

The Southeastern Librarian

Volume 72 | Issue 3

Article 1

Fall 11-1-2024

Southeastern Librarian 72(3) Fall 2024 (Full Issue)

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Recommended Citation

(2024) "Southeastern Librarian 72(3) Fall 2024 (Full Issue)," *The Southeastern Librarian*: Vol. 72: Iss. 3, Article 1.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62915/0038-3686.2101>

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The Southeastern Librarian

VOLUME 72, NUMBER 3
FALL 2024



AN OPEN ACCESS JOURNAL

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The Southeastern Librarian is a
quarterly, open access, peer
reviewed journal published by
the Southeastern Library
Association.

ISSN: 0038-3686

On the cover:
SELA logo with member states

The President's Column

As I realized today is my deadline, I thought about everything over the last week and how I'm feeling. How thankful I am that I'm able to write this short message to you, my colleagues. And I thought about the need to be vulnerable; that in our vulnerability we can encourage others. I considered the feelings of being overwhelmed; the busyness of life and work; and, as I've been preparing for the West Virginia Library Association conference, ruminating on the value of our library colleagues and the lives we touch. And then I focused on processing the tragedy of Hurricane Helene and its effects on our libraries and communities. The sheer loss being experienced by our fellow Americans. Having experienced Katrina's aftermath, this brings back memories. Memories of how Louisiana libraries stepped up, how communities came together, and how libraries hours and states away welcomed strangers and invited them in to become friends. It is my hope that we again come together. That we show our nation how we are stronger together.

I'm certain that our Southeastern Libraries and you will be shining examples of Southern hospitality and strength. For those affected, you remain in our thoughts. I'm sure that I'm not alone in saying, "when you're ready and able, call, email, or text me. Let me help. I'm here for you."

I urge you to exhibit kindness to those around you, to consider how to help one another, and to evaluate your library and its policies to ensure you are creating a welcoming environment to all who visit in search of information, a respite from heat, a place for children to play, or even a shoulder to cry on.

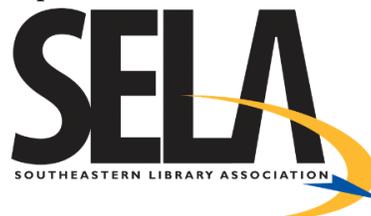
We can do this. Together.



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Government Documents for All: The National Technical Information Service National Technical Reports Library

By *Tim Dodge*, History & Political Science Librarians, Professor, Auburn University

One commonly overlooked government agency is the National Technical Information Service (NTIS), a subdivision of the U.S. Department of Commerce. As the agency's web site says, it is "the **largest federal repository** of scientific, technical, engineering, and research information." (see <https://www.ntis.gov/ourwork.xhtml>). I would like to cover the National Technical Library Reports Library service in this Government Documents for All column.

First, a little historical background may be helpful. The origins of NTIS lie in Executive Order 9568 issued by President Harry S. Truman on June 8, 1945. This Executive Order authorized the release of declassified scientific and technical information for the benefit of the public including, especially, business interests. Much of this initial collection consisted of thousands of technical reports captured by U.S. military forces in Germany. Over time, much more of this technical information has been produced by federal agencies and contractors. The National Technical Information Service itself was established later, in 1970. Things became more formalized with the National Technical Information Act of 1988; among its provisions was allowing the NTIS to participate in joint ventures with private businesses and to require that the NTIS distribute resulting technical documents via the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) in microfiche format. Prior to 1988 such distribution had been haphazard.

Some of you may recall the *Government Reports Announcement and Index* (the title has varied) published from 1965 through 1996, the main way of looking up these technical reports. It's probably been 20 years since I last used this now obsolete reference source. I recall it was a bit complex: one needed to look in two separate sections of each issue (I think it was a monthly publication) or each annual volume and then, having the bibliographic information and the NTIS accession number in hand, one then located the desired report within the NTIS microfiche collection. Fortunately, things are a bit easier nowadays.

The National Technical Reports Library (<https://ntrl.ntis.gov/NTRL/>) is the latest iteration (having followed the National Technical Reports Server that began around 1997). For several years, payment was required for the full text of many of these reports, but since 2016 full-text access has been free to anyone with an Internet connection. NOTE: the vast majority of these reports are freely available, but some are not and are listed only as a citation but provide no PDF link for downloading or viewing.

The search screen provides several helpful options for narrowing one's search. For this example, let's say a researcher is interested in technical reports concerning solar power for the home. Typing "solar power" and homes" brings up 5930 results. NOTE: using quotation marks around phrases and using Boolean operators helps narrow search results, something to consider when using a database containing more than three million bibliographic records. Refining this to reports available only in full-text format slightly brings the number down to 5917 reports. Among the other options for narrowing one's search is date of publication. Setting this to 2014 onward, search results are now reduced to 591. This is better but still impractical. One could add on additional search terms or set the date of publication even more recent but there are still other refinement options to consider. One can click on the following facets: Source (*i.e.*, federal agency), Keywords, Subject, Document Type, and Year. In turn each of these provides in descending number of results dozens and dozens of further options to consider. One of the options found under Keywords is "Climate Change. (32)." Clicking on the hot-linked number there are 32 search results on display. None of these seems to have an obvious connection to solar powered homes, so, out of curiosity, I chose to look at a technical report from 2022 titled *Study of Space-Based Solar Power Systems*. This is a thesis written by John P. Pagel in September 2022 for his M.A. in Sys-

tems Engineering Management at the Naval Postgraduate School which is located in Monterrey, California. Perhaps the most relevant portion to me is Chapter IV, "Assessment of Solar-Based Solar Power Benefits and Challenges" (pp. 43-49).

Also out of curiosity, I wanted to see the earliest technical report concerning solar power and homes available. I constructed a basic search which brought up the 5930 results mentioned earlier. I then selected the Date filter. Fortunately, one can click on an arrow to get to the end since Date display is in reverse chronological order with only 100 records displayed at a time. To my surprise, the earliest report listed is from 1953, a good twenty years earlier than I might have expected. It is titled *Energy in the Future: A Series of Three Lectures* and was produced by the Atomic Energy Commission, Department of Energy. Also surprising to me is that this report is available in full-text format. Looking at the document online, I see that these lectures were actually delivered a couple of years earlier, in 1951. In this age of solar panels produced in China and appearing on some rooftops seventy-plus years later, it is interesting to read the prognostications being made in the early 1950's. On page 85 the text says, "A thoroughly insulated house with fairly large south windows to admit sunlight directly into the rooms in winter. A solar collector is built into the roof. It consists of pipes lying against a black surface and enclosed in a system of glass panes separated by gas-filled spaces. The heat collected in the fluid in the pipes is transferred to some system of heat storage in the house."

What does one do if there is no full text available for a technical report? First of all, you can try an interlibrary loan request since it is possible one of these non-digitized reports was acquired by a library at some point in the past. From 1988 to at least 1997 many of these technical reports were distributed in microfiche format to depository libraries. Earlier reports were acquired in print format although not necessarily via the Federal Depository Library Program. It is a little unclear how or where to acquire these reports not freely available via the NTRL, but NTIS does provide a few options for making inquiries: the NTRL Help Desk is reachable via e-mail at NTRL-Helpdesk@NTIS.gov and there is also a "General Inquiries" e-mail option which includes their "suite of services" at Info@NTIS.gov. They also can be reached by postal mail at:

National Technical Information Service
5301 Shawnee Road
Alexandria, VA 22312.

Strangely, they do not provide a telephone number.

Although the NTIS Technical Reports Library may seem a bit esoteric or complex, it is an amazing resource and is especially useful to researchers looking for engineering, scientific, and business-related technical information. Most of it is freely available to the public.

Find out more about the wonderful world of government documents by joining GODORT when you renew your SELA membership.

System Migrations: Best Practices and Lessons Learned

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ABSTRACT

Two library professionals, a technical services librarian and an Archivist, describe their workflows during a system migration to OCLC Worldshare Management Systems from multiple existing systems at Lincoln Memorial University Carnegie Vincent Library. The migration was difficult at times and had some unexpected outcomes, but the end result was excellent for the students and the faculty of the university. The librarian and archivist provide suggestions to help other librarians and archivists during the process of a migration. They relate the experience to Past Perfect and Exlibris, Alma which were two system migrations they were separately involved in during later employment at new institutions. This case study relates how the two professionals learned from the early migration while accepting new responsibilities at other institutions, where their early experience proved beneficial.

KEYWORDS

System migration, Worldshare, Past Perfect, Alma, next generation catalogs

INTRODUCTION

A system migration is never an easy process, and when working in the technical aspects of librarianship, it will not be uncommon to have experienced the migration process more than once in a career. In this article the authors, a technical services librarian and an archivist, discuss a system migration that both participated in, a migration from ExLibris Voyager to WorldShare Management Systems (WMS) at Lincoln Memorial University (LMU) Carnegie Vincent Library. The archivist follows this discussion with the challenge of including Past Perfect records during the LMU migration. The two professionals related the system migration to migrations occurring later as a case study of how lessons learned can be approached in new situations. The archivist discussed a migration to Past Perfect at the Dominican Sisters of Peace. The librarian related the experience to a later migration at The University of Alabama in Huntsville's (UAH) M. Louis Salmon Library. Both approached the migrations differently depending upon the circumstances. The authors discuss the processes, from the implementation of new systems to the training and other efforts during and after the migrations, with the acknowledgement that the first migration led to a better understanding of the process from the start to the finish.

MIGRATIONS

From Voyager to WMS (Migration One)

During the 2015-2016 academic year, the authors completed a migration of a university library (Lincoln Memorial University Carnegie Vincent Library) from an existing platform (ExLibris Voyager) to Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) [WorldShare Management Services \(WMS\)](#). At the time of the migration, [Lincoln Memorial University](#) was a private college with multiple campuses located in East Tennessee that served approximately 5,000 students and approximately 500 faculty. The main library was located on the main campus in Harrogate, TN. The university archives were located on the main campus, along with the museum archives. The library staff consisted of eight professional librarians, one certified archivist, and four paraprofessional support staff. There were two satellite libraries, one located in Knoxville, TN that served an extension campus there, known as the Cedar Bluff Campus, predomi-

nantly for the Nursing Program. The other satellite library served the Duncan School of Law, also in Knoxville, TN. The Cedar Bluff Campus used the same catalog as the Main Library. The Duncan School of Law Library migrated to WMS, but migrated only their data into a separate catalog.

The existing Integrated Library System (ILS), [ExLibris Voyager](#), was no longer meeting the needs of the library and was becoming difficult to manage. Even with training, it became difficult to keep the system up to date and organized. The Archivist wanted to integrate their [Past Perfect](#) records into the ILS for greater access and searchability. At the time, original MARC records were created for specific archival collections, but the lack of existing records made this task impossible to complete. The archivist was looking for an integration solution for over 5,000 unique records. The librarian began investigating new options within the same time period. After reviewing all the options the recommendation was sent to the Library Director who approved the choice to purchase [OCLC WMS](#).

The librarian was very interested in certain features of WMS. For example, since LMU Library was a small library, student workers often managed the circulation desk, and the current system was difficult to navigate and teach to new students. The circulation system needed to be streamlined to make the check-in/check-out process faster and easier; and easily taught to the student workers reference desk staff. The Ex-Libris system for cataloging was equally difficult to navigate, train on, and manage workflows. With only two catalogers on staff, the library was facing a major backlog of new items each year. The process of copy cataloging was taking too much time and required several librarians and staff to help during peak ordering seasons. The WMS cataloging system removed several steps in the process and would hopefully end the backlog at the library. Technical Services workflows need to be streamlined when dealing with print materials to improve efficiency and processing times (Petruša, 2016). Having a Library Service Provider (LSP) with the catalog in the cloud was a very new and exciting concept at the time of the migration. Many of the technical changes and upgrades can be made from the vendor side at regular intervals. This was very appealing for a small university library where only one librarian handled the process of managing the system. Modern library systems that provide automation create new workflows that increase efficiency (Guo & Xu, 2023). It is of primary importance that libraries partner with vendors to continue to create new systems that are appropriate for their library stakeholders (Wang, 2009). The librarian was also hoping processes like the integration of records from other systems, such as the integration of the Past Perfect records from the archives, would be easier and more efficient in an LSP. Of utmost importance to students, the opportunity to move to WorldCat Local, the discovery catalog was a strong motivator for the selection of WMS. A discovery catalog would provide the opportunity to access the wealth of information available in WorldCat. “From our patrons’ perspective, we changed overnight from a catalog of several hundred thousand items to one with a quarter of a billion” (Dula & Ye, 2012, p. 126).

After discussion with the Library Director, it was decided to pursue a contract with OCLC for the WMS system. Upper management at the university agreed, and a Request for Proposals (RFP) was not initiated. Sending out an RFP rather than reviewing and accepting only one system might have been the better option rather than accepting a system as an early adopter. All aspects of the process, from early implementation, to training, and subsequently using the system on a day-to-day basis, were affected by this decision. A transition with less staff time involved, and a smoother period of training, could have been advantageous. By reviewing several RFPs, the library might have found a product that better fit their needs.

Managing the data before and during migration was also challenging. Only one data dump was completed prior to migration. A second data dump would have allowed items to be caught that were cataloged during the transition phase. Instead, some new items cataloged did not end up in the discovery system. After the implementation process was completed nearly a year later, the librarian began a comprehensive inventory project to find items on the shelf that were not in the system. Also, a data cleanup project was not implemented ahead of the migration. “More pre-migration data cleanup would avoid the post-migration mess” (Guo & Xu, 2023, p. 22). This led to many duplicated records that needed to be reviewed and dealt with; incorrect and outdated records were included that had to be manually removed. To complicate matters further, both the museum and law library data dumps were inconsistent. The mu-

seum migrated records from Past Perfect into WMS via a MARC conversion; a process that required tech support from Past Perfect and WMS. Since this was the first time OCLC would be importing Past Perfect records into WMS, no one knew what to expect. The conversion caused the records to not view properly in the new catalog; over 5000 records needed to be located, reviewed, and edited or deleted. It was discovered post migration that thousands of law library records were dropped into the main catalog and not the Law Library catalog.

Once the decision was made to switch to WMS, the arrival of the implementation phase came quickly. LMU Library was the last library to join the initial users group; there were multiple sources for records and multiple locations, and many of the features that were attractive in WMS were still in the development phase. The librarian was responsible for the implementation process. OCLC provided one team member to perform the data dump and a separate team member to coordinate the initial implementation phase. The archivist volunteered their time to help with implementation, especially in the training phase. The initial data dump of all records in Voyager to WMS occurred about three months into the project. About a month before the actual turnover to the new system, cataloging was halted. The majority of the migration process took place in an immersive two-week period after the new system was effectively turned on. Both the librarian and the archivist spent hours both at home and at the library working with the OCLC team members remotely, analyzing the new system and testing records while providing feedback. Due to the challenges of moving to a new system, the implementation team then transitioned to an extensive training period, working with library staff members individually. This allowed the library to ensure that everyone was fully trained on WMS and to provide private support to staff members who were uncomfortable with the change. LMU Library was placed in a cohort with other libraries for training purposes. The other libraries were all migrating from different systems and in different circumstances. For this reason, it was difficult to find answers to questions that pertained to the migration at hand. Each member of the cohort had far too different circumstances to be beneficial; there simply were not enough libraries on board to create type-specific cohorts. The libraries in the cohort all approached training in the same way; training individuals on specific modules rather than training the entire staff on all the modules. The circulation module, as expected, was streamlined and easy to teach to the front desk staff. The cataloging module required some hands-on training, but many of the previous cataloging processes were no longer needed, allowing for a more streamlined process. The Wordshare Management Service is an example of a management system that not only changes workflows, but often reduces the amount of steps required in a process. This allows staff to redirect their skillsets to other services. It allowed staff to catch up on a cataloging backlog to the point that they were able to move to a desired part-time schedule. However, due to the newness of WMS, some modules were incomplete, in particular the serials and interlibrary loan (ILL) modules. With time and the subsequent WMS upgrades, these modules did improve.

The migration was worth the effort. “The web platform for WMS removes data and actions from functional area silos native to legacy systems and allows staff to see the bigger picture of library management – giving them more ownership and responsibility” (Petrusa, 2016, p. 7). A full inventory of the collection was completed at a later date to find the items missing because of the lack of a second data dump. The incorrect law library record dump into the main catalog was reversed. The user experience, specifically moving from a traditional public interface to a discovery experience, was fantastic and improved access to materials dramatically. The archivist was able to create a unique archival interlibrary loan program that facilitated research internally and externally. By making the archival materials discoverable through the catalog, interested users would be able to contact the archivist directly to arrange for a loan of materials. Instructional librarians were able to teach the new system to the faculty and students who were very receptive of the change.

From Past Perfect to WMS

The biggest issue with the migration was the conversion from Past Perfect records into MARC. Roughly 12% of the records did not convert correctly, placing information in the wrong fields. Another

28% of the records did not have enough information to create viable MARC records. The 12% of records that did not convert correctly but were still migrated into WMS, needed to be located and fixed. To address this issue, the archivist utilized graduate school interns doing virtual internships to locate all the bad records and identify what was missing. The archivist would then repair the record. This process ended up taking far longer than anticipated and was ongoing when the archivist left LMU.

Sixty percent of the archival records were instantly discoverable through WMS, directly leading to a pronounced increase in archival research requests. It also allowed the pioneering of an archival interlibrary loan program. By making the archival materials discoverable in WorldCat, it provided students, faculty, and researchers with easier-to-complete searches that encompassed both library and archival resources. It should be noted that roughly 75% of the museum archival collections were cataloged into Past Perfect by the archivist prior to the migration; the remaining 25% were not processed enough to be cataloged prior to migration. Prior to migration the majority of archival records were not searchable in the ILS, with less than 20% being discoverable, and those were; predominately the special collections materials. Many of the materials held at LMU were rare and unique enough to not have pre-existing records so a MARC record template was created to facilitate faster entry of new archival records into the ILS. The migration allowed the archives to make the unique materials discoverable to researchers, students, and faculty.

Implementing Past Perfect at the Dominican Sisters of Peace (Migration two)

In 2022, the Archivist started a new position with the Dominican Sisters of Peace (DSOP). The DSOP collection was made up of seven founding congregational archival materials from Akron, Oxford, and Columbus, OH as well as New Orleans, LA; Pennsylvania; Great Bend, KS; and St Catherine, KY as well as the growing Peace archives. The collections included archival documents, photos, AV materials, 2D and 3D art, relics, and Sister files. The collection was housed in Motherhouses across the country, but will all be moving to the Peace location in Ohio in the next fifteen years. As the first professional archivist for the congregation, a content management system needed to be selected and implemented that could handle the wide variety of material types. The WMS implementation at LMU guided the decision to purchase Past Perfect. After looking at a variety of data management systems, the archivist settled on Past Perfect because the records can be converted and uploaded into any number of systems. While the congregation is going strong with new women joining regularly, it is acknowledged that religious life is disappearing, but the collections are of major importance in the communities where the Sisters worked. With the understanding that the catalog records will eventually become part of a larger repository, Past Perfect was an easy choice to make. The lessons learned from the LMU migration informed the archival workflows and style guides.

From SIRSI to Alma and Primo (Migration Three)

The librarian accepted a new position as Electronic Resources Librarian at [The University of Alabama in Huntsville's M. Louis Salmon Library](#) several years after the migration at LMU Library. At the time of this migration, UAH was a public university located in Huntsville, AL and continued to be part of the [University of Alabama system](#). It served approximately 9,000 students with a faculty and staff of about 800. UAH Library, the only library on campus, had 12 professional librarians and 14 paraprofessional support staff.

A system migration from [SirsiDynix to ExLibris Alma and Primo](#) began on the first day of employment for the new electronic resources librarian. The preliminary work occurred before the Electronic Resources Librarian accepted the new position at UAH. Although the new librarian did not participate in this early work, it was evident that this groundwork set the proper tone for the entire migration. The migration team had already reviewed several systems (including WMS) before deciding on Alma and Primo as their Library Management System (LMS). This review was an important difference from the

WMS migration. It was important to recognize that the library team was looking for an LMS rather than an ILS in a cloud computing environment, a similar consideration taking place during the WMS migration. “In recent years, more and more libraries have been in the process of adopting the new library services platforms... to better manage all library resources in one place, regardless of whether they are print or electronic” (Yang & Venable, 2018, p. 10). Cloud computing allows libraries to work at the network level while freeing up resources, allowing staff to take a closer look at collection development, new services, and technological advances (Guo & Xu, 2023, p. 2). When selecting Alma and Primo, it was anticipated that systems that provided library management, electronic resource management, licensing management, and analytics would all be provided within the Alma environment along with the more traditional fulfillment and acquisitions modules. One of the advantages of the new system was a comprehensive system within Alma to manage electronic resources, something that was lacking in the previous workflow. Also, Primo would provide an additional component that was missing as the current library catalog was a traditional rather than a discovery catalog. Just as in the WMS migration, the new catalog provided students with more access to information, which was a priority.

An implementation team was created to begin the migration process which included the Library Director, the User Services Librarian, the Acquisitions/Cataloging Librarian, the Electronic Resources Librarian, and the Director of Library Computer Systems. Other librarians and staff in the library participated as needed. The ILL segment of Alma was not implemented because the ILL librarian was participating in the OCLC Tipasa pilot. An online database called Basecamp was used for ease of communication between the ExLibris and library teams.

Training was extensive and thorough. “Alma is a new, complex system—built on a different architecture and data model from our previous system—which requires staff time and effort to review documentation and training videos” (Yang & Venable, 2018, p. 11). The electronic resources librarian was handed papers about the migration to review on the first day of employment. The ExLibris team held a series of online training meetings and would explain various modules extensively. After the ExLibris team explained a module, a member of the implementation team was asked to present on a topic to the remaining team members. For example, the electronic resources librarian presented on the electronic resources and licensing modules within Alma. After the system went live, money was budgeted for an additional two-day training session where a member of the ExLibris training staff visited the library and presented on using the new system. This training method contrasted with the previous WMS training received, where during the WMS migration, librarians were told that there would be WMS staff led training for all the library staff. However, the WMS migration team was given brief training on the modules, and it fell to the implementation team to train the rest of the library staff. This training gap made it difficult for staff to adapt to the new WMS system effectively.

It should be noted that the migration team included team members who had worked for a vendor in the past. This prior knowledge helped team members successfully work with the vendor implementation team. No member of the team other than the new electronic resources librarian, had participated in as comprehensive of a system migration as this one. Unlike with the WMS migration, the cataloging librarian completed as much cleanup as possible prior to migration. Also, the extensive training helped the library staff with a smoother transition to the new system. Primo required a second migration to PrimoVE two years later. At that time, the electronic resources librarian participated with a larger role in the implementation. Basecamp was again used to ease communication. The same training model, within a shorter time period, was used for the second migration. The biggest differences between this migration and the WMS migration included the extensive knowledge of a team of participants, careful planning, and a comprehensive training plan. “The most valuable lessons concentrated on training, communication, engagement, implementation process, and data cleanup/preparation” (Guo & Xu, 2023, p. 17). With these aspects in place, the process was very smooth and complete from the perspective of someone who had migrated in the past and was starting fresh in a new position.

CONCLUSION

When looking back at the WMS migration, the argument that the authors were inexperienced while learning the migration process in real time is appropriate. Both authors found a myriad of situations that could have been improved. The final outcome was a new, better system for the students, which was the ultimate goal. It is important to note some of the lessons learned by the two authors. Those considering a migration should consider reviewing several systems before making a final decision, conduct data cleanup before a data dump; many of the cataloging errors could have been resolved ahead of migration, and be prepared for problems if one is an early adopter. It is best to begin the process with support from the administration, with a strong implementation team, and conduct multiple training sessions. Be aware and prepared to spend a lot of time during the implementation phase; a slower-phased migration will help with a smooth transition. Have good staff to help who are willing to go the extra mile.

Both the archivist and the technical services librarian participated in migrations at their current institutions; the concepts learned from the WMS migration made these second migrations a more carefully thought-out transition. It is the hope of the authors that they were able to perform later implementations with a better outlook and a more formal understanding of the migration process. It is likely that they will again have to navigate a system migration experience in the future.

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The Decline of the Traditional Reference Desk: How Library Reference at Francis Marion University is Adjusting to the Shifting Trend Compared to Other Academic Libraries

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ABSTRACT

In a world of advanced technology, traditional reference faces the ever-increasing challenge to maintain its relevance and significance. Statistics show a drastic decline in reference desk transactions in academic libraries nationwide over the last few decades. As academic libraries around the nation are now transforming their services to adjust to the changing needs of today's library users, how does the Reference department at Francis Marion University compare to its peers in keeping pace with this trend?

KEYWORDS

traditional reference, academic libraries, reference librarians, reference desk, reference transactions, library instruction

INTRODUCTION

In this highly advanced technological age where information is available at the click of a button, traditional library reference struggles to maintain its relevance and not fade into obsolescence. Is the existence of traditional reference even necessary in academic libraries in this postmodern society?

The Association of College and Research Libraries statistics for libraries in doctorate-granting schools, show that nationwide, reference transactions have decreased from 21.3 million in 2001 to 9 million in 2012, which is a 57% decline (Bunnett et al., 2016). Much has been written about the decreasing utilization of reference services over the past thirty years. In 2008, the American Library Association reported a 50% decrease in reference transactions in academic libraries during the previous years. In 1994, there were 111,649,668 transactions compared to 56,148,040 in 2008 (Buss, 2016).

With the increased popularity of Google, Google Scholar, and numerous other search engines so readily available, the demand for traditional reference services has decreased significantly (Bandyopadhyay & Boyd-Byrnes, 2016). The time of the continuous stream of students coming to the reference desk for assistance has long passed.

After reviewing seven reference transaction studies published between 1977 and 2012, K. Maloney and J.H. Kemp found that between 62-78% of questions asked were simple, directional, technical, or policy-related, and they could be answered by nonprofessionals including paraprofessionals and student workers. They also found that 16-30% percent of the questions asked were basic reference that could be answered by highly trained paraprofessionals and librarians, whereas only 2-11% needed to be answered by librarians with advanced subject knowledge or research expertise (Bandyopadhyay & Boyd-Byrnes, 2016).

Charles A. Bunge describes reference service in these terms:

Reference service...has been defined as personal assistance provided to users in pursuit of information. Reference service has three major aspects...(1) information service, which consists of finding needed information for the user or assisting the user in finding such information; (2) instruction in library use, consisting of helping users learn the skills they need to find and use library materials; and (3) guidance, in which users are assisted in choosing library materials appropriate to their educational, informational, or recreational needs (p.185).

There's no formal definition for traditional reference; however, it can be defined on the grounds of what it provides. Traditional reference services are provided in person or via telephone by reference librarians (Shakeri et al., 2012). Reference service can also include other tasks such as collection development, developing research guides, tutorials, catalogs, databases, websites, etc. for researchers (Stevens, 2013).

REFERENCE DESK TRANSACTIONS

Reference Transactions at James A. Rogers Library

The Reference Desk statistics at the James A. Rogers Library (JARL) of Francis Marion University (FMU) in Florence, SC, reflect the nationwide trend where the majority of questions asked can easily be answered by a nonprofessional. The data for these statistics was collected from Gimlet, a software used by JARL to record and track daily service transactions within the Reference and Systems departments.

JARL serves a four-year public university of approximately 4,000 undergraduate and graduate students. With 17 staff members of which nine are librarians, this library houses over 400,000 print volumes, offers access to over 340,000 eBooks, and over 100 databases (Francis Marion University, 2020).

The Rogers Library Reference Desk is staffed primarily by a librarian over 40 hours a week and staffed by student assistants during the evening hours where a librarian is on call. The Rogers Library Reference Desk is open over 60 hours per week, seven days a week during the fall and spring semesters. The library building is open 85 hours, seven days a week during the fall and spring semesters.

From March 1, 2019, to March 1, 2020, Rogers Library statistics show that a total of 4,184 questions were asked at the Reference Desk and of those, 503 or 12% were reference questions. Of the 503 reference questions asked, only 192 or 38% were questions that needed to be answered by a professional librarian.

Questions recorded in Gimlet were carefully examined in order to determine whether a reference librarian should have answered them. This determination was based on the complexity of the question and whether it required in-depth research. Examples of questions recorded in Gimlet include:

1. A student writing a sociology paper was looking for a database for sociology articles only. Such a question could've been answered by a reference librarian, a paraprofessional, or even a trained student assistant.

2. A student needed an article on a behavior intervention plan dealing with elopement psychology. For this question, only a reference librarian was qualified to answer due to its complexity. A question such as this requires advanced and possibly time-consuming research.

3. Can I use a computer to print? This question could certainly be answered by any of the library staff.

As stated before, statistics show that the majority of questions asked by patrons can be answered by nonprofessional library staff. Due to the declining trend of reference transactions and low percentage of advanced reference questions, the Rogers Library Reference Desk reduced its hours of operation by one hour on evenings during the fall and spring semesters and is altogether closed on evenings and weekends during the summer.

Reference Transactions at Kimbel Library

Approximately 50 miles east of FMU, Kimbel Library of Coastal Carolina University in Conway, SC, serves both residential and commuting students where about 4,600 of said students live on campus. Kimbel Library has two main service desks on the first floor, the Information Commons Help Desk and the Circulation Desk both staffed by Access Services staff and student assistants. Librarians from the research and scholarship department are on-call from their offices to provide reference assistance during the times they are most likely to be needed. The questions are referred to the librarians by the service desk staff either in person or via library chat (Faix, 2023).

Like JARL and other academic libraries nationwide, Kimbel Library experienced a drastic decline in the demand for reference assistance. The questions asked on library chat were generally direc-

tional, technological, or very basic. Student assistants who were part of a peer research assistants program offered by Kimbel Library, were disappointed that their research assistance was not in greater demand. A decade back, Kimbel's reference librarians expressed this same frustration at spending so much time giving general and basic assistance and not the research assistance they were trained to provide (Faix, 2023).

Why the Steady Decline in Reference Transactions?

One might wonder why is there such a steady and consistent decline in reference transactions? The obvious answer is that it is due to the explosion of technology and the internet. To keep pace and maintain relevance in a technological age that revolves around the internet, reference had to become a part of the virtual world. The Rogers Library Reference Department has increased its presence and accessibility online, adopting a chat service and making sure the chat and "Ask-a-Librarian" icons are highly visible on the library's webpage. Rogers Library Reference also creates library video tutorials on how to use its online reference resources and has created a frequently asked questions (FAQs) section on its library website. Rogers Library Reference utilizes social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to keep students and faculty abreast of library events, reference services, resources, and to share library video tutorials.

It is quite apparent that a significant portion of communication is taking place online; therefore, reference services are meeting users where they are, whether it is via chat, text message, email, social media, or other forms of web-based communication. But could there also be other reasons for this decline besides technological advancement?

Reference Desk Survey by the Felix G. Woodward Library

In a 2018 survey given by the Felix G. Woodward Library at Austin Peay State University, 55 of the 74 responders never used the reference desk. Sixteen of those 55 said that they never used the reference desk because they were given no assignments that required library resources, and the remaining never used the reference desk for either of the following reasons:

1. They were unaware that reference assistance was available.
2. The library's resources were easy to use and therefore, they needed no assistance.
3. They never used the reference desk for other reasons not specified (Bowron & Weber, 2019).

Academic librarian and teaching faculty relationships

Although this is a rather small pool of responders from the Woodward Library survey, it reflects problems that are common in academic libraries nationwide. The fact that 16 responders said that they were given no assignments that required library resources could possibly be an indication of a lack of collaboration between academic librarians and teaching faculty (Bowron & Weber, 2019). Studies and library literature report deficiencies in the collaboration between academic librarians and teaching faculty because teaching faculty fail to initiate partnerships with academic librarians when designing their courses (Alwan et al., 2018). Research shows a connection between library use and encouragement from professors (Nunes, 2016). Studies have shown that relationship building between faculty and liaison librarians has become more important than ever for success. Some faculty members believe that relationships are strengthened when librarians go above and beyond expectations by asking probing questions and adding new insights. Librarians who established successful relationships with teaching faculty created meaningful interactions and asked for feedback to make improvements (Díaz & Mandernach, 2017).

At JARL, efforts and considerable strides have been taken to strengthen relationships between librarians and teaching faculty. JARL provides a faculty/staff toolkit on its homepage where teaching faculty can suggest book titles, submit library instruction requests, find their library liaison, and much more. The Instruction Librarian also presented information to faculty to raise awareness of Open Education Resources (OER) and interviewed several teaching professors regarding data management assistance. She also interviewed several teaching professors regarding data management and how JARL

could assist with this effort.

Library Jargon

Studies show that library users are often confused about the different functions of the library departments and that most do not know what services the library offers. Terms such as “reference,” “circulation,” and “periodical” did not have much meaning to library users, especially to those who were not from North America; therefore, more simplified language should be used instead of library jargon (O’Neill & Guilfoyle, 2015). The United States population is becoming increasingly diverse, which means library users are of an increasingly diverse ethnic and language background.

The Reference Department at Regis University Library conducted a survey to gauge their patrons’ perception of reference service. In response to the question that asked, ‘what words come to mind when you hear or see the word “Reference,”’ the top three words the survey responders used to define reference were “research,” “help,” and “books” (O’Neill & Guilfoyle, 2015). This justifies the call for more clarified terminology in library signage. Oberlin College in Ohio redesigned their reference area by changing signs, equipment, etc. Their reference desk signs now read “Research Help” and “Information.” They have seen an increase in usage since the signage changes (O’Neill & Guilfoyle, 2015). Like Oberlin College, Rogers Library’s Reference Desk signage also reads “Information.”

Penn State Abington’s Research Party

Penn State Abington, the library of Pennsylvania State University, holds a Research Party to combine the social nature of their library with the research assistance provided at the reference desk. The hope is for an increasing trend toward collaborative working styles where students are brought together, and professional academic colleagues can consult with each other and exchange ideas. The Research Party is held in the library classroom with food, decorations, music, party favors, and research supplies. The party provides a more relaxed and stress-free student-librarian interaction where many students can be served at once instead of the restricted one-patron-at-a-time reference desk model (Hunter & Riehman-Murphy, 2017). The Research Party is a highly creative endeavor to increase awareness of reference services.

Penn State Abington’s Research Party was expected to be more party-like, but instead, it took on an academic air because students had a real need for research assistance. Even though the students came for research help and not to party, they interacted as a community of scholars in their sharing of ideas and challenges. The party likewise provided faculty with another way to relay library services and resources to their students (Hunter & Riehman-Murphy, 2017).

Information Literacy Instruction

The Woodward Library responders who deemed the library resources easy to use and needed no assistance, correspond with studies showing that students are becoming more confident in their ability to use library resources due to an increase in information literacy instruction sessions (Weber & Bowron, 2019).

There is an adage that says, *give a man a fish; you feed him for a day, teach him how to fish, you feed him for a lifetime*. Reference librarians, especially in the academic setting, have promoted self-sufficiency and self-help, teaching that the more one learns to do for oneself, the less assistance they will need. This promotion of self-help comes in the form of information literacy instruction. Studies show that librarians have increasingly provided information literacy instruction for decades, which helps students better understand how to use library resources (Weber & Bowron, 2019). However, librarians have found that some younger college students are overconfident and overestimate their research ability. This is especially true for first-year students (Nunes, 2016).

Stevens (2013) states that:

Basic academic research has gotten easier...Most students today do not need to learn what a pa-

per index is, where it is located, and how to use it to begin finding articles on their topics. They do not have to learn about controlled vocabulary when inputting a few keywords will generally suffice, nor do most even have to come to the library building, let alone navigate its physical space in search of the locations of mysterious objects such as “bound periodicals” and “microfiche. When library materials went online for public use, reference desks still received many questions from students conducting academic research because the systems were unfamiliar and not particularly user friendly. However, vendors and library webmasters have made databases and library websites increasingly intuitive and easier to use, decreasing the amount of user queries (p.203).

At JARL, one of the reasons for the low traditional reference desk transactions is because many students are learning remotely, which has become more prevalent since the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the COVID-19 lockdown is long over, there are students who are still opting for distance learning.

Lingering Demand for Traditional Reference Transactions

With studies showing the steady decline in traditional reference transactions, is there still a reason to have a service point exclusively for traditional reference in academic libraries, and should it be primarily staffed by professional reference librarians? In this current technologically advanced age, is the traditional reference desk fading into antiquity?

The most factual questions can be answered with a simple Google search or a database search; but not all research questions fall into this category. Many information needs require the assistance of a professional librarian, for example, developing a research strategy or selecting the appropriate databases to use. Many users do not understand the more advanced features of Google Scholar and other search engines; therefore, reference is as significant as it ever was in previous generations (Buss, 2016). Even though information is so readily available, it takes training to properly access and assess this information.

Despite the declining trend in the demand for traditional reference assistance, statistics show that there still is a persistent need for person-to-person interaction and assistance. Some librarians see the great value of person-to-person interaction and professional assistance at the reference desk, which to them, justifies the staffing of librarians at the reference desk. Their stance is supported by a study done by Amy Gratz and Julie Gilbert, who found that two-thirds of the student responders reported that they go to the reference desk or a reference librarian for assistance while less than one quarter asked for assistance at another service desk (McClure & Bravedner, 2013).

In a study at Auraria Library at the University of Colorado-Denver, it found that 69% of first-year college students preferred face-to-face reference services over virtual. The value of human contact is the main reason for retaining the reference desk (Miles, 2013).

Buss (2016) discusses a survey of academic librarians at small to medium-sized institutions to see if their experiences reflected the declining trend in reference transactions. In his study, he found that 66.4% of respondents retained traditional services with reference desks and of those, 77.46% deemed that the number of reference transactions had been stable or had risen over the previous two years, thus, contradicting the general trend of reference transaction decline.

Service Desk Models

However, it cannot be ignored that the advancement of technology and the accessibility of information online has created a shift in the need for traditional reference assistance as a whole. In adaptation to this shift, many academic libraries have developed more innovative ways of providing reference services.

After conducting a study that found only 7.4% of transactions at the reference desk required the assistance of a professional librarian, Stetson University began staffing paraprofessionals at the reference desk. In 2008, J. Banks and C. Pracht surveyed 191 academic librarians at mid-sized academic in-

stitutions and discovered that 62% were using non-degreed staff at their desks. Also, in 2008, S. Ryan analyzed reference transaction data collected in 2002, 2003, and 2006 and found that nearly 90% of reference desk transactions could be performed by a non-librarian. In response to this decline in reference transactions, many institutions have adopted the tiered reference desk model, eliminating the traditional reference desk. One of the reasons for shifting professional librarians from the reference desk is to free them up for other responsibilities that are expected of them such as research assistance, library instruction, collection development, and liaison responsibilities (Peters, 2015).

A tiered reference desk model, also called an on-call service desk model, is where trained paraprofessionals and students are staffed at the service desk to answer basic reference and directional questions while professional librarians are called upon to answer the more advanced reference questions.

Due to the continuing decrease in reference transactions and after reading articles that discussed the on-call desk model, Woodward Library adopted this model in Fall 2015. The primary reason for doing so was to increase librarians' productivity by making better use of their time (Bowron & Weber, 2019).

For reference questions that paraprofessionals at service points are not trained to answer, many academic libraries provide reference consultation where patrons can schedule an appointment with a professional librarian if they need advanced research assistance.

Unlike the institutions that have adopted the tiered reference desk model, some academic libraries have combined the reference desk with other service desks to make services more free flowing. Many libraries are also providing roving service where reference librarians walk around the library or even outside of the library to see if there are any patrons in need of reference assistance. Roving reference can reach and serve more library patrons within and outside the libraries (Bandyopadhyay & Boyd-Byrnes, 2016).

Some libraries go as far as to provide in-person reference assistance in locations outside of library spaces such as coffee shops, student unions, computer labs, academic buildings, and residence halls (Coleman & Mallon, 2015). Many scholarly articles show librarians adopting new models of reference services such as roving, consultation, outreach reference, and the combining of service points (Miles, 2013). Roving reference, virtual reference, outreach and marketing services, digital archives, online resources such as databases, e-Books, online tutorials, LibGuides, etc. are becoming more commonplace in academic libraries (Bandyopadhyay & Boyd-Byrnes, 2016).

A 2008 case study shows that 80% of the librarians who responded to the study reported that the on-call service model worked for them personally. Of the library users who responded, 66% reported that the model worked well for them, while only 7% thought that it did not work. 27% of library users were uncertain of its effect on service (Bowron & Weber, 2019). A 2015 study shows several benefits of roving reference services in how such services reach patrons who do not know that they can ask the reference desk for help. It shows how roving reference changes a patron's perception of librarians and delivers point-of-need assistance (Bowron & Weber, 2015).

JARL however, has adopted neither the tiered-reference desk model nor has it combined the reference desk with other service desks. Unlike many academic libraries nationwide, JARL retains its traditional reference service point which is primarily staffed by librarians. But seeing the shift from traditional reference around the country, JARL is now starting to schedule student assistants to staff the reference desk more during the day instead of just evenings. Therefore, its reference librarians benefit by having more time to engage with research, instruction, workshops/conference planning, and outreach activities that require interacting with students and faculty beyond the confines of a reference desk.

JARL's Reference Professional Development and Outreach

Like other academic libraries nationwide, JARL's reference librarians are taking strides to keep pace with the shifting trend and demand by attending workshops, seminars, and taking courses to learn more creative ways to engage its student patrons. The purpose of these workshops, seminars, and cours-

es is to introduce effective librarian instruction strategies, improve reference services, introduce new databases, and to keep academic librarians abreast of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology such as ChatGPT.

In the fall of 2019, JARL's Reference department, with the help of the other library departments, hosted an event called 'Latte with Librarians'. This was an event for students interested in the library and information science profession to come and chat with the librarians of JARL and librarians from public and academic libraries in the surrounding areas. The purpose of this event wasn't about providing reference assistance; nevertheless, it was still a great way for students and librarians to interact in a more relaxed and nontraditional setting. Even though the attendance wasn't large, the students who attended showed keen interest in the library and information science profession.

In 2022, at the start of the fall semester, JARL took part in the campus-wide Open House event for freshmen students. It was one of the places students had to visit to get their mock passports stamped as proof they visited the library. During this event, we introduced students to library services and resources and handed out promotional items.

Inspired by the Open House campus event of 2022, the following year, JARL carried out a similar event where they made mock passports for students to have stamped at each library service desk they visited. Provided the passports were fully stamped, the students could then enter their passports into a drawing for a chance to win prizes. The winners were then recognized on the library's social media.

CONCLUSION

Academic libraries are taking tremendous strides in transforming their traditional practices into ones that are more aligned with the current needs and expectations of their users, and many of their innovations are effective. Although the needs of academic library patrons have changed over time, statistics show that there is still a considerable need for reference assistance. Even in an era of highly advanced technology where information, both good and bad, is at one's fingertips, humanity still values face-to-face transactions. Therefore, traditional reference is not necessarily going away, but instead, it is evolving. Reference librarians and reference departments are now revising and repurposing themselves to offer services that are more congruent with the needs and demands of today's users.

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Challenges and Opportunities in Providing Academic Library Services to Incarcerated Higher Education Students: A Case Study from a Tennessee State Prison

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ABSTRACT

This case study describes the Belmont University Library's partnership with a Tennessee men's prison to provide access to higher education. The program has led to challenges relating to communication, circulation, cataloging, and collection development. These library services are necessary to provide students with access to information not only for their academic endeavors, but also for their own well-being and growth. This paper explores possible solutions to the information deficit of incarcerated students and how the library can support the needs of an underserved population.

KEYWORDS

incarcerated students, special populations, access to information, cataloging, communication

INTRODUCTION

In 2021, Belmont University, a four-year private institution located in Nashville, Tennessee, partnered with the Turney Center Industrial Complex to create a pathway for incarcerated individuals to receive their bachelor's degree in business administration. The Turney Center is one of 14 state correctional facilities in Tennessee (TDOC, 2024). Belmont represents a broader trend for academic institutions to provide incarcerated individuals the opportunity to pursue education in an effort to reduce recidivism. This is especially important in the southeastern United States, considering the higher rates of incarceration in these states compared to other regions of the country (Carson, 2023). To accomplish this, Belmont partners with the Tennessee Higher Education Initiative (THEI) to coordinate curriculum development and academic support for the students. Since its inception, the library at Belmont has played a critical role in supporting the faculty by curating content for their courses and directly assisting students with their research assignments via the Canvas learning management system. Recent expansion of the educational program has also led to increased library involvement, which has opened a variety of discussions regarding supporting the students during the 2023/2024 school year. In late April 2024, the librarians also had an opportunity to visit the students at the facility. Invited by their partners at THEI, the librarians wanted mainly to get to know the students better and understand life at the facility from their perspective. This visit helped the library reassess its services and improve them to best fit the needs of these students.

This paper is a case study of providing library services to the higher education program at the Turney Center. The services highlighted here include library reference, circulation, collection development, cataloging, assessment, and communication. While some of these services began at the inception of the program and others more recently, this article will focus on services offered during the 2023/2024 academic year. Throughout the paper, the authors will also discuss the impact of their visit to the facility and how they are rethinking some of the library services to this group in light of that visit. Each of these library services generates unique obstacles in providing regular services compared to other student demographics. Nevertheless, such challenges have also led to new opportunities to support a heavily neglected and marginalized group of students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although much of the literature on library services for incarcerated populations centers around

those offered by public libraries, there are certainly overlaps between what public and academic libraries can offer in terms of services. Both public and academic libraries encounter similar barriers to access in correctional services. For example, technology is a particularly challenging resource to navigate with information. Since every facility has different policies, some completely ban access to computer usage, while the ones that do provide it typically have filters blocking various websites and other research databases most other patron demographics can normally access. The biggest challenge though is that the general principles that librarians champion (such as patron privacy and the freedom to read) inherently conflict with the model of the current carceral system (Conrad, 2016; Finlay, 2024). Since libraries depend on the Department of Corrections and the facility to allow them to operate on their premises, there is little or no room to negotiate the values those in the profession try to defend for all other patron demographics. It is under this model that library services must adapt and be flexible enough to transform based on the rules established by the facilities. These challenges exist for any form of library operating in this space but are particularly challenging in the academic sphere when promoting scholarly inquiry among these students.

These barriers place most incarcerated individuals in a state of information poverty. Information poverty can be caused either by a direct lack of information or by lack of access to media that disseminate that information (such as books or the internet). As a result, this population often requires the assistance of an information professional just to provide them with the necessary support. A study conducted by Drabinski and Rabina (2015) found that 56% of the questions received in the mail by the New York Public Library for their Correctional Services program were questions related to aspects of facility life and reentry that they could not answer. While the remaining 46% were answerable for the library, each of those questions required the librarian to pull information the patron could not otherwise access due to the limitations of their access to either print resources or the internet. Content restrictions play a huge role in the justification for limiting information access. In a study on prison bans on instructional materials, Wade (2021) found that books/information were some of the most restricted educational materials in another incarcerated higher education program. What is more concerning is that some of this content was barred despite being outside the restrictions of formal policies (particularly on topics related to race, gender, and prison justice). Windhauser (2020) notes that these restrictions can both hurt the quality of education when faculty cannot implement their usual course materials as well as have a negative impact on the students due to the heightened awareness of their situation. Combating information poverty while adhering to facility restrictions can be particularly problematic, especially with different states and facilities having different rules and expectations. Nevertheless, incarcerated students face a crisis of information that makes reference support services critical for librarians to offer this demographic.

Access to books outside the curriculum can also benefit this population's mental health. Finlay and Bates (2018) developed a framework to evaluate the impact a prison library collection should have on its community. They particularly highlighted the importance of its role in both well-being and social development. These supplemental collections to their curricular materials strengthen the academic experience for the student. Such collections can also develop positive literacy habits. Onyebuchi et al. (2020) found that after starting a library collection outside their educational curriculum, half of the students developed a love for reading while another 20% developed an interest to start reading. The social benefits can play a huge role in both the intellectual and mental well-being of this patron demographic. Likewise, while prisons do have library collections, the size and scope vary by prison. In the 1970s, the court case *Bounds v. Smith* led to the rise of prison libraries (particularly with requirements for access to legal information). The 1996 case *Lewis v. Casey*, however, limited the impact of *Bounds v. Smith*, which undermined the development of many prison libraries. As a result of this ruling, there are effectively no standards apart from guidelines set by a state's Department of Corrections to establish the development of these libraries (Lehmann, 2011). Furthermore, very few prison librarians are staffed by ALA-accredited librarians. That role is instead either filled by an employee at the facility or by one of the incarcerated individuals themselves (Klick, 2011). Thus, it is crucial that libraries (academic or public) supporting incarcerated populations do not simply rely on the collection offered by the correctional facility,

but instead curate one to meet the needs of this demographic.

Finally, how librarians discuss and perceive their work with incarcerated individuals is critical in developing a proper service philosophy to this demographic that will most accurately meet their needs. Traditionally, a lot of library literature conveys this kind of service work as a form of rehabilitation service. Although this seems ideal, it ends up stigmatizing this demographic as problematic and needing to be fixed, thereby establishing a power dynamic between the library and the population. This is where critical librarianship comes into play. Instead of viewing library services as a means to rehabilitate incarcerated individuals, they should ultimately cater to empower those who use them. Similarly, these library services should address many of the power dynamics established in the heavily surveyed and monitored lives of this demographic by giving them the autonomy to seek their own interests (Austin, 2022). When designing the Belmont library services for the Turney students, the librarians wanted to ensure that students had the opportunity to have their voices heard, whether by providing relevant reference services for their scholarly interests or building a collection catered to their needs based on feedback. Using critical librarianship with this population therefore designs services in a way that provides users autonomy to explore their own information interests while addressing larger inequalities found in the current carceral system.

THE FRONT END: CIRCULATION AND REFERENCE

As students of Belmont, the Turney students each received Primo accounts (Belmont integrated library system platform) where they could request and renew physical books. One unique challenge to this is that the Turney students do not have emails, nor could they 2-factor authenticate into their accounts. To address this issue, the systems and web specialist librarian at Belmont created a unique pathway for them that accommodated their login procedures into Canvas. A representative from THEI comes to the library weekly to both pick up any physical books heading there as well as return items from the Turney Center. The students are able to request physical books in the main library collection but are unable to access the ebooks due to the need for them to 2-factor authenticate. While this appears to be an issue at first glance, it actually benefits the library in multiple ways. First, to keep the Belmont degree programs operational, the librarians have to confirm the books they access comply with the guidelines from the Tennessee Department of Corrections. Otherwise, consistent violations would shut down the program entirely. The print book model provides a safety net where the librarians could ensure that the books they send them fit the criteria, which they could not otherwise guarantee with their ebooks. Furthermore, to permit access to these ebooks, the library allows the Turney students to request print copies of those ebooks through interlibrary loan. Interlibrary loan helps the library not only provide a means of double checking to ensure there is nothing out of compliance with the request, but also provides an equitable means of giving the students access to content that is otherwise blocked from them.

At the end of the fall semester, the library acquired EBSCO's Correctional Ed platform. This database operates as a solution to providing articles to incarcerated students, which otherwise would go through a much longer process if students wanted to physically request those materials. Each student was given a login and password that they could then use to request articles of their choosing. Those requests then go to the "approver" accounts (in this case, co-operated by the Belmont library and THEI) to inspect the articles to check that they adhere to all the guidelines presented by the Department of Corrections. Once approved, all students within the facility would then have perpetual access to the article. This database provided a helpful alternative to giving students some digital content they could access directly at the facility. One challenge, however, was that when the students received these logins, some of them were either not there at the announcement or had forgotten where to go to access the platform. This puts some students at a disadvantage if they remain unaware of the platform, especially since the library does not advertise it on its website. Nevertheless, Correctional Ed has allowed the library to expand access to both articles and digital resources.

Reference questions are often facilitated by the course instructor depending on the needs of the course. In the fall, many of the courses involved more technical skills, so there was not as much need to integrate the librarian into the course. By contrast, a spring course taught by the former university presi-

dent incorporated research at various components of the class. With the class centering around leadership, students were required to select a biography of a leader of their choice and write about how that figure demonstrated leadership in their life. This figure could range from a successful CEO to a political leader to a coach of a popular sports team, depending on the choice of the student. The students were encouraged to start looking in the catalog, but since they could not look up biographies that were outside the collection, a reference librarian was added to the course to support the students' interests. This librarian would first search the catalog for a series of biographies relevant to the student, then mark those books to be sent to the Turney Center. If the library did not own a biography for a particular figure but one existed, the librarian would either curate the book information so the student could request it through interlibrary loan or purchase the book and send it directly to the student. This model of reference allowed the library to interact with most of the students and support them in finding resources they otherwise could not find on their own.

One issue that arose was filtering communication to all the students equally. On Canvas, the discussion board was placed in an obscure portion of the course, so not everybody could find it easily. This discussion board was also the only point of contact the students had to truly interact with the library, so not using this channel resulted in massive problems. Likewise, some students attempted to use features that they could not fully utilize in an attempt to reach out about their topic, like the library's FAQ page. While librarians could see their questions, the lack of an email meant there was no way the library could respond to them directly. Printed notes were sent via the THEI runner to acknowledge receiving their questions. Communications about library circulation questions are even worse. If a class does not have a research component to it, then the librarian is not added to the Canvas page. The Turney students often have no way to express concerns they have about their Primo accounts, such as wanting to renew a book or an error in the return process. As with the reference questions, they would often turn to a futile method of reaching out, (such as the FAQ page), but then the library could not communicate anything back to the student. Furthermore, when the librarians sat down with one of the students to experience web access from their perspective, it turns out that the Tennessee Department of Corrections does not provide clear guidelines as to what online access looks like in any facility. All of the links the students could find were found by either hearsay or by testing out random URLs just to see what loads. Students were also at various levels when it came to navigating some of the library resources (some even had no idea how to operate the Correctional Ed database). Seeing these challenges the students faced in communicating with the library meant something had to change.

To address these communication issues, the librarians worked on a variety of solutions to ease the process for the students. What became clear during the visit was that Canvas appeared to be their best method for communicating with anyone at Belmont. Although the library had a minimal role on the platform for the Turney students besides being added to the occasional research course, this appeared to be the library's best shot at improving communications with these students. After much discussion, the university approved that the librarians could join the Turney writing group page (one that students have perpetual access to so long as they are Belmont students). Once added to the page, the librarians began streamlining communications on that Canvas course through discussion boards and other forms of instructional content such as videos and handouts. These resources strived to make clear to the students what they could access to meet their academic needs and interests. The use of multimodal resources also helped provide equitable learning opportunities to the students and put everyone on the same basis for the services provided by the library. With another research course planned for the summer, these modifications should hopefully resolve some of the major problems from the previous school year.

THE TURNEY COLLECTION: COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT, ASSESSMENT, AND CATALOGING

In addition to supporting their classes, Belmont also received funding to build a library collection for the students. This collection was specifically dedicated to the Turney students and would be housed at the facility. These books were also not limited to business topics but could be anything of interest. To ensure the collection best reflected the interest of the students, only a fourth of the funds allo-

cated were spent to purchase the first batch of books. Before those resources were sent over, the librarians created a paper survey where students could provide feedback both on the titles offered in the first batch as well as suggest titles or genres that they would like to see more of in the collection. After receiving the feedback, the library used the remaining funds to order titles related to the students' interests. Establishing this model for acquisitions allowed students to lead the discussion on what they wanted to see in the collection instead of letting the librarians prioritize their needs. The model was not entirely perfect (some of the first surveys were actually lost in transit back to the library), but they eventually figured out a way to overcome this situation. With the broader move to Canvas since the April visit, the librarians are considering whether an online version of this assessment may offer better communication. Nevertheless, as they plan to continue adding to this collection in future years, building this assessment model will help the librarians perpetually modify the collection to fit the cohort's contemporary interests.

The Belmont University Libraries use the ExLibris products Alma and Primo as their ILS and discovery tools. As an academic library, the Belmont Libraries use the Library of Congress Classification system. The normal cataloging workflow involves searching for records in OCLC, updating holdings in OCLC, importing the chosen record into Alma, adding a holdings record, and adding an item record. The physical processing portion of the workflow includes adding a barcode label, adding a call number label, writing the call number on the inside of the first page, and wrapping popular hardback books.

When cataloging books for the Turney Center, the librarians had to adjust the normal process for a few special considerations. The first issue faced was how to make cataloged items undiscoverable to ILL and Primo. This was quickly resolved by changing the normal cataloging workflow to not include updating holdings in OCLC and by suppressing the bibliographic record in Alma. Doing these two things ensured that items located at the Turney Center were not visible to external requesters.

Some of the books requested by the Turney Center were already part of the on-campus collection or were items that the library was interested in permanently adding to the main collection. It was crucial to establish a system to designate which of the cataloged books were permanently located at the Turney Center, and which were on loan to them and needed to be returned to the main library. The librarians devised a couple of indicators for clarity. In the item record, the librarians marked each loaned book as permanently located at Bunch Library with a temporary location of Turney Center. This made it easy for the library to search for outstanding loans and to separate them from items owned by the Turney Center. Additionally, the library used colored label protectors to visually differentiate loaned books from permanently owned books, ensuring easy identification for the students.

The most challenging issue faced when cataloging items was how to best integrate cataloged books into an uncataloged library. The Turney Center had an existing collection that was uncataloged, but had been put in alphabetical order by title. The student librarian developed a Microsoft Access database to create an internal catalog and store relevant metadata for their existing collection. This student expressed a desire to put the entire collection in order by Library of Congress classification call number but was unsure how to proceed with the uncataloged and unlabeled books.

The librarians considered a few options for how to proceed. They could separate the uncataloged books from those that had been labeled, although this was not ideal since students would have to check multiple places to find what they needed. Alternatively, they could use the data collected by the student to attempt to catalog the items remotely. Ultimately, the library went with the latter option. An issue that followed was the process of labeling books that the librarians were not able to physically access. The students did not have a label printer so the librarians considered bringing in sheets of labels, pre-printed with the appropriate call numbers, but if a label was attached in error or became damaged, there would be no way for the students to replace them on their own. This is an issue the librarians are still working to resolve, but the current plan is to donate a small Dymo laser printer so that the students can print and reprint labels. This will allow the students to use the call numbers the library gives them, match those call numbers up to the ISBN of each book, and put the books in order on their own. There may be hurdles in moving forward with this plan since the laser printer requires access to a computer, which students have limited access to, but this is the most promising solution to pursue at the moment.

Upon hearing about the Belmont library's work with the Turney Center, some faculty from the Business department began offering donations. The librarians gladly accepted the books and worked to catalog them quickly. As the quantity of donations began increasing, they realized the need for an evaluation procedure to assess the quality of donated items. The librarians wanted to avoid the implication that Belmont was sending them the library's discards or severely outdated or unhelpful resources. Additionally, the librarians were also mindful of their limited space to store physical books. To remedy this situation, the librarians drafted a policy for donations that would not only match the item condition considerations taken in the university library's current policy, but also comply with some guidelines set by the Tennessee Department of Corrections. In conjunction with other collection development plans, the librarians hope this donation policy will help the students receive content they are interested in instead of irrelevant resources thrown their way due to lack of interest by the donor.

CONCLUSION

One of the biggest takeaways from the experience was getting to know this community better during the visit to the facility in April. Upon their arrival, the librarians brought three boxes of books to add to the Turney collection. Once inside the main part of the facility, three of the students offered to carry the boxes all the way to the other side of the facility where the library is located. The students were eager to get the new materials brought in, and by the time the librarians left the facility, most of the books had been unboxed and claimed. Most of the time spent during this visit focused on the librarians conversing with the students directly, both about their studies as well as their personal lives. Many of them expressed gratitude not only for the library services, but also for the librarians taking the time to meet the students in person. One student shared that in their environment, positivity and hope are rare. It is easy for librarians to have a rehabilitative mindset when working in this field and make the students feel they rely on librarians for access to any kind of information. This mindset only creates a power dynamic between the librarians and the students and undermines the whole purpose of serving this community. An academic prison library does much more than educate; there is also a social component to the work. Knowing there is somebody there who values their opinion and interests is incredibly meaningful to these students, considering the lack of voice they receive in this system otherwise. Giving the students this space to communicate also empowers them as information users and encourages them to advocate and seek out library services through their own means. The Belmont librarians are certainly not perfect at this, but they hope that their services humanize the overall prison experience for the students and make their existence feel dignified.

This article explored how various library services were implemented for a prison education program. Due to the position this student demographic is in, providing equitable access to resources presents numerous challenges. Communication issues are the root of most of these issues, preventing the smoothness of these services in comparison to how they are handled with other patron demographics. Furthermore, balancing core library values of access, equity, and the freedom of information with compliance with guidelines from the Department of Corrections is a tricky path to follow. It also does not help that what solutions may work for one library may not work for another based on state and local guidelines maintained by the state's Department of Corrections and the facility respectively. Nevertheless, such difficulties can provide unique opportunities to find innovative solutions to meet this patron demographic's needs. The key in most of these situations relies on the importance of developing strong communication models with both the students as well as all stakeholders involved in their education. Developing these strong communication models will help create a more equitable and accessible information environment for incarcerated students across the nation.

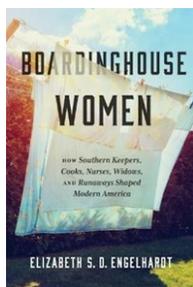
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REVIEWS

Boardinghouse Women: How Southern Keepers, Cooks, Nurses, Widows and Runaways



Elizabeth S. D. Engelhardt
Chapel Hill: University of North
Carolina Press, 2023
ISBN: 9781469676401
312 p. \$27.95 (Pbk)

The boardinghouse industry was integral to the definition of Southern culture and the development of its distinct cuisine, while at the same time providing a crucial safety net for those needing to earn additional income or find a safe space to stay. In her latest book, Elizabeth Engelhardt explores how boardinghouse women helped to shape culture not just in the South but across the United States, through business innovation, the acquisition of financial independence, and fostering artistic creativity.

Engelhardt takes us on a journey through the boardinghouses of the South, contrasting makeshift Mississippi logging camps against the genteel boardinghouses that catered to Virginia elites. Covering a time span from the 1700s through the Jim Crow years, she shows how the South's segregation policies resulted in the boardinghouse industry surviving longer in this region than in the rest of the country.

The book is well researched, and the author uses an impressive wealth of sources, including interviews obtained in the Federal Writers' Project of the 1930s. Her case studies cover women from different racial and socio-economic backgrounds across the South. Although mainly focusing on boardinghouse keepers, several of her case studies follow women who either grew up in boardinghouses or lived in them as guests, which gives the reader a well-rounded overview of the boarding house experience. Several of these women also forged successful careers, such as pioneering travel writer Anne Royall, entertainer Jackie "Moms" Mabley, and early cookery writers Malinda Russell and Mary Randolph.

Rather than organizing her work chronologically, the author divides her chapters into themes focusing on different aspects of the boardinghouse industry, with the first three chapters showcasing women as business innovators, caregivers, and pioneers of culinary development. The middle three chapters are devoted to the more hidden aspects of boardinghouses as spaces for political debate, freedom of expression, or as a safe refuge. Each chapter is presented using detailed case studies of two main women, but then gives additional examples of other boardinghouse keepers to support the theme. By focusing each chapter on a particular theme, Engelhardt allows the reader to easily compare the experiences of women from different eras.

Engelhardt provides a full history of each of the women in her examples and gives the reader a fascinating glimpse into the issues faced by women who had limited economic options while struggling to support their families.

Boardinghouses were one of the few industries open to women who were property-rich and cash-poor in the 19th and early 20th centuries. As a young widow, Alice Larkins found that running a boardinghouse gave her freedom, opportunities, respectability, and financial independence. Operating a boardinghouse also allowed women to use the skills that they already had in laundry, cooking, and caring for others. A common theme that runs through the book is that of women overcoming difficult odds, including widowhood, financial hardship, abuse, and discrimination. These women found futures for themselves, either as businesswomen or creatively through the freedom that the boardinghouse provided. The food that was created in such houses helped to shape Southern cuisine and hospitality.

Particularly interesting was the chapter on using boarding houses for political ends. Engelhardt recounts the life of entrepreneur and abolitionist Mary Ellen Pleasant, whose establishment played a role in the underground railroad. She contrasts this to the experiences of Mary Surratt, the first woman to be executed by the federal government, whose house was implicated in the assassination plot against President Lincoln. Boardinghouses offered these women access to political discussion and provided cover for their

political involvement.

Also enlightening is Engelhardt's focus on the boardinghouse as a safe space. She uses examples of travelers during the Jim Crow era who used Green Books to identify safe spaces or who used the anonymity of the boardinghouse to present themselves as a different race, gender, or class:

Some used boarding houses to leave their past behind, whether in terms of racial identity, gender or class; some found the freedom to love who they wanted or resist expectations they hated. Some found that boardinghouse tables were places of influence, politics, or culture not otherwise available to them. (p.13)

Engelhardt is willing to identify the gaps in her account. She emphasizes that although many boardinghouse women are absent from the historical record, even more notably absent are the scores of women (both employed and enslaved) who toiled in their establishments.

The title effectively demonstrates how Southern boardinghouses were important in establishing Southern cuisine and provided a place of refuge in a sometimes threatening society. The author emphasizes the legacy of boardinghouses in American culture in terms of written works, businesses, and in the spirit of today's pop-up restaurants, Airbnbs, and assisted living communities.

Academic libraries, in particular those with an interest in Southern history, women's history, and African American history, should consider including this title in their collections.

Boardinghouse Women would also be of interest to those studying the development of the Southern hospitality industry. Elizabeth Engelhardt is Kenan Eminent Professor of Southern Studies in the Department of American Studies at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Layla Farrar, University of North Georgia

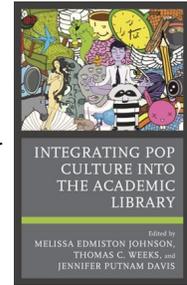
Integrating Pop Culture into the Academic Library

Melissa Edmiston Johnson, Thomas C. Weeks,
& Jennifer Putnam Davis, eds.
Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2022

ISBN: 9781538159408
309 p. \$132.00 (Hbk)

Can using popular culture materials in academic libraries across the United States make a difference in the student user experience at institutions of higher learning? In what specific ways have popular culture trends influenced library purchases in the 21st century? Throughout the pages of the book *Integrating Pop Culture into the Academic Library*, co-editors Melissa Edmiston Johnson, Thomas C. Weeks, and Jennifer Putnam Davis provide a picture of how academic library personnel can incorporate popular culture as a means of learning course material for many college students. As learners in the digital age, college students nowadays relate more easily to popular culture icons if they can see a connection to their daily lives. Ultimately, library personnel must face the reality of a different user population in the 21st century. As an example, the authors of one chapter indicate that using specific fictional newspaper materials from J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books and film adaptations to explain news misinformation or disinformation might be the best path forward. In these ways, the library course material is more "relatable" to the students. For their part, the book co-editors emphasize using the *Quibbler* and *The Daily Prophet* from the Harry Potter books to aid students in understanding news media more completely.

One very interesting aspect of the book is the case studies that show how specific colleges and university libraries are changing their outreach programs to consider the growing popularity of popular culture books, television, or classic movies (like *The Black Panther*). In one chapter, the authors mention communities of practice or common interest groups as a specific means to meet the needs of a changing library user population more completely. The authors recommend that a popular culture interest group consisting of interested faculty and students would showcase the impact of popular culture in the 21st century or spread the word about its growing emergence. Notably, once college students can engage in meaningful conversations about popular culture with their faculty, they begin to realize that shared



interest in popular culture can become a reality at their campus library. Specifically, effective popular culture outreach programs and bibliographic instruction classes with a popular culture component or theme can be developed on college campuses. The “library as space” concept is put into practice more often today on college campuses in order to account for the growing popularity of popular culture icons.

In this book, co-editor and contributor biographies are included at the end of the book for easy convenience. Also, examining the contributor biographies would lead the reader to conclude that all of the writers have a vested interest in the topic of popular culture use in academic libraries. Although no illustrations are included in this compilation, the chapter authors do a remarkable job of painting a picture of the full capabilities of using popular culture in higher education institutions. The book is divided into four parts as follows: foundations of popular culture in libraries (part one), using popular culture in library collections (part two), integrating popular culture into library instruction (part three), and popular culture programming in academic libraries (part four). Each chapter begins with a summary of the specific academic library/popular culture trend and how the specific college or university library is addressing the issue at their specific institution. In some cases, the authors of each chapter talk about actual experiments or surveys that they conducted with their patrons to gauge their interest in popular culture materials.

This book is intended to showcase the various means by which academic libraries at college campuses across the United States have incorporated elements of popular culture into their library collections, programming and outreach, and both one-shot and multi-session bibliographic instruction classes. Library administration and library staff can use growing popular culture trends to increase the user experience at the university library. By focusing on popular culture foundations, collections, instruction methods, and programming, the book gives readers a full picture of the potential benefits of popular culture materials in higher education. Because of its specific scope, *Integrating Pop Culture into the Academic Library* would be suitable for inclusion in any academic or local library with a focus on popular cultural trends in university libraries and college

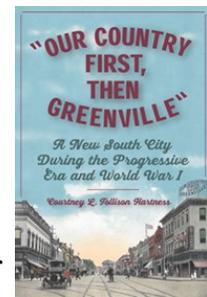
courses.

Since September 2022, Melissa Edmiston Johnson has been employed as Associate Professor & Director of Reese Library at Augusta University in Augusta, Georgia. Thomas C. Weeks is Reference & Instruction Librarian at Augusta University. Jennifer Putnam Davis is Scholarship & Data Librarian at Augusta University.

David W. Young, University of North Carolina at Pembroke

“Our Country First, then Greenville”: A New South City During the Progressive Era and World War I

Courtney L. Tollison Hartness
Columbia: University of South
Carolina Press, 2023
ISBN: 9781643364162
328 p. \$34.99 (Pbk)



The commemorations for the centenary anniversary of World War I, often called the “Great War,” are long over. One might suspect that the moment for books exploring the home front experience during that war has also passed, but Courtney L. Tollison Hartness’ book *“Our Country First, then Greenville”: A New South City During the Progressive Era and World War I* puts that assumption to rest.

This book could have been a simple local history of Greenville, South Carolina—one that only focused on the activities at Camp Sevier, which was a military training camp that prepared American soldiers to fight overseas. Instead, Tollison Hartness situates her study in the community development efforts of local leaders before, during, and after the war. These leaders were forward-looking and supported the construction of roads and highways, better public education, and improved sanitation and public health. Unlike many other municipal leaders in Southern cities, they championed Progressive Era reforms and sought partnerships with the federal government. Tollison Hartness notes that the city’s embrace of the federal government and the desire to place an American identity before a Southern identity was rare, especially because it occurred *prior* to America’s entry into World War I. As a telling example,

in 1916, the Chamber of Commerce raised funds to build a huge, electrified sign. The purpose of the sign was to demonstrate the city's patriotism with the bold and unambiguous slogan, "OUR COUNTRY FIRST, THEN GREENVILLE."

The subject of Southern Progressivism is a bit of a sticky wicket, but Tollison Hartness includes a masterful historiography of the topic through the lens of the lived experience of the residents of Greenville, many of whom viewed the siting of Camp Sevier opportunistically. Local businessmen were eager for the influx of thousands of soldiers and the dollars that would follow. White women hoped that their contributions to the war effort would translate into broader support for suffrage. The war also provided African Americans a narrow opening to improve their lot.

African Americans in Greenville demonstrated their patriotism through actions such as purchasing Liberty Bonds, assisting the Colored Auxiliary of the Red Cross, and supporting segregated Black soldiers. Local African American men enlisted in the military and served honorably. Such actions improved conditions for the Black community in Greenville, but such gains were often short-lived. There would be no fundamental reordering of society in the Piedmont following the war's end. Some African Americans, weary of discrimination, segregation, and race-based violence, became part of the Great Migration. They left to seek better pay, improved work conditions, and more freedom in Northern cities because, as Tollison Hartness states eloquently, they were "pushed by anguish and pulled by ambition" (p. 109).

White women who were already active in social clubs, charities, and Civil War remembrance endeavors redirected their energies toward supporting the soldiers and their accompanying family members. They did this as individuals and through organizations such as their local chapters of the Red Cross, Women's State Council on Defense, and the Young Women's Christian Association. The mass movement of men to training sites and then to fight overseas created a vacuum that women filled. Some opened their homes to boarders; others found employment outside of the home. But the political and economic gains they experienced did not last. After the war, men returned to the workplace and most women assumed their traditional roles. When the war end-

ed, there was little traction on the issue of suffrage because of fears that giving women the vote would lead to federal interference in elections and a weakening of white supremacy. As a telling indicator of how deeply held those fears were, South Carolina did not ratify the 19th Amendment until 1969.

Following the war's end, Greenville's population continued to surge. Some of the men that trained at Camp Sevier decided to return to Greenville and establish roots there. Municipal services increased and infrastructure development projects continued. The city and surrounding area continued to reap the economic impact of Camp Sevier. The shadow of the war remained into the 1930s with soldier reunions and memorials to fallen servicemen. The shadow of the Civil War also remained because these ceremonies honored Confederate war veterans and glommed on the language of the "Lost Cause" in their tributes to the war dead. Tollison Hartness details other developments during the postwar years, including the influenza pandemic of 1919.

Throughout the book, she illustrates how the people of Greenville embraced the federal government, economic growth, and a truly American identity—except when doing so posed a threat to the existing social order. *"Our Country First, then Greenville"* is an important book because it helps answer the riddle of Southern Progressivism, which is: When was a Southern Progressive not progressive? The answer: Whenever the color line was at stake.

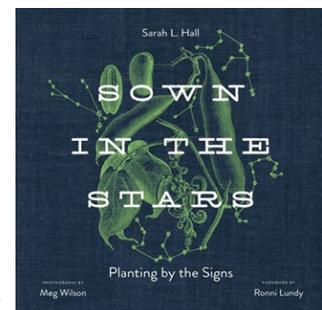
This book is highly recommended for academic libraries and public libraries with South Carolina and Piedmont region history collections.

Kristine Stilwell, University of North Georgia

Sown in the Stars: Planting by the Signs

Sarah L. Hall
Lexington: University
Press of Kentucky,
2023
ISBN: 9780813197043
150 p. \$34.95 (Hbk)

Set in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, Berea Col-



lege is a small private liberal arts college in Kentucky where the author teaches plant science in the Department of Agricultural and Natural Resources. During her sabbatical in 2018-2019, Dr. Sarah Hall created a project that combined her interests in Appalachian plants and people with the agricultural practice of planting by the signs, and in the process, she published this book.

Although there are numerous how-to guides available on this topic, Dr. Hall found few personal stories or background information on planting by the signs. This book fills that gap. For her project, Dr. Hall interviewed and collected stories from 22 participants, and in her dedication, she recognized the “countless folks in Kentucky and beyond who are keeping this rich tradition alive and well.” She found interviewees by word of mouth via her colleagues at Berea and by reaching out to Growth Appalachia, a Berea initiative, and to those at the Pine Mountain and Hindman Settlement Schools.

Although not a tome, the book’s five main chapters provide a brief but comprehensive overview of the world of growing plants based on the phases of the moon and signs of the zodiac and includes a chapter on other activities such as farmwork, the weather, and fishing. Starting off with the aptly named chapter “The Basics,” Dr. Hall neatly summarizes the similarities and differences between astrology and astronomy. Both “seek to make sense of the stars, the planets, the sun, and the moon...and use what is known about the present to predict the future” (p. 11). In the case of astrology, these celestial bodies could also be used to predict human behavior – and it was the Babylonians who first did this in the second millennium B.C.E. Astronomy came about later in the first millennium B.C.E. with the Sumerians of Mesopotamia.

From these two disciplines came the practice of planting by the signs. It made use of the “almanac man” or “zodiac man,” diagrams where the constellations of the zodiac were assigned to specific parts of the body. It also relied on the moon cycles (i.e., waxing and waning of the moon) and its influence and position relative to the earth. For example, some practitioners believed if they planted beans in the Feet sign (Pisces), the beans would grow at the “feet” of the plant. However, if they planted beans in the Head sign (Aries), the beans would sprout right on top.

Following “The Basics,” Dr. Hall introduces readers to her interviewees, many of whom were taught the signs by their parents, neighbors, or friends. For Gary and Goldie Easton of Gallatin County and Clyde Charles of Lee County, the tradition was passed on from their parents. Today, the Eastons also use *The Old Farmer’s Almanac* and as well as a weekly column, “Planting by the Signs” (*Gallatin County News*), written by a fellow interviewee, Phil Case of Franklin County. Mr. Charles’ mother, on the other hand, used the *Farmer’s Almanac*, and their family grew a little of everything, from corn and sorghum to beans, blackberries, and potatoes—lots of sweet and Irish potatoes. Mr. Church himself still grows those potatoes today, making sure to plant them during the first quarter of the moon and digging them up in the waning of the moon.

Jane Post’s interest in the signs began with her first farming attempts in her family’s Pennsylvania garden when she was 15 and discovered the *Foxfire* books (1972-2004). These books contained stories of Appalachian customs and crafts and centered the Appalachian philosophy of simple living. Later, she attended Berea College and met some old-timers who practiced the signs. Meanwhile, Susanna Lein’s journey started when she moved from Iowa to Guatemala and learned about the moon signs from her Mayan neighbors. She brought those lessons, among others, with her when she moved to Kentucky. There she practiced permaculture on her subsistence and market farm, Salamander Springs Farm, and followed the *Stella Natura* biodynamic calendar. This calendar was based on the *Maria Thun Biodynamic Almanac* whereby constellations were aligned with different plant parts—that is, the root, leaf, flower, or fruit. Other almanacs and calendars that are mentioned include *Baer’s Agricultural Almanac & Gardener’s Guide*, *Llewellyn’s Moon Sign Book*, *Ramon’s Brownie Calendar*, and *The Weather Vane Calendar*.

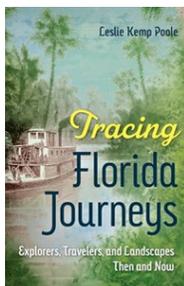
Near the close of her book, Dr. Hall provides this advice: be patient, because there are a lot of variables—and therefore planning—that go into planting by the signs. Stick with one calendar, because different calendars may differ by one to two days depending on the given zodiac signs. Lastly, she recommends reading *Sown in the Stars*, getting your own calendar and trying it out for yourself. For her own endeavors for her book,

she received the 2023 Henry Clay Public Service Award, named after the Kentucky statesman Henry Clay (1777-1852).

Sown in the Stars fills a gap in the current literature and would comfortably fit, like an old beloved friend, in any academic or public library with a collection on local agricultural and farming practices. The book provides a reminder that those “old ways” have not been forgotten. For those interested in planting by the signs, Dr. Hall provides a shortlist of recommended books. For those interested in her interviews, the recordings are archived in Berea’s Special Collections & Archives under *Planting by the Signs in Kentucky, Oral History Collection, 2018-2019*.

Linh Uong, University of North Georgia

Tracing Florida Journeys: Explorers, Travelers, and Landscapes Then and Now



Leslie Kemp Poole
Gainesville: University Press of
Florida, 2024
ISBN: 9780813080475
266 p. \$28.00 (Pbk)

Tracing Florida Journeys ties together the past and the present using carefully researched historical documentation, interviews with experts and advocates across the state, and the author’s own personal narrative, giving readers a colorful and expansive understanding of the history of Florida. It is part travel agent and part in-depth historical marker—pointing to the necessity for an ongoing discussion about the impact our collective past, present, and future have on the places we work, call home, and long to travel to in search of curiosity and exploration.

Presented in chronological order, Leslie Kemp Poole’s readers go on a journey beginning with Hernando de Soto (1539-1540) and ending with Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings (1931). Poole portrays nine notable individuals and outlines two formative periods in Florida history—a period dubbed “Travelers in the Panhandle” (1765-1891) and the famed 1892 Ingraham Everglades Expedition. Poole writes about people and places in her engaging work and weaves together a rich tapestry of Florida’s history. A historian with a rich back-

ground in environmental history, it is no surprise that Leslie Kemp Poole frequently pushes the reader to contemplate the modern-day environmental effects these people and events have had on the state, whether on land use, water resources, or tourism, as a few important examples.

Florida’s history, beginning well before official statehood in 1845, is complicated and inextricably linked to the Indigenous people living in the territory as the early explorers from Spain and other European nations arrived. Poole offers her readers a snapshot of this complexity and of how the experiences and decisions of those individuals and nations set the stage for how Florida would evolve as a place to be conquered and settled by countless outsiders and seen by those outside the region as a fantastical place that seemed almost mythical. This conflict develops mainly through her discussions and examples of travel writers who described Florida in these terms. This myth-making ultimately caused great confusion when visitors found the climate and environment inhospitable due to its unbearable heat and unwelcoming critters.

Poole’s work is especially compelling because she tells a person’s story and gives the reader crucial historical context for the period in which that person lived, making essential connections between the individual and what was happening around them. In the chapter covering Zora Neale Hurston and her work collecting the underrepresented stories of the Black community living and working in Florida, the reader also gets an informative description of the history of forestry and mill towns in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Poole understands that it is insufficient to outline quotes from Hurston’s reflections or those she interviewed. However, providing background information on the companies they worked for and their role in Florida’s economic and environmental history carefully shows us the interconnectedness of humanity.

Tracing Florida Journeys is an excellent example of natural and public history. Poole makes a solid argument for understanding the history of a place and why it must matter to residents, visitors, investors, and government officials alike. She routinely engages with the reader in such a way as to encourage a continual commitment to prioritizing the resources that help to sustain a way of life that values both the people and

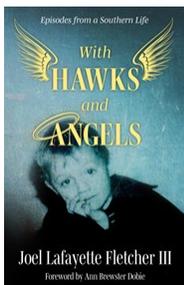
the land.

Tracing Florida Journeys is a co-publication with Florida Humanities and the University Press of Florida. Published in 2024, Poole's book was made possible by funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Leslie Kemp Poole is an Associate Professor of Environmental Studies at Rollins College in Winter Park, FL. With a PhD in History from the University of Florida and as a fourth-generation Floridian, she provides a personal and highly approachable reader for both the academic and general reader interested in the storied and varied history of our nation's 27th state. Before working in higher education, she was an award-winning journalist for several newspapers, including the Orlando Sentinel.

This book is highly recommended for academic and public libraries, especially those with Florida and Southern History collections. Those planning a vacation or day trip centered on historical locations will find it especially enjoyable. Each chapter ends with detailed historical site information covered in the respective section. Additionally, the book includes numerous photographs and historical images that complement the rich descriptions provided by Poole.

Austina McFarland Jordan, University of North Georgia.

With Hawks and Angels: Episodes from a Southern Life



Joel Lafayette Fletcher, III
Jackson: University of Mississippi
Press, 2023
ISBN: 9781496844699
256 p. \$30.00 (Hbk)

Joel Lafayette Fletcher III's book *With Hawks and Angels: Episodes from a Southern Life* is a memoir of a privileged life. Privilege is the term he employs to denote the opportunities that come with status and financial security. In many ways, Fletcher did lead a privileged life. He attended a prestigious private university, traveled abroad, and met interesting and famous people. Unlike others with few financial resources, Fletcher not only had the desire to flee the discrimination he encountered, but he also had the financial means

to do so.

Fletcher was born in Lafayette, LA, and his family had power and influence in that community. Fletcher's father, Joel Lafayette Fletcher Jr., served as the president of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette from 1941 to 1966. Fletcher remembers that at the age of five:

As a result of the [Huey] Long scandals, my father became president of the college and we moved into the imposing new mansion that my father's predecessor had finagled for himself. We not only had a cook to prepare our meals, but a maid to do the cleaning, and a male servant who came early in the morning to perform all other tasks. (pp. 211-212)

It was customary for his family to entertain distinguished guests who spoke at the University. Such guests included Archduke Otto von Habsburg (the last crown prince of Austria-Hungary). While there, Joel remembers von Habsburg patting him on the head, then sitting down to play *The Blue Danube* and *Tales from the Vienna Woods* on their piano. Other visiting dignitaries to the family home included a former president of France, Vincent Auriol, and celebrated soprano Lily Pons. These experiences set Fletcher apart from his school classmates and underscored his social difference.

Fletcher suspected that he was a homosexual during his adolescence, and that, too, accentuated his differences. He attended college at Tulane University in New Orleans, and he lived a closeted life there. He dated girls but describes his college years as "still trying to become what I was not" (p. 91). Upon graduation, and at the urging of his father, he received a commission as an ensign in the US Navy. He was assigned to an aircraft carrier based in San Francisco. Fletcher described San Francisco as "then as now a city of irresistible gay temptations" (p. 91).

After fulfilling his terms of service and being honorably discharged from the U.S. Navy, Fletcher applied to and was accepted into the graduate program at Stanford University. While at Stanford, he began to explore the possibilities of expatriate life. He was able to save money (largely because during his second year at Stanford, he lived rent free in a cottage on his parents' property) to plan a trip to Europe for a few months.

Fletcher was tired of the homophobia in the United States, and although he wasn't exactly closeted at this time, he also was not living what is now called an authentic life. Once he made the journey to Europe, Fletcher stayed there for 12 years. In Europe, he was able to live his life as an openly gay man. Had Fletcher stayed in the American South during the 1970s and 1980s, such an open lifestyle was almost inconceivable and potentially dangerous. By moving abroad, he was also escaping his family's opprobrium and his father's rejection.

During the course of his travels, Fletcher fell in love with Italy and especially Florence. He set up house in that city and began teaching English classes at the Instituto Americano. The same year Fletcher began teaching at the institute, a smaller but competitive language school closed its doors. Fletcher, along with a friend, bought the rival language school. This marked the beginning of Fletcher's transition to a full-fledged expatriate. While he was in Europe, he met famous artists, authors, and local dignitaries, such as Count Francesco Guicciardini, war correspondent Therese Bonney, photographer Andre Ostier, and painter Mary Guggenheim.

Three years after his father's death, Fletcher decided to return to Louisiana. This is something that he could not and would not do while his father was alive. Despite his father's rejection, he was willed the family's cottage in Stanford, and he resided there with a partner.

Fletcher tells his life's story in vignettes or snapshots, which makes the book an easy read. Less easy to read are his accounts of the discrimination and pain he experienced while trying to please others and failing miserably. His freedom finally came through "hawks" and "angels." According to his life partner John Copenhavers, the hawk symbolizes good fortune. For Fletcher, the angels represent the guardians and protectors. Fletcher noted that "we did have years of financial success, good times, and made great friends while hawks and angels perhaps were watching over us" (p. 4).

This memoir is recommended for those who might be interested in Fletcher's descriptions of Louisiana small town life in French Acadian southwest Louisiana and the Louisiana piney woods, as well as the vibrant city life of New Orleans during the 1960s. His encounters with artists, politicians, the famous, and near famous at home and in Europe will appeal to other readers. Finally,

this book may also be for the readers who are seeking something better and longing to live authentic lives on their own terms.

This book is recommended for public libraries.

Chris Andrews, University of North Georgia

If you are interested in becoming a book reviewer for the *SELn* email Teresa Nesbitt, teresa.nesbitt@ung.edu, for more information.

SELA

SOUTHEASTERN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

NEWS

2024 SELA Conference: Recharge in Rocket City July 14-16, 2024



Left to right: Sarah Simms, Laura Slavin, Crystal Gates, Kristin Rogers, & Becky Bickford

SELA OFFICER INSTALLATION



Left to right: Laura Slavin, Crystal Gates, & Melissa Dennis



Kristin Rogers & Melissa Dennis



Becky Bickford, Crystal Gates, & Melissa Dennis



Sarah Simms & Melissa Dennis

Photos by Robin Campbell

SELA AWARD WINNERS

Ginny Frankenthaler Memorial Scholarship recipients:

- George Farris (Itawamba Community College)

Hal Mendelsohn Award:

- Laura Slavin (University of Alabama-Huntsville)

Honorary SELA Memberships were awarded to:

- Michael Seigler
- Dwain Gordon
- Dr. Vicki Gregory
- Sandra McAninch
- Dr. Nan Carmack



Camille McCutcheon & Michael Seigler

Mary Utopia Rothrock Award:

- Dr. Nan Carmack (Library of Virginia)



Dr. Nan Carmack & Gordon Baker

Outstanding Southeastern Author Awards:

- Fiction – Mary Kay Andrews for *The Home-wreckers*
- Fiction – Ron Rash for *The Caretakers*
- Nonfiction – Evan Dalton Smith for *Looking for Andy Griffith*

New Voices Award:

- Caroline Fleming & Ryan Yoakum (Belmont University)



Caroline Fleming, Ryan Yoakum & Neil Foulger

Outstanding Southeastern Library Program Awards:

- University of Mississippi Libraries for School Library Symposium



Gordon Baker & Melissa Dennis

- Honorable Mention: North Little Rock Public Library for Prom Shop



Gordon Baker & Crystal Gates

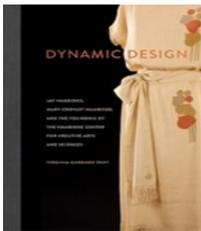
Photos by Robin Campbell

2024 Southern Books Competition:

72nd Anniversary

Awards for Book Design

Excellence in Cover Design



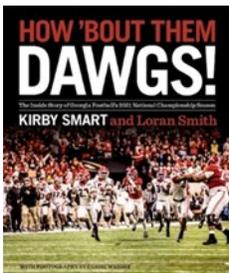
Dynamic Design: Jay Hambidge, Mary Crovatt Hambidge, and the Founding of the Hambidge Center for Creative Arts and Sciences

By Virginia Gardner Troy

Published by The University of Georgia Press, 2023

The cover of *Dynamic Design* perfectly represents the artistic content within this beautiful tribute to the lives and work of both Jam Hambidge, a visual artist and “dynamic symmetry” theorist, and Mary Crovatt Hambidge, a weaving and textiles artist. Quarter bound in cloth with paper covered boards, the photograph of one of Mary’s textile masterpieces featured on the cover is complemented textually by the cloth on the spine. Additionally, the font colors of the title, subtitle, and author names pull from the color palette of the dress, making for a visually appealing introduction to the beautiful artwork exhibited inside.

Excellence in Page Design



How ‘Bout Them DAWGS!

By Kirby Smart and Loran Smith

Published by The University of Georgia Press, 2023

This book incorporates exciting and thoughtful page design while organizing a wealth of information, which requires multiple text elements such as scores, roster charts, and other statistics. The use of their team colors works brilliantly to create page designs and typography that stand out and make sense of the information. The photography of Cassie Wright is equally important to this book. Over one hundred photographs set the reader on the field, providing an intimate portrait of the players, the coaches, and the game. The embossed book jacket is also an attractive design detail. Smart, Smith, and Wright have succeeded in their collaboration to create an exclusive look in Georgia’s 2021 Football National Championship.

Excellence in Original Artwork



An Unflinching Look: Elegy for Wetlands

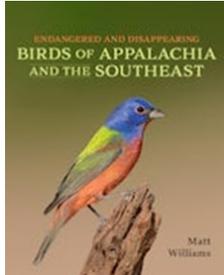
By Benjamin Dimmitt

Published by The University of Georgia Press, 2023

Dimmitt has captured the true beauty of these vast ecosystems and how they are rapidly changing due to climate change. His haunting photographs show diminishing wetlands and vast changes over time that show the erosion of the land and space that

is the home of the beautiful Gulf Coasts of Florida. His works shed a powerful light on how much these lands have changed over time and continue to do so.

Excellence Overall



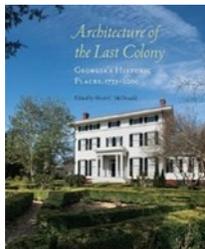
Endangered and Disappearing Birds of Appalachia and the Southeast

B Matt Williams

Published by The University Press of Kentucky, 2024

Matt Williams' excellent bird conservation work is matched superbly by beautiful photography, design, and ease of readability. Every bird description is clearly marked with sections on species account, identification, vocalization, nesting, and species conservation data. Included with each description is a color-coded map of the bird's range, occurrence, and seasonal migration. The maps cover the top half of a page, reflecting the bottom half-page photograph of the bird just opposite. Beautiful full-page and double spread photographs of birds are also included and feature significant moments captured by the photographer, such as bird courtship in flight. The book is both coffee table and exhibit worthy, as well as an important contribution to bird conservation.

Excellence in Historical Significance



Architecture of the Last Colony: Georgia's Historic Places, 1733-2000.

Edited by Mark C. McDonald

Published by The University of Georgia Press, 2023

Mark McDonald captures the true essence of the history of Georgia by exhibiting some of Georgia's finest examples of architecture that bring the past to life. The beautiful colors and explanations of each architecture are a snapshot into the past and can be a lesson in past building and style practices. This book also focuses on new style patterns of modern architecture that are just as bold and beautiful as more seasoned exhibits within this collection. The colors and shades literally leap off the page and transform you to visually appealing southern elegance in architecture.

Excellence in Photography



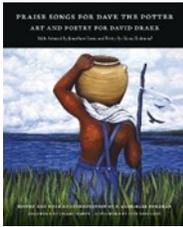
Shaker Made

By Carol Peachee

Published by The University Press of Kentucky, 2024

The Shakers' sturdy simplicity used in memorializing their devotion to God, is made evident through Carol Peachee's book. Her brilliant decision to use black and white photography calls further attention to the fine details of light, line, and form, representative of the Pleasant Hill Shakers' craftsmanship. This visually stunning tribute succeeds in creating a full composite, from craftsmanship and art to landscape and buildings. Peachee perfectly captures a living history of the Pleasant Hill Shakers, from mundane to majestic with her unique composition and angles.

Excellence in Typography



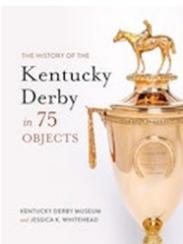
Praise Songs for Dave the Potter: Art and Poetry for David Drake

Edited by P. Gabrielle Foreman

Published by The University of Georgia Press, 2023

This book shares the brilliance of David Drake and how his pottery transcended history and time. His words jump off the pages as they are visual representation of the words he so eloquently wrote in his artwork. The book and how it is laid out shows the unique style in which he wrote on his artifacts. This book allows the reader to see the soul of David Drake with its vibrant artwork and photography which makes each section on the page come alive.

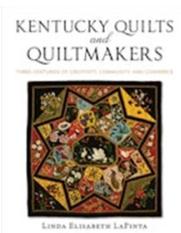
Honorable Mention



The History of the Kentucky Derby in 75 Objects

By Kentucky Derby Museum and Jessica K. Whitehead

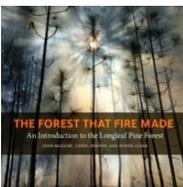
Published by The University Press of Kentucky, 2024



Kentucky Quilts and Quiltmakers: Three Centuries of Creativity, Community, and Commerce

By Linda LaPinta

Published by The University Press of Kentucky, 2023



The Forest That Fire Made

By John McGuire, Carol Denhof, and Byron Levan

Published by The University Georgia Press, 2024

The Southern Books Competition

The Southeastern Library Association (SELA) started the competition in 1952 and continues it today. Trade publishers, university presses, specialty publishers, and private presses—located in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Puerto Rico—are eligible to enter the competition.

The competition represents the Association's commitment to the book as a vital part of library service. Awards are made based on design, typography, and quality of production. Judges are knowledgeable book people associated with book design, printing, bookselling, publishing, and librarianship.

After award-winning books for the biennium are exhibited at the conference of the Association,

they are available for viewing at the permanent archive at the Valdosta State University Archives and Special Collections, Odum Library, 1500 N. Patterson Street, Valdosta, GA 31698. For information, contact: Douglas R. Carlson, Program Coordinator, drcarlso@valdosta.edu.

The 2024 Competition Judges

Peggy Balch has her MLIS from the University of Alabama and MA in history from the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). She is the Curator of the Reynolds-Finley Historical Library (RFHL), a part of UAB Libraries. Her responsibilities include the management, preservation, exhibition, interpretation, and development of the RFHL, a collection of rare books and manuscripts pertaining to the history of medicine, science, and health care dating from the 14th century through the mid-20th century. She regularly utilizes the collection for instruction and research support to students and scholars, often drawing upon the material culture and history of the book to enhance educational encounters with rare scientific texts in a variety of ancient and modern languages.

Christie Halloran has worked for UAB Libraries in Birmingham, AL for over 15 years, where she is part of the Interlibrary Loan Department. She previously held library positions at The University of South Alabama and Spring Hill College, both in Mobile, AL. Christie holds a Bachelor of Science in Art Education with a minor in painting, from the University of Alabama, where she taught for the University of Alabama's Youth Art Program. She also taught art in the public school system of Charleston, SC after graduating college. Christie is a freelance artist who enjoys art projects of all types. In her spare time, she loves attending art shows, concerts, and watching documentaries.

Sylvia McAphee is the Assistant Professor and Metadata Librarian for Continuing Resources at the University of Alabama at Birmingham's UAB Libraries. She has worked in libraries for over 25 years. She received her M.L.I.S. from the University of Alabama. She works in the Resource Acquisitions & Metadata Services Department where she catalogs print, equipment, special collection items, and special projects. She is the proud aunt to a niece and two nephews.

SELA CONFERENCE KEYNOTE: ASHLEY M. JONES

Ashley M. Jones is the Poet Laureate of Alabama and served as the Keynote speaker for the 2024 SELA Conference. Below is a copy of the keynote given. During the keynote, several of her poems were read, the first poem is reprinted in its entirety, the remaining poems read during the keynote only include the title. Please visit Ashley M. Jones' [website](#), for more information about her work including the poems in the keynote.

Good morning, and thanks so much for having me at the 2024 South Eastern Library Association Conference. Whenever I'm asked to speak at any event celebrating librarians, I jump at the chance because libraries are so important, not just in these times where the work of librarians is under attack, but always, because we were all helped at some point along the way because of a library.

Libraries shaped my childhood. I remember, even before I went to school, going with my parents to my local library to check out books—my mom had taught me to read at an early age, and books were the most wonderful portal to adventure and fun. I would load up by the armful, devouring the books as quickly as I could once I got them home. Once I started school, I kept that very same routine with my school's library—stocking up on as many books as I could each week when we visited the library. Yes, there were Accelerated Reading points to be won, but I truly loved to go to all the different places books could lead me. And, as a die-hard Reading Rainbow fan, I knew that reading was much more than just collecting points or earning pizza vouchers. It was a way of life, and it was a portal to knowledge and understanding. I read about magical lands, about families, about emotions. I read about history and friendships. I read chapter books and picture books—anything I could get my hands on, I read.

That love of reading led me to my life's passion—writing poetry. I was seven years old when I discovered I was born to be a poet. I had been in a racial existential crisis since Kindergarten, when I had my first brush with racism. That event tumbled me into the depths of low self esteem, and into a true questioning of how I was supposed to deal with the hatred that exists in this world—how could I be joyful about my culture when people made me feel so bad about it? How could I feel comfortable when I worried about what else people might do just because they couldn't find my humanity because of racial prejudice? When I found, on one of our school library visits, the book *Honey I Love and other love poems* by Eloise Greenfield, I was changed forever. This book showed me that there was a full and worthy joy in being Black—that we were linked to freedom fighters like Harriet Tubman, and that any racism or discrimination we faced was entirely the problem of the aggressor. I was enough, and joyfully so, just as I was. When I recited the poem “Harriet Tubman” from that book in 2nd grade, I knew, that day, that poetry was what I wanted to do—it made me feel alive, proud, and totally confident. I feel that way to this day. I'm glad that book was available to checkout that day, because I don't know where I'd be without that pivotal experience.

Loving libraries and reading also led me to my passion for truth-seeking, always. Learning about my culture and about Black writers and Black history was, unfortunately, mostly left up to my own self study, as I didn't often find myself represented on syllabi or in class lessons, and that was true all the way through my educational journey. I'll be starting my PhD studies this fall, and I still have not had a Black writing teacher. I had a couple of Black literature teachers, but the vast majority of my education in Black poetry and Black literature has been done on my own, going to libraries and checking out books that could lead me to my people. In fact, I was re-invigorated to write about my culture and heritage as an undergraduate when I spent hours in the University library reading book after book of Black poets' work. Libraries bridge the gap—where our traditional education might not cover everything we truly need, libraries are full of so much knowledge that can be the difference between cultural awareness, historical knowledge, and empathy and a life of blind ignorance.

Now that I'm serving a term as the first person of color and youngest person to be named Poet

Laureate of Alabama in the state's history, I'm accurately aware of the important role libraries and librarians play in our society. At every event I've done with librarians or at libraries, it is clear that librarians are the great protectors of our cultural history and our earnest and authentic pursuit of knowledge. I see the joy of library patrons as they come to programs, and I hear them sharing grateful words with the librarians who plan events and rally around books and authors. I see how comfortable people are in the arms of a library. Until recently, the political control of educational systems didn't touch the sanctuary of the library. Until recently, people from all walks of life could feel welcomed and safe in the stacks of the library. It is vital that we fight to make sure libraries remain a protected space. When people study this time period centuries in the future, will they learn the truth, or will the libraries be censored into some sanitized version of reality?

I consider it a part of my artistic practice to perform that same work—to make space for knowledge, empathy, and the truth. Like the shelves of the libraries of my youth, my poems seek to inform and invite readers to an empathy-making look into the human condition. I'd love to read a few poems of mine which I think do that work:

First, I'll read a poem which deals with history—I truly believe looking honestly at our history through poetry is a great way to sit with the human experience instead of just the black and white photos, the controlled or politicized narratives, or even the fears of those who wish that history to remain buried. This is a poem about Ann Williams, which I wrote as the script for an animated musical webseries called "The History of White People in America" which is distributed online by PBS. This episode premieres in October. Ann Williams was enslaved in Maryland, and she was told, because the TransAtlantic Slave Trade was outlawed, that she, like many other enslaved people in the northeast, would be sold south.

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN GOT WINGS

"I got wings, you got wings, all of God's children got wings! When I get to Heaven gonna put on my wings; I'm gonna fly all over God's Heaven! Heaven, Heaven. Everybody talkin' 'bout Heaven ain't goin' there, Heaven, Heaven; gonna fly all over God's Heaven!"

-lyrics from the Negro Spiritual

"They brought me away with two of my children, and would'nt let me see my husband—they did'nt sell my husband, and I did'nt want to go;—I was so confus'd and 'istratcted, that I did'nt know hardly what I was about—but I did'nt want to go, and I jumped out of the window; —but I am sorry now that I did it; —they have carried my children off with 'em to Carolina."

-Ann Williams, who jumped out of a third story tavern window to protest being sold away from her children and into the Deep South, 1815

when I was born, God gave me wings—
feathers fit to fly—
the wide breadth of the open sky—

when I was born, God said you are and I was.
this place called maryland can't own my flesh.
this place called america can't own my blood.
no master over my love or my womb—no master

no man making devil's deals
no mistress holding her skin above mine
no five flat dollars enough to sell me.

they say I'm going south—
 they can't take us from Africa anymore
 so they'll just take us from here:
 can the capitol's shadow hide this sin?

in the south, the sun is mad just like we are—
 it burns the whole land
 to spite the men who make us work it.
 it reminds us that something in this world can be warm.

my children are traded for vulgar currency.
 and I remember God said you are made of wings,
 and then I remember the sky, its gift,
 those clouds which they cannot hold, and my soul—

I remember that God does not know their names.
 no slavemaster will see the pearly gates.
 and the window, it says, you are.
 it says I got wings. feathers fit to fly.
 when I get to Heaven—there'll be no bones to break,
 no families unglued by the spit of satan—
 I'm gonna fly all over God's Heaven.
 I'm gonna fly.

—

"All God's Children Got Wings" was commissioned by and appears in Room 608's animated web series, "The History of White People In America"

Next, a poem about two great leaders who have impacted Alabama forever. John Lewis, who was born in Pike County, AL, and Bryan Stevenson, who currently works in Montgomery, Alabama. Lewis was a civil rights pioneer, giving his very blood for voting rights on Edmund Pettus Bridge on Bloody Sunday. Bryan Stevenson remembers that history with care and an incredible commitment to truth at the Legacy Sites in Montgomery and through his work to fight carceral injustice with the Equal Justice Initiative.

FREEDOM SERMON—ALABAMA, USA (title of poem read during keynote)

This is a poem about one of my patron saints, Harriet Tubman. It is one of five pieces I wrote which became the orchestral poetic composition in collaboration with Dr. Rebekah Griffin Greene, *A Portrait of Harriet*, which I've performed once in Birmingham with the Alabama School of Fine Arts Orchestra, and I'll perform in September in Fresno, CA with an orchestra. This poem re-sees the injury Harriet Tubman sustained which she said made way for her visions from God. Those visions showed her how to escape to freedom time and time again.

V. HOLYHEADHARRIET (title of poem read during keynote)

Birmingham Fire and Rescue Haiku, 1963 (title of poem read during keynote)

This poem is set in Kelly Ingram Park in Birmingham, AL at the Children's March in 1963, which was a turning point in the Birmingham Civil Rights Movement. This park is a part of our National Civil Rights Monument here in Birmingham. During the Children's March, Commissioner of Safety Bull Conner met the peaceful child marchers with fire hoses and police dogs. This poem is in their voice.

It is vital that we do our own research to find the truth. And it can be uncomfortable. It is necessary for our growth, and if we truly love this country we must interrogate its past to make hope for the future. This poem, like all my poems, is researched and desires to see reality behind the fables and tall tales we try to hide behind. It tells the story of America.

MANIFEST DESTINY (title of poem read during keynote)

Two poems left. This is one I used to call my greatest hit because I read it everywhere, even on Good Morning America. Again, the books will lead us to the truth. This poem talks about the work we all must do, not one region in America. It starts with a quote from a book by Dr. King:

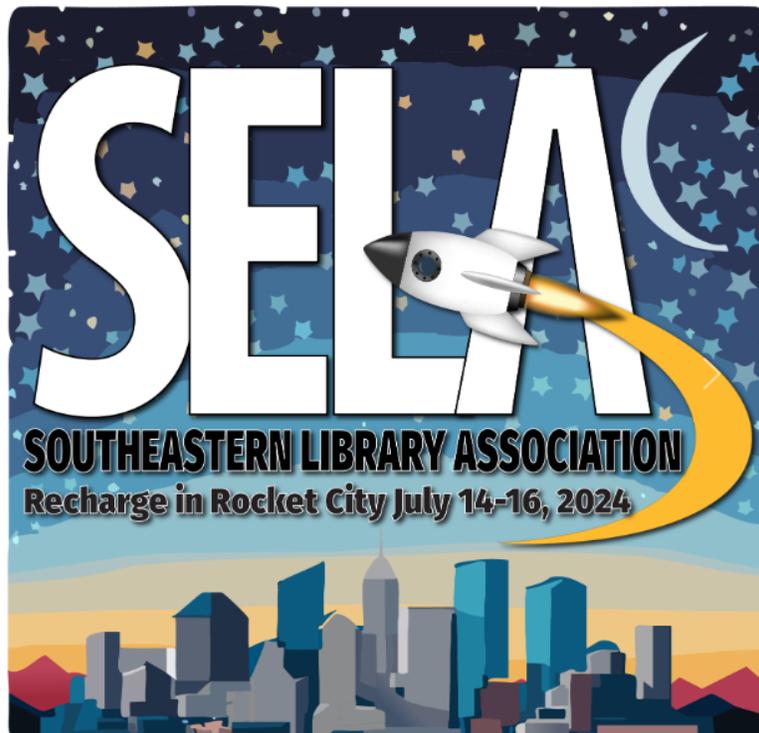
ALL Y'ALL REALLY FROM ALABAMA (title of poem read during keynote)

I want to end on a poem about God and freedom.

WHEN YOU ASK ME FROM WHERE MY HELP COMES (title of poem read during keynote)

Thank you, and thank you for all you do to keep our country full of knowledge, love, and truth.

-Ashley M. Jones, Poet Laureate of Alabama



NEWS FROM THE STATES



UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

UAB Celebrates New Gallery Space

On September 20th, UAB Libraries held a grand opening ceremony for the Dennis G. Pappas Historical Collections Gallery. The gallery is named for Dennis G. Pappas Sr., MD, and Dennis G. Pappas Jr., MD, both of whom specialize in otolaryngology and are longtime supporters of UAB Libraries' historical collections.

The Pappas Gallery is a 3,000 square foot space on the second floor of the Lister Hill Library of the Health Sciences and the exhibition home to the Alabama Museum of the Health Sciences, Reynolds-Finley Historical Library, and UAB Archives. Visitors can tour the gallery's inaugural exhibit, "Navigating Communication: Breaking Invisible Barriers," which explores vision and hearing loss and treatments and offers deeper understanding of the lived experiences of the deaf, blind, and deafblind communities. It will be on display through August 2025.



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

UA Libraries Facilitates ORCID ID Campaign

The University of Arkansas is embarking on a campaign to attain full participation in ORCID by faculty, research staff, and graduate students. ORCID is a free, unique, persistent identifier for individuals to use as they engage in research, scholarship, and innovation activities. It is the most universal ID when compared with other unique author ID systems and has been integrated with many major publishers.

The first phase of this rollout involves the faculty. University Libraries is emailing each faculty member with a unique link for establishing their IDs. This project is sponsored by University Libraries, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, the Office of Graduate Student Support, and Research and Academic Technologies.



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

UCF Opens New Production Studio

The University of Central Florida Libraries is excited to announce the roll out of a new Production Studio at the John C. Hitt Library. This innovative space provides users with the tools necessary to create professional-quality videos and images. With three versatile areas for capturing content, the studio is designed to meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff across a wide range of creative projects. The Conversation Stage is tailor-made for interviews and podcast-style recordings. From capturing photography to shooting dynamic videos, the Presentation Stage is fully equipped with a variety of backdrops and mirrorless cameras. The Headshot Stage offers a photo-booth-style setup for capturing high-resolution images.



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

UGA Establishes New Research Department

As new regulations and best practices with research data evolve in academia, a new department in the University of Georgia Libraries is poised to help researchers navigate the changing technology and policy landscape at every stage of their project, from data management planning to analysis to publishing. The Department of Research and Computational Data Management (RCDM) offers resources and support to faculty and student researchers whether they are experienced or just starting out. The five-person team, led by Dr. Beth Woods, offers seminars, workshops and one-on-one consultations with research data management planning; data discovery, access, and collection; data storage, analysis, and visualization; and publishing, copyright, and digital preservation.



UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

UK's New Digital Scholarship Center

The University of Kentucky Libraries is thrilled to announce the opening of a brand new space for all students, faculty, staff, and researchers. Named to honor King Library's historical purpose of housing analog collections, with a nod to contemporary digital infrastructure, The Stacks: Digital Scholarship Center is a unique space with specialized equipment, resources, and events dedicated to digital and data-intensive scholarship.

With expertise that spans all areas of digital and data-intensive scholarship, The Stacks team offers guidance with data applications and visualizations, digital and open access publishing, digital project management & sustainability, digital scholarship methods & tools, GIS & digital mapping, research data management, and digital humanities.



LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

LSU Launches OER Advancement Fellowship

This year, Louisiana State University Libraries established a new initiative designed to increase the awareness and usage of Open Educational Resources (OER) across LSU's campus. The OER Advancement Fellowship awards stipends to faculty members who are committed to reviewing or incorporating OER materials into their curricula, thereby reducing reliance on costly commercial textbooks.

During the 18-month project period, the fellows will participate in a series of workshops and consultations that will equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully implement OER in their courses. By embracing these resources, the fellows will play a crucial role in advancing educational equity at LSU, ensuring that students have greater access to free, high-quality learning materials. Eleven members of faculty across various schools and colleges were accepted as inaugural fellowship participants.



UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

New Appointments at UM

The University of Mississippi Libraries is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Sian Lee as Assistant Professor of Scholar Support and Data Services, effective August 26th. Dr. Lee is the latest member of the recently established Scholar Support and Data Services (SSDS) department at UML. Dr. Lee received his Ph.D. in Informatics from Penn State.

The University of Mississippi Libraries is also pleased to announce the appointment of Michael Carelse as Research and Instruction Librarian and Assistant Professor, effective September 30th. Mr. Carelse received his MLIS from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver.

Blues Archive at UM Commemorates Milestone

The Blues Archive at the University of Mississippi celebrated its 40th anniversary on September 13th with live music performances from Libby Rae Watson and Afrissippi. Established in 1984, the Blues Archive acquires and preserves blues and blues-related materials in a variety of formats for scholars of the blues, African American studies, and southern culture. With thousands of sound recordings, photographs, videos, books, periodicals, newsletters, research collections, memorabilia, and more the Blues Archive houses one of the largest blues collections in the world.

UM Librarians Receive Award

Abbie Norris-Davidson and Adam Clemons won the Fortier Prize for Emerging Scholars at the Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations at George Mason University in Washington, D. C. for their presentation on the "Dear Mr. Meredith" project. As the Digital Initiatives Librarian, Norris-Davidson implements and manages digital projects for the Libraries. Clemons is an Assistant Professor of Scholar Support and Data Services.



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

New Appointments at UNC Chapel Hill Health Sciences Library

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's University Libraries is pleased to announce the appointment of Luke Barron as a Clinical Librarian for the Health Sciences Library, effective July 29th. They were previously a graduate assistant at the Health Sciences Library. Barron holds an M.S. in library science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a bachelor's degree in business administration from Baylor University.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's University Libraries is pleased to announce the appointment of Joel Collier as a Clinical Librarian for the Health Sciences Library, effective August 5th. He brings experience from time at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Research Triangle Park Library and at Poudre River Public Libraries in Fort Collins, Colorado. Collier holds an M.S. in information sciences from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a B.A. in history from Colorado State University.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's University Libraries is pleased to announce the appointment of Katherine Howell as Health Sciences Librarian for the Health Sciences Library, effective August 26th. Howell was most recently an assistant professor and librarian at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University's Bluford Library. She previously worked as an assistant professor and librarian at Western Kentucky University. Howell holds an M.S. in library and information science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and bachelor's degrees in economics and classics from Davidson College.

New Appointment at UNC Chapel Hill’s University Libraries

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s University Libraries is pleased to announce the appointment of Collin Drummond as Open Knowledge and Research Impact Librarian, effective September 23rd. In this two-year position reporting to the Library’s scholarly communications officer, Drummond will advance programs and activities to make scholarship more affordable, sustainable, transparent and open. His focus will be on collecting, analyzing and interpreting bibliometric and other data to guide decision-making. Drummond earned both an M.S. in library science and a B.A. in linguistics and history from UNC-Chapel Hill.

New Appointment at UNC Chapel Hill’s NCHDC

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s University Libraries is pleased to announce the appointment of Ashlie Brewer as digital projects coordinator for the North Carolina Digital Heritage Center (NCHDC), effective September 30. The NCDHC partners with cultural heritage organizations statewide to digitize historical materials and publish them online. In this role, Brewer will support the handling and digitization of a wide variety of special collections materials. She will also develop workflows, ensure the quality of finished files and supervise the Center’s digitization staff and student assistants. Brewer has published and presented about community collaboration, digitization of local history and increasing access to historical materials. Brewer holds a B.A. in anthropology and music, with a minor in Chinese from UNC-Greensboro. She recently earned an M.A. in public history at North Carolina State University.



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

USC Appoints University Historian

The University of South Carolina’s University Libraries is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Evan Faulkenbury as its University Librarian, effective August 16th. Dr. Faulkenbury was most recently an associate professor of history at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Cortland. In addition to being a scholar of civil rights, African American history, public history, and historical methods, he is a practicing public historian who has engaged fellow historians, students, and the public through partnerships with local history organizations, by conducting oral histories, leading book clubs in public libraries, writing monthly history columns in newspapers, and working with the National Council on Public History (NCPH) as a lead editor for *History@Work*.

Housed in University Libraries, the University Historian serves as the principal resource on matters of historic interpretation, representation, and commemoration of the University of South Carolina for the university community and beyond. Dr. Faulkenbury will engage with the community to tell the University of South Carolina’s story fully, with historical accuracy, through a variety of forums and media, and will advise university leadership on matters surrounding building names, historical markers and monuments, and public art. Dr. Faulkenbury will also research, create, and disseminate original scholarship on the USC’s past in collaboration with appropriate campus partners and other relevant university, local, regional, and state entities.



VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

Vanderbilt’s Sesquicentennial Time Capsule Project

Last spring, Vanderbilt University’s Jean and Alexander Heard Libraries began collecting

and curating materials—both physical and digital—to provide insight into campus life and the university’s values and priorities during its 150th year. In addition to considering the items placed in the recently opened 1874 time capsule, the Libraries polled the Vanderbilt community for suggests of items to include. More than 50 university schools, departments, campus organizations, and individuals responded with recommendations that included drone video footage of campus; Campus Dining recipes and menus; a WRVU-curated playlist; materials from the K.C. Potter Center for LGBTQI Life; a composite photograph of Greek Life officers; statements from the University Staff Advisory Council, faculty and various student leaders on their vision for the future of Vanderbilt; and Chancellor Daniel Diermeier’s 2024 Founders Walk address, in which he highlighted the time capsule. Over 150 items were included.

When Vanderbilt leaders opened the 1874 time capsule in February 2023, they discovered that water and mold had caused significant damage to the contents. As a result, the Libraries’ staff stepped up preservation efforts for the new one. It is a steel box with approximately the same dimensions in inches as the original copper one—11 by 11 by 10. One way it differs is the addition of a nozzle used to remove oxygen, which causes paper to deteriorate. The nozzle also pumps in nitrogen, an inert gas that reduces oxidation. In addition, the staff sought acid-free paper for any typed or printed documents going in the capsule. The time capsule will be opened in 2174.



THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM & MARY

William & Mary Publishes its Second OA Publication

College of William & Mary Libraries has published its second open access publication, which explores the meanings of life and death in the Greek play, *Alcestis*. The book, *Euripides’ Al-*

cestis: Introduction, Translation, Notes, and Essay, was authored by former W&M provost and classical studies professor Dr. Michael R. Halleran. Halleran was working on a modern translation and analysis of *Alcestis* that could be useful to anyone from scholars to students to someone that knew nothing about Greek literature. He believed that his project would also be well-suited as an open educational resource (OER).

Rosie Liljenquist, W&M Publishing and Open Access Librarian, oversaw Dr. Halleran’s publication from start to finish. Halleran has published several works, but this is his first open access project. Working with W&M Libraries helped him discover the opportunities that digital publishing provides including accessibility, the ability to add on in the future, and allowing for more creative and productive uses of space that hardcopy cannot permit. Liljenquist is excited about the opportunities to collaborate with more faculty on open access publications and hopes to expand the collection of open access works that W&M Libraries publishes to cover a variety of topics.



WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

WVU’s Stewart Plein Honored with Emerita Status

Stewart Plein, Curator of Rare Books and Printed Resources at the West Virginia & Regional History Center (WVRHC), retired August 30th after 13 years of service with emerita status. Plein began her passionate work with books and printed materials in the local books trade in 1995. In 2004, she joined WVU Libraries as a volunteer in the Rare Book Room. This experience changed her life’s direction, inspiring her to earn her MLIS. She began her professional career as a special collections librarian in 2011 at the WVU Law Library and has been a member of the faculty at the WVRHC since 2014.

Plein greatly advanced the stewardship and development of the West Virginia Books and Serials Collection, the Appalachian Collection and the Rare Book Collection at the WVRHC. She ensured those collections grew reflecting current scholarship and creative writing from the region. Plein taught hundreds of rare book, Appalachian studies, and primary source instruction sessions for WVU courses. Furthermore, she served as principal investigator and managing director for five West Virginia National Digital Newspaper Project grants.

Plein's scholarship includes articles, book chapters, blog posts, essays, and annual updates to *West Virginia History's* West Virginia History Bibliography. In addition, Plein's scholarship included the research and production of multiple exhibitions that highlighted items from the collections, featured stories about the Rare Book Collection, and appeared in the Libraries' Ex Libris as well as in WVU Magazine.



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