baseline, we are reminded how far the field has come since 1947.

Women's Historiography: Lerner and Hildenbrand

Pioneering women's historian Gerda Lerner theorized a much-cited conceptual framework of research perspectives that describes the various stages of women's inclusion in historiography.¹³¹ Library historian Suzanne Hildenbrand built upon Lerner's perspectives to create a theoretical model specific to scholarship on women in library history: (0) invisibility; (1) compensatory or contributions history; (2) discrimination or oppression history; (3) women's cultural history; and (4) women *in* history.¹³² This typology begins with zero because the study of history, as it has been traditionally understood in Western culture, has not included women. That is, the presence of women is not denied, but their work and lives are assumed to exist solely in the shadow of men; women themselves are invisible. The first scholarly perspective that includes women is compensatory or contributions history. It is based on the assumption that the experiences of men and women have been basically similar and that the addition of some influential but hitherto overlooked Great Women is sufficient to effect the inclusion of women in history. The second perspective, discrimination or oppression history, assumes that male and female experiences have been fundamentally different and seeks to

document discrimination against women as a historically oppressed group. The third perspective, women's cultural history, also assumes that male and female experiences have been fundamentally different but focuses instead on the historically undervalued activities in which women *have* engaged. The fourth and final perspective, the "women in history" model, is based on the assumption that men and women are neither completely similar or dissimilar but are instead influenced by a wide range of variables, including—but not limited to—gender. This awareness of the contextual gender system enables researchers to view more clearly the power relationships in a given context and how the various actors—male and female—fit into that frame.

The model proposed by Lerner and modified by Hildenbrand may be used to understand not only the history of women generally but also the historiography of the extremely female-intensive specialization of youth services librarianship. First, youth services librarianship was absent from library history. Then, a few exceptional Great Youth Services Librarians began to appear in library history. Next, historians related accounts of the discrimination faced by youth services librarians inside and outside the profession; they also wrote about youth services work as a women's culture. Finally, historians integrated women *into* history and youth services librarianship *into* the overall history of librarianship. Following a brief discussion of sources for information about the past, I will attempt to sketch a research agenda for the history of youth services librarianship based on the five categories identified earlier (collection, space, etc.) and adding users and other themes, always with Lerner's typology in the background to suggest the range of questions still to be answered. This research agenda is by no means comprehensive but rather reflects the particular interests that I bring to this field.

Primary Sources

When children are affected, adults are eager to advise and recommend. There is an abundance of prescriptive literature on all aspects of youth services librarianship. Contemporaneous published primary sources contain lists of recommended books, activities, decor, circulation procedures, bulletin board displays, audiovisual materials and programming, and so on, as well as advice on the ideal librarian's personality, demeanor, and education. As yet, however, very few scholars have used descriptive primary sources as a "reality check" to the prescriptive literature. In addition, researchers have frequently succumbed to the temptation of using a single vivid quote to represent librarians' views, without indicating when individuals were speaking for themselves and when their views represented a professional consensus.

Published sources are invaluable, but it may be possible to supplement them with unpublished institutional files, such as reports, minutes, correspondence, circulation records, personal papers, and work journals. Oral history is another underused primary source; historians examining the recent past should consider the value of conducting (and archiving) interviews. Unfortunately, difficulties arise in the use of existing recorded oral histories in formats for which playback equipment is no longer readily available, such as reel-to-reel audiotape and videotape.

Specialized Collections

The first library collections for young readers were more or less invisible, as readers of all ages drew their books from a single library collection. Lerner's next perspective of contributions history is reflected in histories of early children's collections like the Bingham library (see below). There were also early singular books, such as *Alice in Wonderland*, a book some consider to be the first book truly written for children, as well as early singular authors, illustrators, publishers, and journals. Children's literature is well represented in discrimination history: children's literature was—and is—rarely included in discussions of the canon, and otherwise respected authors' works for children are often ignored by literary historians. Next, the cultural history of children's literature accurately portrays it as a world unto itself, with its own awards, reviewing sources, evaluation criteria, and listservs. Finally, research could focus on children's literature as part of an overall body of literature, children's collections *within* the larger library collection, children's authors among all authors, the censorship of children's books as an event in a more global history of censorship.

Librarians created numerous lists of recommended books and materials for children's collections. What books were actually in the library collection? What books and other materials were excluded? In the professional literature, for example, much was written about the ill effects of series books. What was the actual incidence of series books in children's collections? What part did book reviews, both in-house and in review journals, play in selection decisions? What can library collections tell us about the canon?

Some McCarthy era library censorship campaigns were successful, while others were not. What role(s) did children's librarians play in these varying outcomes? American Legion posts' Americanism Committees, the National Organization for Decent Literature, and other procensorship groups sometimes targeted libraries. Did their pressure tactics have an effect on children's library collections?

Specialized Space

Without designated children's space in the library, there is little physical evidence of children's past library use, which in turn renders children's library presence invisible. Early public libraries had age restrictions. How were these enforced? In the course of their gradual removal, were there similar patterns in libraries according to geographic area and size of community or library?

The establishment of children's rooms was a national phenomenon that took hold and spread throughout the country during the 1890s. What political, social, and cultural factors shaped this trend? What was the decision process by which a library gained a children's area or room? Who was responsible? Librarians? Women's clubs? A coalition effort? Adult library users? What arguments were used? How was the expense justified? Some of the first children's rooms have been documented in floor plans or photos, but the process of their creation has not been examined in any depth.

Some historians and other observers have viewed the common relegation of the children's room to the library basement or other out-of-the-way library locations as evidence of its second-class status. Others view this physical separation as a more positive move to allow children and children's librarians control over their own space with minimal disturbance from others. How was the children's space's location seen by the librarians? By young library users? By adult library users?

Children's library space could usually be identified by the presence of low tables and chairs, but children's rooms in diverse locations often had other common decor and design elements that appear to have signified the room's identity as a space for children. What were these signifiers? What was the relation between this space and the rest of the library? How did the children's room compare to other spaces being designed for children at that time, such as kindergartens, playgrounds, and hospital children's wards? What influence did the Arts and Crafts domestic architecture of that time have on the decor of the library children's room?

Specialized Personnel: Librarians

According to Lerner's model, once women ceased to be invisible to historians, their lives and work were studied using the first perspective of contributions or compensatory history, seeking to add a few Great Women to the field's pantheon of Great Men. As noted earlier, this pattern also describes the historiography of youth services librarianship. Thus far, much of this history has focused on a handful of Great

Librarians from the first generation of professionals involved in library work with young people. The lives and work of some of these pioneers have been documented, particularly Minerva Sanders, Caroline Hewins, Lutie Stearns, and the omnipresent Anne Carroll Moore. Who were the others in that first generation of children's librarians?

The next generation of children's librarians received specialized training at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, Carnegie in Pittsburgh, or Case Western in Cleveland. Who were these students? What curriculum did they study? What was their work history following graduation? One model for this research can be found in Elizabeth Cardman's groundbreaking study using student records to document the personal and professional lives of the 361 students who attended the Illinois Library School in its first fourteen years from 1893 to 1907.¹³³ What might student records tell historians about the graduates of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's Training School for Children's Librarians, or about students who went into children's work from other library school programs?

The ideal personality and demeanor for the children's librarian (sunny disposition, comfortable manner, boundless patience, good sense of humor, and relentlessly positive attitude) were no doubt familiar to practitioners. At the same time, the negative stereotype of a librarian pictured her (and it was always a "her") quite differently—a grim-visaged spinster with an exaggerated sense of decorum. Is it possible to determine where reality lay between these two extreme images? What information might work journals or photographs reveal about children's librarians in and out of the workplace?

Historically, youth services librarianship has been a female-intensive specialization within a female-intensive field. In a field that has been over 97 percent female, the culture of youth services librarianship was a woman's culture. The history of this profession is women's cultural history, and the feminist theory that informs the study of women's history can be usefully applied. In addition, for years youth services librarians had one of the lowest marriage rates of any profession. Thus the history of youth services librarians is the history of single women and could be viewed through that lens as well.¹³⁴

Children's librarianship was one of a number of female-intensive child welfare professions that grew out of Progressive Era social activism, and the histories of these professions are beginning to be written.¹³⁵ A comparative study of youth services librarians and women in other female-intensive child welfare professions would be enlightening. How did the experiences of youth services librarians within the ALA compare to the experiences of elementary teachers within the NEA or those in the more child-oriented and presumably more female-intensive professional specializations within the American Nurses Association or the National

Association of Social Workers?¹³⁶ As these female-intensive groups worked within male-dominated professional organizations to achieve their goals, did they face similar barriers? Employ similar strategies? The meaning of such networks for individual librarians might be gleaned from their letters and other correspondence.

Specialized Programs and Services

At some point early in this history, there were no library-sponsored activities for children. What were the first activities for children? How did children's programming become established, and how was it justified? What sort of resistance or encouragement did it encounter? Early public library children's departments sponsored numerous children's clubs. The official record connects them with reading, and one also finds mentions of library-sponsored walking and hiking clubs, sewing clubs, and nature clubs, as well as worker clubs for delivery boys, Western Union messengers, and young garment industry piece-workers. Are there any archival records of library clubs? Why did library clubs die out? How did they relate to other youth organizations and agencies, such as the Boy Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, the YMCA and YWCA?

Public libraries sponsored regular radio and television programming aimed at reading promotion for children and teens. Children's librarians provided library service to children in this country's Japanese internment camps during World War II. What other services did youth services library outreach programs provide? What part did these programs play in the library's overall outreach program?

Professional Networks and the Wider Historical Context

Historically, children's librarianship has been a fairly small field compared to teaching and nursing, so that children's library services and their connections with other agencies remained invisible to many. How were connections between libraries, schools, and public health facilities initiated and established? This is now a potentially rich area of study because of recent historical work that has been done on other social and child welfare organizations. Histories of other child welfare organizations have been or are being written, but as yet they contain little information about the interrelated work and services of children's libraries and librarians.¹³⁷ What role(s) did children's libraries and librarians play in the general movement toward child welfare during the Progressive Era?

We know that there were often strong connections between settlement house work and public library work. Caroline Hewins, for example, lived for twelve years in a settlement house in Hartford. Did other librarians

live in settlements, and what might their lives tell us about relations between urban libraries and urban settlements? What was the relationship of the public library with the schools, public health departments, and playgrounds? The kindergarten movement began somewhat earlier than children's librarianship, and several studies of its history have been published.¹³⁸ Kindergarten work and children's librarianship were often compared, and it was not uncommon for children's librarians to have a background in kindergarten work. What were the connections between public libraries and librarians and kindergartens and kindergarten teachers? How did children's librarians work with the General Federation of Women's Clubs and other service organizations?

At this point, studies generally focus on children's, young adult, or school librarians. What might be learned by studying them together, as the contemporaries that they were? We need a history of youth services that encompasses both school and public libraries.

The Public They Served: Young Library Users

Thus far, the historical study of youth services librarianship has focused on the work from only one side of the desk. What of the library users? In order to understand this field fully, we need accounts from the viewpoint of the young people and the adults who made use of the services the library provided. How did children, parents, and teachers view the library as a place and as a service?

A large part of youth services librarianship occurs on a one-to-one basis as librarians continually strive to put that "right book" into the hands of that "right child." Many books, including many reference books, are devoted to this practice, but there has been little historical analysis of readers' advisory work with young readers.

Contextual History: Youth Services Librarianship in History

All these professions were predicated on women's access to higher education. There are several studies of women as they gained access to and entered the professions.¹³⁹ The history of youth services librarianship is part of this history. Youth services history could also inform and be informed by the history of publishing and the history of children's literature.

Children's library service was one small part of a far larger governmental bureaucracy. Keeping it financially viable required consistent (and constant) advocacy within a public sector that was continually underfunded. The survival of children's librarianship for the past one hundred or more years indicates that librarians have been successful

political players. What leadership style did children's librarians employ? How did they utilize "women's ways of knowing" to support women's ways of wielding power?

Histories of children and childhood are beginning to be written.¹⁴⁰ Few of these histories include any mention of children in libraries, while histories of libraries, from Ditzion's time to our own, pay scant attention to youth services. We need institutional history that includes children's history. We know children were there. The work of historians can make them visible.

There was some early public library service to children in Great Britain, but the model for youth services librarianship as it is currently configured took shape and matured in the United States. Has the U.S. model been used in other countries? If so, how? If not, what other models have been followed? As in other areas having to do with women and children, youth services librarianship has been simultaneously revered and ignored throughout its illustrious history.

Conclusion

According to Jesse Shera's canonical history of early American libraries, *Foundations of the Public Library*, the founding of the Bingham Library for Youth in Salisbury, Connecticut, in 1803 was "the first instance in which a municipal governing body contributed active financial assistance to public library service."¹⁴¹ Thus, the first public library as the term is currently understood was a library created specifically for young people. Thirty-one years later, in 1834, the Peterborough, New Hampshire, Town Library was founded and became a far better-known claimant to the "earliest public library" designation. The Peterborough library was for residents of all ages, but Shera notes that more than half of its inaugural collection—approximately 200 books out of 370—were described as "the Juvenile Library," or books for young readers.¹⁴² Thus, from the very early years children have been a significant constituent group of library users.

The early scholars of women's history knew that women were present throughout the past—the task was not so much that of ferreting out an obscure history but that of making the invisible visible. The same holds true for library scholars who would place children—and the women (and some men) who worked with them—in the mainstream rather than the margins. If they have been invisible, it is because no one was looking for them; rather, they were unsought and thus unfound. But we know they were there.

Contributions history is fine and should continue, but it is not enough. Discrimination history is certainly needed if only to respond to those who

insist that children's librarians were not library directors simply because they didn't wish to be. But even as we raise questions about apparent discrimination (why, for example, were children's rooms so often relegated to the library's basement?) we should continue using a cultural history perspective as well. What happened in those basement children's rooms? What were librarians and young readers doing, saying, and reading? Finally, there is the perspective of women *in* history. Historically, children have been viewed as peripheral to history, and those who work with them have been dismissed as inconsequential. But the record tells a different story. Photos of children using libraries adorned annual reports from coast to coast. We know they were there. Now it is time to find them.

The amount of work that remains to be done to even begin laying a foundation for a twenty-first-century history of youth services librarianship is daunting. There is so much to learn, so many questions to ask and answer, so much to make visible.

An Ample Field, Amelia Munson's 1950 book about the emerging field of young adult librarianship, begins with a chapter that describes the many responsibilities of this rewarding and demanding professional specialization. She ends her true-to-life account of library work with teenagers with a challenge to the reader: "Of course it's a job! What did you think? Maybe you're right. Maybe you ought to take up needlepoint instead."¹⁴³

Every page of Munson's text promotes the growing field of library service to young adults with unflagging energy. Indeed, even at the close of twelve enthusiastic chapters, it appears that she could continue almost indefinitely. But instead she concludes and turns back to the work at hand, writing, "But all these things are not for telling now; / I have, God knows, an ample field to plow."¹⁴⁴

Historical research in youth services librarianship is an equally ample field that has lain fallow for far too long. It is time—and, I hope, not yet past time, given the potential fragility of print on paper resources—for historians to step up to this scholarship with the same positive problem-solving attitude and professional zeal characteristic of the profession itself. It is time to find and to write the history of youth services librarianship.

Notes

1. Margo Sasse, "Invisible Women: The Children's Librarian in America," *Library Journal* 98 (January 1973): 213–17.

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3. Oliver Garceau, *The Public Library in the Political Process: A Report of the Public Library Inquiry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), 49.
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