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LIBRARIES AND THE SYSTEM OF INFORMATION PROVISION IN THE 1930s' UNITED STATES: THE TRANSFORMATION OF TECHNOLOGY, ACCESS, AND POLICY

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Library and Information Science
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2015

Urbana, Illinois

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ABSTRACT

Examination of developments in technology, access, and policy reveals that American librarianship and the wider system of information provision underwent profound and far-reaching changes—a transformation—during the 1930s. With regard to technology, the 1930s saw the widespread adoption of microfilm, heralded by its advocates as a revolutionary tool that would transform information preservation and dissemination. The number of outlets for library services increased markedly as information was brought to more people, often in creative ways, and on an enlarged scale. Finally, policymaking for libraries, and information provision more broadly, assumed greater prominence. New federal agencies were established, new statistical series offered, and existing information programs were expanded.

Librarianship has a long history of critical engagement in times of crisis. Using archival, primary, and secondary sources, I examine the 1930s using the system of information provision as a lens. While the 1930s' US has been well-traversed by many scholars, no one has foregrounded the system of information provision as a site of transformation. I consider the system in its entirety, using technology, access, and policy as the key vectors of evidence of this transformation. The role of librarians is consistently foregrounded. Many librarians of the 1930s eagerly embraced visionary approaches with regard to imagining the future of libraries, and they were not afraid to act boldly on a range of economic, political, and cultural issues.

"Transformation" alludes to different things depending on the context: sometimes it meant redefinition, sometimes it meant expansion, and sometimes a bit of both. The "system of information provision" includes but is not limited to librarianship. Although deeply concerned with the pursuits of libraries and librarians, my dissertation research reveals how library work intersected with that of historians, archivists, documentalists, and with other activities involving

access to and preservation of information resources. “Information provision” is intended to gesture at this wider range of associated precepts and practices.

Historians make some room for the 1930s, but leave pressing questions: what were the relationships between changes in technology, access, and policy in librarianship during the 1930s; and how were librarians agents in this overall process? This dissertation is an attempt to engage directly with these questions.

For Joe Cali

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I could not have completed this dissertation without the considerable support of family members, friends, and colleagues. There were many times when I felt unable to see this task through, and I am profoundly grateful to everyone who helped me along the way.

I entered the Graduate School of Library and Information Science in the fall of 2006 with the sole intention of earning a master's degree, yet here I sit on the other side of a dissertation. I had the good fortune of working with Dan Schiller throughout. Were I to describe all the ways that Dan excels at his job as a scholar—as a researcher, writer, instructor, and mentor—I would not have room for anyone else in the acknowledgments. We need more scholars of Dan's caliber in higher education.

My committee members Alistair Black, Christine Jenkins, and Joanne Passet are all formidable scholars whose research on the history of libraries and information has inspired and enhanced my work. I am thankful for their invaluable feedback and support.

I am also grateful for the support of current and former GSLIS faculty, particularly Pauline Cochrane, Leigh Estabrook, Bonnie Mak, Kate McDowell, Rae-Anne Montague, and Linda Smith. The GSLIS support staff are essential to the School's success, and were of great help to me. I especially want to thank Penny Ames, Sally Eakin, Candy Edwards, Linda Meccoli, Kathy Painter, and Julie Smith.

I am very grateful for the generous financial support I received from GSLIS, including travel awards for research and conference attendance. I am honored to count myself amongst the inaugural cohort of the Information in Society specialization, funding for which came from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

I would like to thank the many librarians and archivists I have worked with throughout

the course of this project, including those at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the Library of Congress, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, the National Agricultural Library, and the National Archives. They made the research process infinitely more manageable and enjoyable.

The doctoral dissertations of GSLIS alumnae Ellen Knutson, Joyce Latham, and Cindy Welch were instrumental in helping me model my dissertation. I also wish to thank Lucy Moynihan for sharing her seminar paper with me about 1930s' libraries.

I am grateful to and for the Graduate Employees Organization, the union for graduate employees at the University of Illinois. Having a union has made a positive difference in my life and the lives of thousands of other graduate students. Solidarity forever!

To Carol Baxter, Laurie Gilbert, and Lisa Haake: thank you for helping me keep my spirits up. To the baristas of Espresso Royale (especially at Sixth and Daniel) and Café Kopi: you helped me keep my momentum going. One of Champaign-Urbana's finest features is the Art Theater, as of this writing the only cooperatively owned movie theater in the country. Many thanks to Austin McCann for keeping the marquee bright, and interesting.

I am lucky to have a vast network of friends. Some of you I see regularly, others far less than I like. Much gratitude to Julie "Dog" Adamo, Julie Allen, Doris Andrechak, Abby Anzalone, Dan Bassett, Emilie Bess, Beth Blauer, Doris Bonnett, Patrick Brennan, Christina Ceisel, Suzanne Chilcote, Corrie Crain, Matt Crain, Cope Cumpston, Christine D'Arpa, Sarah Davis, Kat Doherty-Chapman, Brian Dolber, Steven Doran, Tom Dousa, Caitlin Drake, Millán Figueroa, Joe Foti, Loretta Gaffney, Jess George, Charles Fogelman, Liz Flyntz, Randy Genau, Colleen Gibbons, David Gracon, Angie Heaton, Rachael Higgins, Elena Hillard, Karima Isberg, Julia Jamieson, Crystal Keldun, Kathleen Kuehn, Mary Madson, Dana Malan, Alaine Martaus,

Stacey McKeever, Karen Medina, Molly Niesen, Tim Noble, Ros Paul, Rich Potter, Roxanne Sawhill, Jo Seidl, Rika Seidl, Kerry Sheehan, Derek Slagle, Mikki Smith, April "A." Spisak, Valeda Stull, Sunah Suh, Aiko Takazawa, T.J. Tallie, Andrea Thomer, Ann Thottam, Paula Treichler, Rosemary Trippe, Richard Urban, Dora Valkanova, Maggie Weber-Striplin, Preston Wright, ShinJoung Yeo, and Desiree Yomtoob. Thank you ad infinitum.

I am grateful to my mother Mary Nappo, my sister Meaghan Nappo, my brother Vinnie Nappo, and my future sister-in-law Jo Heinan. During graduate school I became an aunt twice over thanks to Jo and Vinnie, and my twin nephews Adrian and Jackson are purely delightful. My father Frank was a great source of intellectual inspiration whom I miss every day. My unfailingly sweet dog, Samson, has been my beloved companion for nearly a decade. I am also grateful for the love and support of my many aunts, uncles, and cousins in the McDonald and Nappo families. Alla famiglia!

Tim Hayden: I love you. Thank you for your love, positivity, culinary dynamism, and being Pure Michigan. You're number one, baby. I am so excited to see where we go next.

Finally, the dedication page reads "For Joe Cali." Joseph John Cali was a long-time librarian at Antioch College, working there for 50+ years until his death in 2007; Joe literally worked for the library until the day he died. His passion for librarianship and the humanities inspired generations of Antiochians to become librarians themselves, or at least to engage more deeply with libraries and librarians. I attended a special memorial service held by the College shortly after he died, and his sister closed the eulogy by saying: "My brother's life was not a life of the headlines. His was a life of the heart." Joe, here is to living a life of the heart.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 1
Background 1
Methodology and Sources 10
Organization 14
CHAPTER TWO: THE SYSTEM OF INFORMATION PROVISION IN THE 1930s' UNITED STATES 17
Introduction 17
Background on the 1930s' United States 18
Definitions 32
Individuals and Institutions in the System of Information Provision 42
Expansion and Crisis in the System of Information Provision 46
Information and Culture in the 1930s 61
Conclusion 64
CHAPTER THREE: TECHNOLOGY AND THE SYSTEM OF INFORMATION PROVISION 65
Introduction 65
Works Progress Administration and Technology 69
Libraries and Technology 75
Charting the Course of Technology: Joint Committee on Materials for Research and the American Documentation Institute 79
National Agricultural Library and the Bibliofilm Service 89
Conclusion 96
CHAPTER FOUR: ACCESS AND THE SYSTEM OF INFORMATION PROVISION ... 99
Introduction 99
Historical Efforts to Improve Information Access 103
Scholarly Communication and Access 104
Works Progress Administration and Access 113
Libraries and Access 127
Conclusion 156
CHAPTER FIVE: POLICY AND THE SYSTEM OF INFORMATION PROVISION ... 159
Introduction 159
Government Information and Policy 163
American Library Association and Policy 177
Conclusion 208
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION 211
Summary 211
Future Research 215
BIBLIOGRAPHY 221

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACLS	American Council of Learned Societies
ADI	American Documentation Institute
ALA	American Library Association
ARL	Association of Research Libraries
CCC	Civilian Conservation Corps
CWA	Civil Works Administration
CWS	Civil Works Service
FERA	Federal Emergency Relief Administration
GLS	Graduate Library School
HRS	Historical Records Survey
JCMR	Joint Committee on Materials for Research
NAL	National Agricultural Library
PWA	Public Works Administration
SSA	Social Security Administration
SSRC	Social Science Research Council
TVA	Tennessee Valley Authority
WPA	Works Progress Administration
WPP	Women's and Professional Projects

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

Background

In June 2014, library and information science made the Forbes list of the "worst master's degrees for jobs."[1] This assessment is based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, where projected job growth for librarians is 7.4%, whereas job growth for all occupations averages 10.8%.[2] With the national unemployment rate at 5.9% in September, 2014, economic conditions are looking up somewhat, especially when compared to three years ago when the national unemployment rate was at 10%.[3] In essence, the Forbes piece and the BLS statistics tell us that job growth is slow, and even slower for would-be librarians. Not entirely surprising, considering the economy is in a deep recession—the worst since the Great Depression of the 1930s. In October 2014, a study published by economists Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman found that the wealth held by the top 0.1% is almost as high as 1929 levels.[4]

Meanwhile, in addition to sluggish job growth, librarianship also faces charges of irrelevancy. As more information migrates online or is born digital, with the proliferation of online technologies in the form of handheld devices and personal computers, and the growth of information technology giants such as Google and Apple, many ask: when everything is online and we can find information ourselves anytime, why do we need libraries and librarians?

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[1] Kathryn Dill, "The Best and Worst Master's Degrees for Jobs in 2014," accessed October 28, 2014 from http://www.forbes.com/sites/kathryndill/2014/06/12/the-best-and-worst-masters-degrees-for-jobs-in-2014/.
[2] Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Projections," accessed October 28, 2014 from http://data.bls.gov/.
[3] Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey," accessed October 28, 2014 from http://data.bls.gov/.
[4] Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman, "Wealth Inequality in the United States since 1913: Evidence from Capitalized Income Tax Data" (NBER Working Paper 20625, Cambridge, MA, 2014).

Sluggish job growth combined with the growth of information technologies have also prompted many to ask why public dollars should be spent on libraries. This comes amid an ongoing dismantling of public services.[5] Perhaps we live in a digital age, but more importantly we live in a neoliberal age, where deregulated or unregulated market forces are deemed to be the most efficient arbiter of economic productivity. Why fund public library services when people do not need them? According to the logic of neoliberalism, why fund public library services when the private sector can provide better services at reduced costs?

This dissertation looks at major changes in technology, access, and policy that characterized American librarianship during the 1930s in order to demonstrate the importance of library services amid an economic crisis. With the United States in the worst economic slump since the 1930s, it becomes all the more important to reexamine this period. The current prevailing attitude toward economic recovery—that it is best achieved by incentivizing the private sector—is one alarmingly similar to that of the 1920s. The 1930s was a significant moment in American history, for it saw a unique and innovative response to economic crisis—the New Deal. The creation of new government agencies in the 1930s, meant to curb the excesses of the previous decade that were blamed as the cause of the Depression, helped usher in an unprecedented expansion of the federal government into public life.

To say that the whole of society and all social structures underwent a transformation in the 1930s is not an overstatement. Economic, political, and cultural life were all changed by the events of the 1930s, first by sharp economic decline and then by reinvigoration thanks to the New Deal. That American society was transformed by the events of the 1930s is not a new observation, and indeed many scholars have described in thorough detail how political,

[5] John Buschman, *Dismantling the Public Sphere: Situating and Sustaining Librarianship in the Age of the New Public Philosophy* (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2003).

economic, and cultural life were reshaped. This is evident in a number of works on varied aspects of the period including Lizabeth Cohen's *Making a New Deal* and Robert Zieger's *CIO*; in Nick Taylor's *American-Made* and Frank Freidel's *Franklin D. Roosevelt*; in Robert McElvaine's *The Great Depression* and Alan Brinkley's *The End of Reform*; and especially in Michael Denning's *The Cultural Front*.[6]

Alongside the creation of new agencies such as the Social Security Administration (SSA), the New Deal also created more than 8 million jobs through its various relief agencies, the largest being the Works Progress Administration (WPA).[7] New jobs were created by practicing deficit spending: borrowing large amounts of money against the Treasury. Using this money to create jobs, the idea was that job creation would stimulate consumer spending, which would revive the economy. It was not left to the private sector to turn around the economy, the government attempted this, in collaboration with communities nationwide.

A literature review of what has been written on the history of librarians in the 1930s can be found in this chapter and the next. While the events of the 1930s' United States are well-documented, we do not have a full account of the contributions of librarians. This is imperative because librarians and information workers are an important part of the recovery story. This dissertation aims to reveal the vital contributions of librarians in the response to economic crisis in the 1930s; it attempts to emphasize the importance of libraries in economic crisis. The literature in the history of librarianship and that of cultural history lacks a unified account of the

[6] Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO, 1934-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Nick Taylor, *American-Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA* (New York: Bantam Books, 2008); Frank Freidel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous With Destiny* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1990); Robert S. McElvaine, *The Great Depression: America, 1929-1941* (New York: Times Books, 1984); *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995); Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Verso, 1996).

[7] WPA first stood for Works Progress Administration and later Work Projects Administration. I will use the former throughout.

many inventive and innovative activities of the profession in the 1930s. A close investigation of primary sources coupled with analysis of secondary sources allows us to elucidate profound and concurrent changes around technology, access, and policy. The 1930s was one of the direst periods economically; yet as historians Michael Denning and others have shown, it was also a time of exciting, dynamic cultural production. I mean to show how libraries and the system of information provision were central parts of this process.

With regard to technology, the 1930s saw the widespread adoption of microfilm, heralded by its advocates as a revolutionary tool that would transform information preservation and dissemination. At the 1939 meeting of the International Federation for Information and Documentation, Arthur Berthold declared that "the development of union catalogues is closely connected with the present economic crisis... the successful application of micro-photography has simplified the compilation of union catalogues to such an extent that this method is now the unchallenged basis for all union catalogues work to be under-taken in the immediate future."[8] Microfilm also interlocked with other significant advances in the automation of document retrieval.[9]

The number of outlets for library services increased markedly as information was brought to more people, often in creative ways, and on an enlarged scale. Packhorse libraries expanded services to rural users while "open-air" libraries in public parks enhanced access for urban users.[10] Finally, policymaking for libraries, and information provision more broadly, assumed

[8] Arthur Berthold, "Union Catalogues and Documentation" (paper presented at the International Federation for Information and Documentation Conference, Zurich, Switzerland, August 1939).
[9] Colin Burke, *Information and Secrecy: Vannevar Bush, Ultra, and the Other Memex* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1994).
[10] Donald Boyd, "The Book Women of Kentucky: The WPA Pack Horse Library Project, 1936-1943," *Libraries and the Cultural Record* 42, no. 2, (2007): 111-28; Gerald S. Greenberg, "'On the Roof of the Library Nearest You': America's Open-Air Libraries, 1905-1944," in *Libraries to the People: Histories of Outreach*, ed. Robert S. Freeman and David M. Hovde (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2003), 181-91.

greater prominence. New federal agencies were established, new statistical series offered, and existing information programs were expanded. The long-planned National Archives and Records Administration became a reality and state appropriations steadily increased during the Great Depression, while the American Library Association initiated its campaign for permanent federal support.[11]

Some historians have already flagged the 1930s as an important decade with regard to activities around information provision. Kathleen Molz has written extensively on policy work in 1930s libraries, and has rightly claimed that the 1930s was a decisive decade in the advancement of library policy.[12] A special issue of *Libraries and the Cultural Record* published in 2011 gives attention to libraries in the Depression.[13] Historians such as Stuart Leslie and Irene Farkas-Conn have described the development of information technology in the 1930s.[14]

The most common theme in library history studies of the 1930s is the involvement of libraries and librarians, particularly women, in WPA efforts. Donald Boyd's article on pack horse libraries and Mary Mallory's biographical article on Tennessee Valley Authority's librarian Mary Utopia Rothrock describe some of the creative efforts to expand services for rural users.[15] The essays in Daniel Ring's 1982 edited volume describe WPA projects in several rural and urban areas.[16] Martha Swain has published both broad and specific treatments on this topic, the

[11] Donald R. McCoy, *The National Archives: America's Ministry of Documents; 1934-1968* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978); Michael S. Blayney, "'Library Services for the Millions': Adult Public Library Services and the New Deal," *Journal of Library History* 12, no. 3 (1977): 235-49.
[12] R. Kathleen Molz, *Federal Support for Libraries* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976).
[13] James V. Carmichael, ed. "The Continuing Depression," special issue, *Libraries and the Cultural Record* 46, no. 3 (2011).
[14] Irene Farkas-Conn, *From Documentation to Information Science: The Beginnings and Early Development of the American Documentation Institute-American Society for Information Science* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990); Stuart W. Leslie, *The Cold War and American Science: The Military-Industrial-Academic Complex at MIT and Stanford* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).
[15] Boyd, "The Book Women of Kentucky"; Mary Mallory, "The Rare Vision of Mary Utopia Rothrock: Organizing Regional Library Services in the Tennessee Valley," *Library Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (1995): 62-88.
[16] Daniel F. Ring, ed., *Studies in Creative Partnership: Federal Aid to Public Libraries During the New Deal* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1982).

latter being her biography of WPA director of women's programs Ellen Woodward; as library work was initially classified under the women's program, Woodward oversaw several WPA library endeavors.[17] Jane Pejsa's biography of Gratia Countryman chronicles the life and career of the director of the Minneapolis Public Library who also served as an ALA president in the 1930s.[18] Like her contemporary Mary U. Rothrock, Countryman was also a passionate advocate for WPA programs in libraries and argued in favor of national library planning. While aspects of policymaking for libraries emerge from time to time in these histories of libraries and the WPA, one must look elsewhere for more details on policy work by and for libraries.

A combination of description and analysis can be found in some contemporary library histories on the relationship between librarianship and the Great Depression. Margaret Herdman published such a statistical study in 1943, and Edward Stanford's doctoral dissertation from the University of Chicago's Graduate Library School (published as a book in 1944) broadly surveyed the topic.[19] In addition to being some of the earliest research on 1930s' US librarianship, these works are valuable starting points for several reasons. Both works present copious references to statistics on library services, usage, and funding. They also provide extensive descriptive sections of these aspects and offer some analysis. Although not an historical piece, the 1932 study "The Public Library and Depression" published in *The Library Quarterly* also is significant as a primary source — it provides useful contemporary data and also suggests that

[17] Martha Swain, "A New Deal in Libraries: Federal Relief Work and Library Service, 1933-1943," *Libraries and Culture* 30, no. 3, (1995), 265-83; Martha Swain, *Ellen S. Woodward: New Deal Advocate for Women* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1995).
[18] Jane Pejsa, *Gratia Countryman: Her Life, Her Loves, and Her Library* (Minneapolis: Nodin Press, 1995).
[19] Margaret M. Herdman, "The Public Library in Depression," *Library Quarterly* 13, no. 4, (1943): 321-43; Edward Barrett Stanford, *Library Extension Under the WPA: An Appraisal of an Experiment in Federal Aid* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944).

scholars attempted to draw meaningful connections between librarianship and the Depression very early on.[20]

Although scholars have explored some of these changes in a piecemeal way, much more can be said about the depth and breadth of these initiatives. My dissertation undertakes the task of more fully describing this transformation and analyzing its impact, relating it to broader currents of American history, and serves to augment the work already done in the history of library and information science by examining some little-known but vital and formative activities of the period.

In describing the expansion of cultural programs in the 1930s, Michael Denning and others have shown that the decade witnessed not only social upheaval, but also unique and vibrant cultural production and social change.[21] The system of information provision likewise became more dynamic in the 1930s, yet the LIS literature lacks a unified account of the many inventive and innovative activities that occurred around technology, access, and policy. Without a more comprehensive treatment, we cannot sufficiently appreciate the extent to which the 1930s constituted a watershed in American information history. The creation of new information services, expansion of existing services, and the growing consensus that local services required reliable, federal support are all vectors of this transformation.

"Transformation" alludes to different things depending on the context: sometimes it meant redefinition, sometimes it meant expansion, and sometimes a bit of both. The "system of information provision" includes but is not limited to librarianship. Although deeply concerned with the pursuits of libraries and librarians, my dissertation research reveals how library work

[20] Douglas Waples, Leon Carnovksy, and William M. Randall, "The Public Library in the Depression," *Library Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (1932): 321-42.
[21] Denning, *The Cultural Front*, 49.

intersected with that of historians, archivists, documentalists, and with other activities involving access to and preservation of information resources. "Information provision" is intended to gesture at this wider range of associated precepts and practices.

What evidence do we have that such a wide-ranging transformation occurred during the 1930s? Part of it lies in the pronounced expansion that occurred around the collection of statistical data for policymaking. Some of the statistical indicators were established prior to the Great Depression, such as the work of the Bureau of Labor Statistics or the decennial collection of Census data. Yet the establishment of new programs suggests a fresh awareness of which type of information was collected and how. For example, census data underwent modification in response to the Great Depression, with questions about unemployment first asked for the 1940 census. Likewise, we see evidence of the transformation in the collection of new categories devoted to economic information. To understand and combat the economic crisis, policymakers began to institute new information generating and analyzing programs both to prevent a recurrence and to stabilize the economy.[22]

Transformation is also clearly evident in the expansion of the librarian workforce during this period. Denning notes that librarians formed one of two occupational categories that almost quadrupled between 1920 and 1950 (the other was college professors). While the workforce as a whole during this thirty-year period grew by 40 percent, from 42 million to 59 million, the

[22] Margo Conk "The 1980 Census in Historical Perspective," in *The Politics of Numbers* ed. William Starr and Paul Alonso (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1987), 155-86; Joseph T. Goldberg and William T. Moye, *The First Hundred Years of the Bureau of Labor Statistics* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1985).

number of librarians grew by 280 percent, from 15,000 to 57,000.[23] Edward Stanford's study on libraries in the Depression showed a 1021.7% increase in the number of library assistants and attendants between 1930 and 1940.[24] These disproportionate increases on their own warrant closer investigation.

In this dissertation I look at the 1930s using the system of information provision as a lens. While the 1930s' US has been well-traversed by many scholars, no one has foregrounded the system of information provision as a site of transformation, as a pivotal area. I am considering the system of information provision in its entirety, using technology, access, and policy as the key vectors of evidence of this transformation. Histories of the system of information provision have typically explored these aspects in isolation from one another. Even more curiously, many histories of technology, access, or policy in the 1930s have sidestepped the role of information provision in economic crisis.

I am personally interested in telling this story because I wish to counter some of the contemporary rhetoric about libraries and crisis. A cursory glance at the professional literature reveals the perspective that librarians are too risk-averse, reluctant to adapt to the changes wrought by life in the so-called information age. I am wary of making generalizations about librarians in the twenty-first century. However, many librarians of the 1930s eagerly embraced visionary approaches with regard to technological possibilities in the future of libraries. They were certainly not afraid to act boldly on a range of economic, political, and cultural issues.

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[23] Denning, *The Cultural Front*, 49. Denning writes in the notes on pages 505-06 that he arrived at these figures by calculating numbers published in *Historical Statistics of the United States Colonial Times to 1957*, "Detailed Occupations of the Economically Active Population: 1900-1950", Series D 123-572. I consulted the same tables, and confirmed that in 1920, there were 15,000 librarians; in 1930, there were 30,000; in 1940, there were 39,000; and in 1950 there were 57,000. In the source notes for *Historical Statistics*, David L. Kaplan and M. Claire Casey's *Occupational Trends in the United States, 1900-1950* is credited as the source of the data used to create "Detailed Occupation of the Economically Active Population, 1900-1950." Kaplan and Casey's work was a Census Bureau working paper published in 1958.

[24] Stanford, *Library Extension Under the WPA*.

Librarianship has a long history of critical engagement in times of crisis.

Methodology and Sources

A close investigation of some under-used historical records may enhance our understanding of how and why information activities of the 1930s unfolded as they did. As an historical project, my dissertation involved intensive examination of primary sources, including several archival collections. Using these primary sources, I discuss the motivations of key actors—to ascertain not only why they thought information organization, access, and policy warranted more robust support, but what considerations influenced their strategies. In cases where motivations are unclear, I describe what happened and put those actions in the context of historical scholarship on the New Deal, the Great Depression, and library and information science.

In the broadest sense, historical research entails looking at records with the aim of illuminating the past. While this may sound like a fairly mundane practice, historical research is not a neutral endeavor. In the most recent edition of *The Pursuit of History*, John Tosh writes that "how the past is known and how it is applied to present need are open to widely varying approaches."[25] As with all historical research, my own project incorporates those approaches which I find most compelling and useful. Michael Denning's landmark work on cultural production in the 1930s, *The Cultural Front*, is one benchmark, one used already by Joyce Latham to clarify changes in contemporary library principle and practice.[26] Denning's work informs how I examine and interpret the available sources, in particular his definition of the cultural apparatus. Drawing on sociologist C. Wright Mills, Denning describes the cultural

[25] John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, 5th ed. (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited, 2010).
[26] Joyce M. Latham, "White Collar Read: The American Public Library and the Left Led CIO; A Case Study of the Chicago Public Library, 1929-1952" (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 2007).

apparatus as "the organizations... in which artistic, intellectual and scientific work goes on, and of the means by which such work is made available to circles, publics, and masses."[27] This definition is consonant with the approaches advocated by some historians of library and information science such as Alistair Black, Michael Harris, Joyce Latham, and Wayne Wiegand, who might agree that there is a relationship between information provision and the cultural apparatus, and that libraries are part of this relationship.[28] The nature of the relationship between the Cultural Front and information provision largely remains to be determined, but we may assert on the basis of Latham's work at the very least that this connection exists. This relationship may or may not turn out to be the fundamental point of the dissertation, but it is valuable in looking for traces of the strong reformist impulse that motivated the Cultural Front in the changing system of information provision. As Joanne Passet has noted, a reformist impulse has long been part of librarianship.[29]

My approach to historical research is also informed by scholarship in the political economy of information. In *How to Think About Information*, Dan Schiller argues for a political economy of information because "information itself is conditioned and structured by the social institutions and relations in which it is embedded."[30] At the most basic level, I wish to clarify the relationship between dollars expended and the initiatives around technology, access, and policy. Besides entreating us to observe where the money goes, political economy also invites us to

[27] Denning, *The Cultural Front*, 38.
[28] Alistair Black and Dave Muddiman, "The Information Society before the Computer," in *The Early Information Society: Information Management in Britain before the Computer*, ed. Alistair Black, Dave Muddiman, and Helen Plant (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2007), 3-54; Michael H. Harris, "Portrait in Paradox: Commitment and Ambivalence in American Librarianship, 1876-1976," *Libri* 26 (1976): 292; Latham, "White Collar Read"; Wayne Wiegand, Tunnel Vision and Blind Spots: What the Past Tells Us about the Present; Reflections on the Twentieth-Century History of American Librarianship," *Library Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (1999): 1-32.
[29] Joanne E. Passet, "'Order is Heaven's First Law': Itinerant Librarians and Bibliographic Control, 1887-1915," *Library Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (1990): 23-43.
[30] Dan Schiller, *How to Think About Information* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 15.

think about the ways in which economic decisions—amounts expended, who participates in determining what money goes where, who benefits from the outcomes—shape social life. Vincent Mosco writes that "one can think about political economy as the study of the social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources."[31] Political economy is a useful method "because it asks us to concentrate on a specific set of social relations organized around power or the ability to control other people, processes, and things, even in the face of resistance. This would lead the political economist of communication to look at shifting forms of control along the circuit of production, distribution, and consumption." Although Mosco refers here to the political economy of communication, his definition has obvious relevance for library and information science. One can also see this relationship between political economy, communication, and information in the work of Herbert Schiller, who wrote that "the generation and provision of information and entertainment, and the technology that makes it possible, are among the most dynamic elements of the economy. How these are put together profoundly affects the character of the national information condition."[32] It would be impossible to look at the system of information provision during the New Deal without considering the negotiation of economic power.

This dissertation is an historical study and as such draws from numerous archival sources. I consulted the American Library Association Archives and the Graduate School of Library and Information Science Archives, conveniently located at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I also had the pleasure of consulting four collections in the Washington, D.C. area. The Library of Congress houses the papers of both the American Documentation Institute and

[31] Vincent Mosco, *The Political Economy of Communication*, 2nd ed. (London: Sage, 2009), 24.
[32] Herbert I. Schiller, *Information Inequality: The Deepening Social Crisis in America* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 46.

the Joint Committee on Materials for Research. The National Agricultural Library Archives are located in Beltsville, Maryland. Finally, I spent several days with the Works Progress Administration papers at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland. These collections contained letters, manuals, meeting minutes, memoranda, reports, press releases, and news clippings. The archival sources I used are not wanting for consultation—they have been used by other scholars, many of whom I have cited in this dissertation. What I have done is re-examine these sources with an eye to inter-relatedness of people and institutions involved overarching changes around information technology, access, and policy.

I also used primary sources published in the 1930s and 1940s, including books, periodicals, and pamphlets. ALA publications of the period were helpful, as were articles from professional and scholarly literature including *Library Journal* and *The Library Quarterly*. Dissertations and reports published in the 1930s and 1940s were also valuable primary sources. All of these non-archival primary sources were accessible through the University Library at Illinois, some digitized and most in print. Finally, I consulted dozens of secondary sources, some of which have already been referenced in the introduction. The many books, reports, web sites, and dissertations about the 1930s were key for gaining a better understanding of not only the events of the period, but the prior causes that led to the Great Depression. Secondary sources were also helpful for seeing some approaches to studying the 1930s and the sources used. Government web sources such as the Consumer Price Index's Inflation Calculator also came in handy—I appreciated being able to use a decidedly twenty-first century tool for historical analysis.

Organization

In this dissertation I explain why it is important to devote further study to the programs of this period. I review the relevant literature on librarianship and library-related information agencies in the 1930s, as well as key works on the Great Depression, the New Deal, and the WPA. Substantial gaps in knowledge are identified and assessed. Using my research questions as guiding themes, I have organized my dissertation around the transformation of technology, access, and policy in the US system of information provision.

In Chapter Two, The System of Information Provision in the 1930s' United States, I introduce transformation, information provision, technology, access, and policy as key terms and explicate meaning and context. The literature review will show synthesis of secondary sources on a broad range of areas, including US librarianship in the system of information provision. I address the relationship between the events of the 1930s and the system of information provision, some of the overall changes around technology, access, and policy, and the political economic conditions which enabled these changes. Specifically, I will explore what we miss about the history of the 1930s without including information provision, and what we miss about the history of information provision without paying attention to the 1930s. This chapter will provide the rationale for why librarianship needs to be addressed as a more important piece in the system of information provision, by identifying how librarians simultaneously engaged with technology, access, and policy.

Chapter Three, Technology and the System of Information Provision, focuses on technology-related changes in the system of information provision. Although I pay particular attention to microfilm, I will also look at other technological advances in data processing and information retrieval, such as human computers and tabulating machines. I show that librarians

were eager to adopt microfilm, and for a wide range of purposes beyond enhancing access to scientific information. I also highlight the ways in which cooperation amongst a range of actors made these activities possible. I address the ways developments in information technology affected the system of information provision, the extent to which New Deal librarianship reorganized around information technology, and how information technology was applied for purposes including but not limited to the organization, preservation, and dissemination of scientific information.

In Chapter Four, Access and the System of Information Provision, I look at how efforts to enhance to the standard of living and expand the notion of social welfare related to improving information access. Expansion of access manifested in numerous aspects of librarianship, including services for schools, rural areas, and African Americans. I describe how the American Library Association's commitment to the expansion of access related to broader shifts in thinking about information access. Namely, the severity of the Great Depression led to a deepened appreciation for the importance of having publicly-supported access to timely and accurate information. I look at the ways expansion of access affected the system of information provision, address how there could be expansion of access in the midst of the Great Depression, and describe other agencies and institutions besides libraries that prioritized expansion of information access.

Chapter Five, Policy and the System of Information Provision, looks at the ways in which information policy was newly visible and effectual in the 1930s. Attention to policy is evident in the government initiatives and ALA activity, particularly in the ALA's campaign for permanent federal funding for libraries. I describe examples of how the Roosevelt Administration prioritized the collection, dissemination, and preservation of information. I also look at how

ALA campaigned for federal and state funding for libraries, and the ways in which ALA cooperated with the federal government in New Deal programs. I describe the ways in which librarians and other information professionals engaged in policymaking, expenditures for library projects, and why information policy was prioritized in the 1930s. Evidence that the system of information provision underwent a transformation lies in how government leaders, scholars, and practitioners reprioritized or more vigorously prioritized activities related to the generation, collection, organization, dissemination and preservation of information.

In the conclusion, I summarize the evidence from primary and secondary sources and show how changes in technology, access, and policy in the 1930s' United States transformed librarianship and the system of information provision. The conclusion will also discuss the implications of my findings and avenues for future research.

CHAPTER TWO:

THE SYSTEM OF INFORMATION PROVISION IN THE 1930s' UNITED STATES

Introduction

In this chapter, I examine the overall status of the US system of information provision in the 1930s and broadly sketch the changes that occurred around technology, access, and policy in libraries.[1] Here I will engage with research questions on the relationship between the history of the 1930s and the system of information provision, and how these activities were significant. Specifically, I will explore what we miss about the history of the 1930s without including information provision, and what we miss about the history of information provision without paying attention to the 1930s. The background provided in this chapter provides a basis with which to investigate issues around technology, access, and policy more closely in the subsequent chapters. Sometimes information provision is considered broadly, but libraries are at the center of this history. "Information provision" is a term meant to capture the wider range of associated precepts and practices related to the systematic generation, collection, organization, dissemination, and preservation of documentary and scientific records.[2]

I elaborate on the "system of information provision" providing additional context for its particular conceptualization and manifestation in the 1930s and during the Great Depression. Included in this further contextualization is a more detailed background on events of the 1930s in the United States. I describe major individual and institutional actors, why they are significant,

[1] The terms "information provision," "transformation," "technology," "access," and "policy" are defined later in this chapter; the latter three terms are discussed in greater depth in their respective chapters.
[2] This concept of "information provision" is somewhat narrower than the one developed by Alistair Black and Dan Schiller. See Alistair Black and Dan Schiller, "Systems of Information: The Long View," *Library Trends* 62, no. 3 (2014): 628-62.

and how they fit into the story told in the following chapters. We are then able to interrogate the ways in which American cultural agencies and institutions defined and valued documents and how information services changed in the 1930s, and to appreciate the significance of this change. In the 1930s, the federal government's information provision activities were primarily driven by economic crisis.

The American experience of that decade was largely shaped by cataclysmic economic recession and subsequent attempts at recovery: the Great Depression and the New Deal. While this may seem an obvious statement to make, not all histories of library and information science in the 1930s address the role of the Great Depression. Therefore, we cannot just assume that the Great Depression was a major event—we must acknowledge it explicitly.

Part of this dissertation's purpose is to put libraries and information provision at the center in looking at the 1930s' United States. In doing so, we have another access point through which we can engage with fundamental questions and themes of what remains today the most devastating and economic crisis in US history. The lessons we can still learn have yet to be fully uncovered, for this period characterized by economic deprivation is rich in history that we may still share. At this point, a general overview of the 1930s will be useful.

Background on the 1930s' United States

The Great Depression

The 1930s was a decade of extraordinary change in the United States and the world, as people struggled with catastrophic economic conditions. Such a grave and unprecedented economic collapse found a bold response, in thirty-second President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal. Because this dissertation looks at events of the 1930s' United States, acknowledging

the Great Depression and the New Deal is unavoidable; however, this is not a dissertation about the Great Depression and the New Deal per se. These form an important backdrop, but at the center is the system of information provision.

The system of information provision and its transformation pivoted on economic crisis, economic recovery, and political crisis. These are not the only experiences or lenses through which to explore the United States in the 1930s; however, they were arguably the most pervasive experiences of the decade. Everyone felt the effects and impacts of the Great Depression. Americans did not all experience the Depression or recovery in the same way, however, and there were numerous divergent opinions as to the cause of and cure for economic crisis. This also holds true for the global political crises that loomed ever larger at the close of the 1930s and on the eve of the Second World War. There was a palpable feeling that whatever was considered the "American" way of life was in crisis and in a fraught period of change.

The causes and the impact of the Depression and the Roosevelt administration's response and plan for economic recovery have been subject to debate for nearly eighty years. Some historians contend that too much can be made of the 1930s. For example James Cortada observes that "it is almost obligatory for historians of the interwar period to treat the Great Depression as a topic worthy at minimum of its own chapter, but in reality it represented a link between prosperous times and war days."[3] In this dissertation, I am more inclined to agree with Michael Denning, who claims that the 1930s reshaped American culture.[4] The system of information provision was both shaped by and part of shaping this cultural transformation. Furthermore, it is

[3] James W. Cortada, *Before the Computer: IBM, NCR, Burroughs, and Remington Rand and the Industry They Created, 1865-1956* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 144.
[4] Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 2010).

important, as Lizabeth Cohen argues, to examine the events of the 1930s "for what they meant at the time."[5]

First, some general indicators of what made the Depression a cataclysmic event. Economists have argued that given the cyclical nature of markets, occasional dips and declines are normal. Such patterns can be identified as having occurred with some regularity long prior to the 1930s, and this attitude largely accounts for the Hoover Administration's initial response to the Great Depression. In June 1930, Hoover dismissed any cause for panic and "cautioned the country that statements about the severity of unemployment were not based on solid data."[6] Although initially perceived as an ordinary plateau, the economic decline that followed the stock market crash of 1929 was in fact quite extraordinary. Between 1929 and 1932 the gross domestic product plummeted nearly in half, from $103.6 billion to $58.7 billion, and whereas unemployment was at 3.2% in 1929, it had skyrocketed to 24.1% in 1932.[7] By that time, a growing consensus had begun to emerge that the strategy of Hoover and the Republicans (the Congressional majority) was deeply inadequate, and that the market was not going to correct itself. More and more people believed that direct federal intervention was needed.

Where historians of the 1930s diverge is in how they interpret the causes, contour lines, and outcomes of the Depression. When they focus on the 1930s, historians typically provide background on the social, political, and economic events that preceded the stock market crash of 1929, the moment generally considered to be the start of the Depression.[8] Of course, it is only in retrospect that we can claim October 1929 as a start date. No one knew that a global economic

[5] Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 367.
[6] Margo J. Anderson, *The American Census: A Social History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 160.
[7] Susan Carter et al., eds., *Historical Statistics of the United States: Millennial Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), http://hsus.cambridge.org/.
[8] Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, eds, *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989).

crisis was about to persist for more than a decade. At the time, indeed, some contemporaries anticipated that the crash would be a minor setback. President Herbert Hoover steadfastly refused to consider federal relief, and Hoover's lack of effective intervention with the Depression ultimately cost him the 1932 election. Robert McElvaine offers a compassionate portrayal of Herbert Hoover, whom he describes more as a victim of circumstance rather than a heartless or inept leader.[9] While historians do not necessarily exonerate Hoover for his actions (or lack thereof), most agree that the events that led to the crash of 1929 were set in motion long before Hoover's election in 1928.

Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal

It is impossible to make sense of the 1930s without looking at Roosevelt and his Administrations. First elected in 1932, the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt lasted through 1945 and through the end of World War Two. A well-heeled cousin of former President Theodore Roosevelt, FDR had enjoyed a long career in politics prior to his first presidential win. Biographical treatments of FDR are profuse, and tend to be critical yet respectful appraisals of his political life.[10] As previously suggested, biographical information on FDR is also embedded in histories of the Great Depression. Historians have tried to ascertain to what extent the administration's policies bore FDR's personal imprint, what motivated him to act as he did, and which people had the greatest influence over him.

Economic policies congruent with—or later, originating in—the work of influential economist John Maynard Keynes assumed an instrumental role in the recovery process.

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[9] Robert S. McElvaine, *The Great Depression: America, 1929-1941* (New York: Times Books, 1984).
[10] See for example: Frank Freidel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous With Destiny* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1990); William E. Leuchtenberg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932-1940* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963); Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt: The Politics of Upheaval* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960).

Keynes had warned of long-term and catastrophic consequences for the global economy in 1919 following the Treaty of Versailles. Keynes argued that going along with the business as usual boom and bust cycles was too dangerous, that the possible consequences were too great, and indeed that the 1930s proved how disastrous the bust could be. As the devastating effects of the Depression wore on, mainstream policymakers embraced a Keynesian approach: the amelioration of economic crisis through counter-cyclical deficit spending. Keynes was the most important economist whose work was explicitly engaged in the latter part of the 1930s.[11] As they were embraced, his doctrine ramified throughout much of the US political economy—including the system of information provision.[12]

Information provision and cultural projects of the 1930s figure in here because they were also prioritized and deemed in need of greater support and expansion regardless of their revenue-generating capabilities—because the expansion and enhancement of cultural life was actually good for a society overall. In a time of protracted economic crisis, in turn, people were brought more public goods and services based on government investment and federal programs.

Historians differ in their motivations for looking at the New Deal and in how they decipher its outcomes.[13] While the New Deal did not overthrow the capitalist system, that it produced positive, far-reaching changes has been disputed. Written after the "Reagan Revolution" of the 1980s, Alan Brinkley's *The End of Reform* is an attempt to explain "why modern American liberalism has proved to be a so much weaker and more vulnerable force" by examining the years between the recession of 1937 and the end of the Second World War.[14]

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[11] Fraser and Gerstle, *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980*.
[12] Vincent Mosco, *The Political Economy of Communication*, 2nd edition (London: Sage, 2009).
[13] Jefferson Cowie and Nick Salvatore, "The Long Exception: Rethinking the Place of the New Deal in American History," *International Labor and Working Class History* 74 (2008): 3-32.
[14] Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995).

Some New Deal liberals had initially argued for a fundamental overhaul of the economic order so as to ensure a more equal distribution of wealth and sweeping regulation of industry. By the end of the Second World War, liberals had abandoned the idea of fundamental change and a more skeptical critique of capitalism. Instead of framing economic problems in terms of overproduction, the emphasis shifted to the problems of under-consumption. As a result, economic reforms were geared toward stimulating the economy by helping Americans buy more consumer products. This approach gained further momentum in the expansion during and after the Second World War. Brinkley also argues for a reading of the New Deal as an evolving set of policies shaped by people who in turn made strategic decisions in response to contingencies. In the end the New Deal wound up being an exercise in extreme compromise, albeit one that did affect some lasting change. However, because these changes did not completely alter the economic structure, historians like Brinkley have argued that the subsequent impact has been muted. Brinkley concludes that it is not possible to "create a just and prosperous society without worrying about the problems of production that structure the economy."[15]

Some critics of New Deal policies have portrayed FDR as a radical socialist determined to undermine the economic order,[16] yet Brinkley and several other historians would vehemently disagree with such an assessment. McElvaine notes that Roosevelt was not a radical by any means, but a strategic politician who "sought recovery and more limited reform," and contends that Roosevelt's "commitment to substantial - although certainly not revolutionary - change was genuine... the federal relief effort [did not pose] a serious threat to existing power relations."[17] Like Brinkley, he argues that the economic policies of the New Deal were shaped by the belief

[15] Ibid., 271.
[16] Burton W. Folsom, Jr., *New Deal or Raw Deal?: How FDR's Economic Legacy has Damaged America* (New York: Threshold Editions, 2008).
[17] McElvaine, *The Great Depression*, 169.

that consumer purchasing power needed increasing. McElvaine suggests that New Deal policies were shaped directly by the experiences of Roosevelt and the people in his inner circle, many of whom felt a personal responsibility to alleviate the suffering of the poor.[18] Although radical sentiment heightened in the early 1930s, he says that "no organizational structure existed to translate the changed attitudes into political power."[19] Roosevelt constantly sought to strike a balance between the interests of the poor and working class, whose votes he needed, and those of the business community, whose financial support and political connections he also needed.

Of particular significance is the extent to which the Roosevelt administration prioritized information provision. One way this is evident is in how information provision was integrated into or made an essential part of new agencies created in the first hundred days. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) were two such agencies created through legislation passed in March 1933. FERA maintained a research library, while the TVA provided comprehensive library services for its workers. Typical of agencies and projects of the 1930s, they each maintained meticulous records for the purposes of reporting.

Historians generally concur that the military buildup for World War Two eventually ended the Depression. This is not to suggest that the Depression could not have ended without war, "but that it took the danger to convince Roosevelt and the Congress to spend at the level necessary to bring about recovery."[20] Again, throughout the 1930s Roosevelt and his

[18] Prominent examples include First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins. See Blanche Wiesen Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt, Volume 2: The Defining Years, 1933-1938* (New York: Penguin, 1999) and Kirsten Downey, *The Woman Behind the New Deal: The Life and Legacy of Frances Perkins—Social Security, Unemployment Insurance, and the Minimum Wage* (New York: Anchor Books, 2009).
[19] McElvaine, *The Great Depression*, 248.
[20] Ibid., 320.

administration pushed the New Deal reforms not to undermine capitalism, but to save it.[21] Some members of the Roosevelt administration—not to mention significant segments of the population at large—had hoped for more radical changes to the US economic system. Even supposing that Roosevelt himself personally supported such fundamental changes—and again, sources argue he did not—Roosevelt and the Democrats nevertheless had to balance any zeal for reform with the wishes of corporate America. Even at the height of the Depression, business leaders still wielded great influence over the American political economic system.

By the end of the Second World War, the United States was poised to reposition itself as a major economic and military power. It is difficult—if not impossible—to speculate how economic recovery would have proceeded without the aid of New Deal programs. What we do know is that the New Deal and the Works Progress Administration had an enormous impact on American political, economic, and cultural development, including the system of information provision. Historian Michael Bernstein writes that "the unprecedented crisis of the Great Depression brought an interventionist regulatory economics to center stage... the thirties and the New Deal agendas of the Roosevelt presidency served to legitimize regulatory economics in ways that had hitherto been unimaginable."[22] More recently, Jefferson Cowie and Nick Salvatore have argued that the Great Depression disrupted the previously set trajectory of social relations. The New Deal and the rise of the welfare state could only have occurred because of the cataclysmic Great Depression.[23]

[21] Mark H. Leff, *Limits of Symbolic Reform: The New Deal and Taxation, 1933-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
[22] Michael A. Bernstein, "Regulatory Economics and its Discontents: Some Theoretical and Historical Observations," *Info* 9, no. 2/3 (2007): 30.
[23] Cowie and Salvatore, "The Long Exception."

The Works Progress Administration

Although some relief effort began during the Hoover Administration, the New Deal refers to the unfolding and, for some, disorganized array of relief and recovery programs enacted under the Roosevelt Administration. Capitalized at $500 million and permitted to issue notes up to $1.5 billion (roughly $8.5 billion and $26 billion respectively in 2014),[24] the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) was established in January 1932 to provide loans for governments and businesses; however, the bureaucracy of the loan process made this early version of the RFC insufficient for stimulating the economy. Roosevelt continued the lending efforts of the RFC, increased its funding, and expanded its charge to include provision of direct aid in the form of grants rather than loans. The RFC went on to form one of the core agencies of what became known as the New Deal.[25]

Historians refer to the programs implemented in 1933 as the "First New Deal," while the "Second New Deal" encompasses the period from 1934 to 1936. New Deal programs aimed to revive both the economy and the human spirit, while several pieces of New Deal legislation sought to strengthen financial regulation, improve working conditions, and establish permanent sources for poor relief. These amounted to more than two dozen initiatives, some of which have persisted into the twenty-first century, such as the Social Security Administration, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and the Federal Communications Commission; other programs still exist in a modified form, such as the Surplus Commodities Program, the Farm Security Administration, and the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation. Other programs were established as temporary initiatives, such as the Civilian

[24] "Inflation Calculator," Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed August 13, 2014, http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm.
[25] Freidel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt*.

Conservation Corps, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, and the Works Progress Administration.[26]

With the passage of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935, President Roosevelt was authorized to allocate nearly $5 billion for work relief, making it "the greatest single appropriation in the history of the United States or any other nation."[27] This appropriation underwrote the creation of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a massive job creation effort meant to employ as many people as possible as quickly as possible. For this reason, some have dismissed the WPA as having provided for a lot of people "to do useless work poorly."[28] However, the efforts of WPA laborers produced changes of lasting utility and significance. This is evident in diverse ways, from the murals on post office buildings and archived recordings of former slaves' narratives, to the "more than 2,500 hospitals, 5,900 school buildings, 1,000 airport landing fields, and nearly 13,000 playgrounds" built.[29]

Whereas previous New Deal agencies such as the Public Works Administration focused on physical infrastructure, the WPA employed a great number of cultural laborers. Much of the scholarship on these cultural projects has focused on the arts programs generated through Federal One: theater, music, visual art, and writing.[30] Programs initiated under the WPA led to the eventual creation of the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Yet the arts projects are only part of the cultural labor utilized by the WPA. The

[26] Fraser and Gerstle, *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930–1980*; Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal*.
[27] Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal*, 125.
[28] Eric Rauchway, *The Great Depression and the New Deal: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 67.
[29] Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal*, 126.
[30] Federal One, or Federal Project Number One, was a WPA program initiated in the late 1930s and included the Federal Writers' Project, the Federal Arts Project, the Federal Music Project, and the Federal Theater Project. See William F. McDonald, *Federal Relief Administration and the Arts: The Origins and Administrative History of the Arts Projects of the Works Progress Administration* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1969).

WPA supported several white collar projects devoted to both access to and preservation of information.[31] There is scant scholarship on the Historical Records Survey, the Federal Records Survey, the American Imprints Inventory, the Research and Records Program, and the numerous indexing, cataloging, and bibliography projects generated by the WPA—each and all crucial developments in the emerging redefinition of information provision. A related problem is that the existing scholarship does not situate these projects within the larger transformation of the American system of information provision during the 1930s.

As has been emphasized by other scholars of the 1930s, the primary goal of the WPA was to put people back to work. In other words, the main point of the WPA was not to paint murals, build roads, or sew mattresses. But in putting people back to work through these projects, the projects then served as demonstrations of how and why those activities were needed and valuable. They validated the importance of public art and public works. In creating these structures and generating these resources, the Depression itself seems to have revealed a dearth that the public did not even realize had existed. During the Depression programs and resources were generated that arguably were needed and could have been built on a sound economic basis during prosperous times. It is therefore all the more remarkable that so much was built during a time when people had so little. Paradoxically, at the end of the decade, they came away with so much more.

On its face, the WPA accomplished what it set out to do: put millions of Americans back to work. It was phased out during the 1940s, when the mobilization of World War Two provided jobs on a scale not seen since the onset of the Depression. During its lifetime, the WPA

[31] Robert Binkley defined "white collar workers" as "the people who work with paper rather than machinery, who deal with the public rather than with raw materials." See Robert C. Binkley, "The Cultural Program of the W.P.A.," in *The Collected Works of Robert C. Binkley*, ed. Max Fisch (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948), 237.

employed 8.5 million people and created 1.5 million projects.[32] That so many people were put back to work is a striking accomplishment on its own. A related consequence of the size of the workforce employed through the WPA was that it allowed for the development of unique, large-scale projects. Thanks to the steady employee pool, visionary cultural laborers were able to translate big dreams into reality, even if only momentarily. Beth Kraig writes how Douglas McMurtrie, director of the American Imprints Inventory, had long found catalogs of American printing to be incomplete and inadequate, but he "recognized that he could not hope to remedy the flaws by working alone; accordingly, he began to develop plans for a nationwide survey employing hundreds of workers. A network of surveyors would stretch across the country, visiting libraries, archives, and historical institutions." Kraig goes on to acknowledge that "in any decade but the 1930s, McMurtrie's notions might have been nothing more than pipe dreams, but the development of work relief programs... offered a means of breathing life into such schemes."[33]

Of all of these projects, the Historical Records Survey is probably the most well-documented. Edward Barrese devoted his dissertation to the subject, and William McDonald's epic treatment of WPA arts projects has a chapter on the HRS.[34] We know that the HRS began as a project under the auspices of Federal One; but it was moved out and given its own independent status. Historian Luther Evans, who oversaw the HRS from the beginning and through most of its existence, succeeded Archibald MacLeish as the Librarian of Congress. This last detail

[32] Carter et al., *Historical Statistics of the United States*.
[33] Beth Kraig, "Douglas McMurtrie and the American Imprints Inventory, 1937-1942," *Library Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (1986): 19.
[34] Edward F. Barrese, "The Historical Records Survey: A Nation Acts to Save its Memory" (PhD diss., George Washington University, 1980); McDonald, *Federal Relief Administration and the Arts*.

perhaps demonstrates the potential greater connection between WPA information projects and librarianship. However, the full extent to which libraries and library workers participated in these projects is not yet well recognized. This void is evident in both the literature on the Great Depression and the New Deal as well as the literature on the history of librarianship.

Collaboration and cooperation are recurring themes in my dissertation. White collar work projects were highly collaborative efforts and accomplished through the cooperative efforts of state and local institutions and federal agencies. City governments, historical societies, museums, libraries, newspapers, hospitals, and of course the WPA served as co-sponsors depending on the kind of project, not only pooling together the needed financial capital and material resources and professional expertise, but allowing organizations to cooperate who previously did not realize their potential for fruitful collaboration. WPA projects helped organizations tap into the creative possibilities for new types of projects, highlight common goals through innovative programming, and generate useful informational resources. Often these were not obvious projects. Organizations who may not have seen their overlap refreshed their perspectives and enlarged their thinking thanks in part to the opportunity afforded through the WPA. The WPA was in this way a unifying effort in the obvious sense through the realization of, for example, union catalogues, but also indirectly in that it helped unify work across what were more isolated organizations and agencies. They could accomplish more together due to shared finances and resources, but also a heightened awareness and appreciation of one another and their work. The nature of shared responsibility here had other important implications. One was that the federal government could provide a generative and organizational impulse and assured funding. This was necessary in the 1930s after Hoover's inaction on the Depression convinced many Americans that federal action was crucial for stimulating all economic sectors.

WPA reports of course serve as promotional materials for the work of the WPA, for they not only document the efforts and achievements, but also argue for their importance. WPA reports never merely describe; they also embellish, emphasizing the size, the professional authority, and the high standards of these projects. One press release touts "the largest indexing job in history" while another boasts that "21 WPA workers finish huge clerical task for hospital."[35] This is in part meant to downplay the "boondoggle" critics, who alleged that WPA projects were glorified busywork that produced inferior results. WPA detractors were particularly skeptical of the white collar projects. In his history of the WPA, Nick Taylor concedes that "building work and disaster response were obvious jobs for the WPA. Some other jobs were not. But [Harry] Hopkins needed to put men who were not laborers, and women other than teachers, nurses, and seamstresses, to work, and so across America the WPA paid people to copy old records that were moldering to dust, repair toys for poor children's Christmas stockings, rebind books for libraries, index newspapers, compile lists of historic buildings, and record folk songs." This labor, Taylor argues, was as vital to economic recovery as the building projects, yet "much of this work never would have been done had the WPA not needed to create jobs for these segments of the population; with it, the WPA was helping to preserve the country's past even as it was helping to build for the future."[36] The detailed documentation of WPA projects also helped to serve another purpose: to galvanize similar projects into being. By describing how to do what, other localities and organizations may not only haven been inspired to do it, but also find a blueprint for how, going into the post-Depression future.

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[35] "21 WPA Workers Finish Huge Clerical Task for Hospital," WPA Papers, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.; "The Largest Indexing Job in History," WPA Papers, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.; "Gigantic Card Index Set Up By 3000 WPA Workers," WPA Papers, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

[36] Nick Taylor, *American-Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA: When FDR Put the Nation to Work* (New York: Bantam Books, 2008), 215.

Definitions

Information Provision

How do we characterize the system of information provision? Information provision activities relate to the systematic generation, collection, organization, dissemination, and preservation of documentary and scientific records. The system of information provision in the 1930s' United States therefore includes libraries and librarians but also includes the work of allied professionals in government research, media, higher education, archives, history, and documentalism. "Information provision" is intended to gesture at this wider range of associated precepts and practices.

"What is information?" has been debated in library and information science (LIS) literature for decades, mostly within information science.[37] Scholars identify Claude Shannon's mathematical model of communication as the first attempt to define information as a unit of scientific measurement. More recently, Bates has defined information as patterns of matter or energy.[38] Definitions of information have also piqued interest outside LIS: like Bates, historian Daniel Headrick has defined information as "patterns of energy and matter that humans understand."[39] In the 1960s and 1970s postindustrial theorists assigned information a fundamentally economic role, arguing "that information itself had become the transforming resource of social organization," and that "knowledge was supplanting capital and labor as the decisive factor of production."[40]

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[37] See for example: Michael Buckland, "Information as Thing," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 42 (1991): 351-60; Brenda Dervin, "Chaos, Order, and Sense-Making: A Proposed Theory for Information Design," in *Sense-Making Methodology Reader: Selected Writings of Brenda Dervin*, ed. Brenda Dervin, Lois Foreman-Wernet, and Eric Lauterbach (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2003), 325-40.

[38] Marcia J. Bates, "Information," in *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences*, 3rd ed., ed. Marcia J. Bates and Mary Niles Maack (New York: CRC Press, 2010), 2347-360.

[39] Daniel R. Headrick, *When Information Came of Age: Technologies of Knowledge in the Age of Reason and Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 4.

[40] Dan Schiller, *How to Think About Information* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 6.

As Bates and others have done, it is important to acknowledge that Shannon did not develop the mathematical model to explain human communication, but to explain signal transmission within electrical systems. Bates expands the definition by allowing for scientific and social dimensions of information; however, Bates' (and Headrick's) definition is so inclusive that it does not provide a clearer sense of what information is. The postindustrialist definition of information is reductionist—it says that information is intrinsically an economic unit.

I would argue that the Data, Information, Knowledge, and Wisdom (DIKW) hierarchy can help generate a useful definition of information. In the DIKW model, information necessarily follows data and precedes knowledge.[41] Data is raw, unprocessed signs and symbols; once data is interpreted and described it becomes information (similar to Brenda Dervin's "information as sense-making" thesis.)[42] I would then augment this definition with Dan Schiller's description of information as a resource that is "conditioned and structured by the social institutions and relations in which it is embedded."[43] Thinking of information as a cultural resource used to organize, interpret, and communicate provides us with a working definition to use in the context of the system of information provision. The system of information provision is the aggregate of activities and services that organize, interpret, and communicate information resources.

During the 1930s in the United States, this system was changing. Existing services and programs were being enlarged, with cases in point including books in Braille, expanded census data, and the enlargement of librarianship's mission to include intellectual freedom. The 1930s also saw new services like the Social Security Index, microfilm, and the National Archives and

[41] Arlene Taylor and Daniel Joudrey, *The Organization of Information*, 3rd ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2008).
[42] Dervin, "Chaos, Order, and Sense-Making."
[43] Schiller, *How to Think About Information*, 15.

Records Administration. These services and programs will receive more thorough treatments in later chapters.

In the 1930s, the system of information provision was in part characterized by interdependency. There is evidence of collaboration, cooperation, communication, and overlap. The evidence is present from correspondence between the Library Services Division of the Works Progress Administration and the American Library Association. In a letter dated November 2, 1939, ALA Executive Secretary Carl Milam invited the director of the division, Edward A. Chapman, to visit ALA headquarters in Chicago in order to discuss "the need of a unified program for the A.LA."[44] ALA leaders such as Milam were in frequent contact with WPA officials such as Ellen Woodward and Edward Chapman. This overlap is also seen in the appearance of other associations' materials in WPA archives, such as correspondence with the American Documentation Institute and the Joint Committee on Materials for Research. Writing in the 1970s, historian Peggy Sullivan observed that "de Tocqueville and other general commentators on American society have been cited to explain the great interest that librarians have shown in coming together in diverse organizations."[45]

The state (principally the United States federal government) occupied a central role in the system of information provision of the 1930s. The relationship between information and the state has a long history, therefore making the US government's growing role in the 1930s less surprising. States have historically been, and are still heavily invested in the generation, collection, management, and suppression of information. Peter Burke writes that "governments have been interested in collecting and storing information about the people under their rule from

[44] Letter from Carl H. Milam to Edward A. Chapman, November 2, 1939, WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
[45] Peggy Sullivan, "Library Associations," *Library Trends* 25, no. 1 (1976): 135.

the time of the ancient Assyrians, if not before," and Daniel Headrick notes that "governments had long known that knowledge is power."[46] Various agencies of the 1930s' US saw the need to more effectively harness the information they had while finding new ways to collect information relevant to addressing the economic crisis.

Scholars continue to debate the extent to which states become involved in information provision for purposes of social control. Colin Burke has cautioned against "imposing sweeping concepts on evidence" in order to prove the existence of "deterministic forces such as social control."[47] Edward Higgs argues that the state's interest in information provision cannot be entirely explained by a motivation for social control, and that there are likely both "utopian and dystopian" explanations.[48] I would not argue that state actors only use information provision for purposes of coercion or surveillance; on the other hand, it seems unlikely that the state would knowingly promote a system of information provision that would undermine its power. In the 1930s, the state's information provision activities were primarily reinflected by economic crisis. This is not to say that the expanded and newly created services and programs could not or would not be exploited for other reasons; however, this is not a focus of my dissertation.

This dissertation is not a survey of all activities that can be included under the system of information provision. Broadcast media, for example, are left out.[49] Its focus is not-for-profit agencies and institutions concerned with print media—therefore, while the newspaper industry qualifies as a print medium, as a commercial venture it is not included. Finally, as fascinated as I

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[46] Peter Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), 118; Headrick, *When Information Came of Age*, 106.
[47] Colin Burke, "History of Information Science," in *Information Today: Annual Review of Library & Information Science* 41, ed. Blaise Cronin (2007), 38.
[48] Higgs, *The Information State in England: The Central Collection of Information on Citizens Since 1500* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 10.
[49] Cindy C. Welch, "Broadcasting the Profession: The American Library Association and the National Children's Radio Hour" (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 2008).

am by postal history, and as important as I believe it to be, the post office as a means of delivery and information transfer is not discussed much in this dissertation. Its core concern is the production and distribution of information for use by people in scholarly and everyday communication through governmental and non-profit agencies and organizations. The choice to focus on a handful of government agencies and services, plus select scholarly societies and libraries is in part a practical one—a dissertation by nature must be bounded in some way. The other reason is that the story of these organizations and institutions has not been discussed in the context of the system of information provision and its transformation. This must be corrected.

To sum up: the system of information gestures at the range of precepts and practices that provide information services through scholarly organizations, libraries, federal agencies, and research centers. An information service, simply put, describes an activity that collects, organizes, distributes, and/or preserves ideas in a systematic way. An information service may do so in fixed, permanent format and/or in an unfixed format. Files that are recorded in some way (e.g., monograph or sound recording) are fixed, while unrecorded oral transmissions (e.g., conversation, in person reference interview) may be impermanent yet are nevertheless a type of information service.

How was the system of information provision transformed in the 1930s? It would be hard to imagine how anyone or anything could have endured the experience of the Great Depression without being changed by it. A scan of library literature in the early 1930s indicates a feeling of profound change on the horizon. Jesse Shera wrote in 1933 that social conditions were undergoing a fundamental metamorphosis, and that librarians needed to respond accordingly.[50] At the New York State Library Conference in 1934, New Deal brain-truster A.A. Berle Jr.

[50] J.H. Shera, "The Librarian's 'Changing World," *Library Journal*, February 15 1933, 149.

opened his address by bluntly stating "there is no point in describing to you the problems of the last few years...The only way out must entail a remolding of our social institutions."[51]

This social transformation necessitated changes at the most mundane and bureaucratic levels of record-keeping. The old ways of managing information simply would not do. Writing about the Office of Budget Management, Frederick Mosher argues that "the Great Depression, the multitude of New Deal programs, and finally World War II made the original routines of budgeting and auditing impracticable if not impossible."[52] The Social Security Administration is one New Deal agency whose creation required a complete overhaul of record-keeping practices, particularly in the management of vital statistics. In his history of archives and record-keeping, Richard Cox states that "federal recordkeeping is a twentieth-century development. It was not until after 1930 that even 90 percent of births and deaths in the United States were recorded."[53] From record-keeping to economic regulation, the experience of the 1930s made clear that business as usual was at best inefficient and at worst disastrous.

Information Workers and American Labor

Another term that requires explication is "information worker." I talk about librarians a lot in this dissertation, but I also talk about people who were engaged in library work at some level, but technically were not librarians. It would be inaccurate to say this is a dissertation on librarians in the 1930s, because I am writing about allied professionals as well. "Librarian" is

[51] A.A. Berle, Jr., "Libraries in the New Society," *Library Journal*, December 1934, 955.
[52] Frederick C. Mosher, *A Tale of Two Agencies: A Comparative Analysis of the General Accounting Office and the Office of Management and Budget* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 11.
[53] Richard J. Cox, *Closing an Era: Historical Perspectives on Modern Archives and Records Management* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 6.

sometimes too specific a term, and we therefore require one that is more comprehensive and all-encompassing. I use "information worker." For this concept I like the definition provided by political economist of media and communications scholar Vincent Mosco: "A broader definition of knowledge work encompasses the labor of those who handle, distribute, and convey information and knowledge. This includes school teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels, most journalists, librarians, media technicians such as telecommunication and cable television workers, as well as those who work in the postal services... These are considered knowledge workers because an increasing amount of their work involves making use of information or information technology to efficiently and effectively deliver a product whose value is intended to expand a recipient's knowledge. In essence, they represent a middle class within the knowledge sector."[54]

The professionals who labored in the host of information environments described in this dissertation were middle class, white-collar workers. Primary and secondary literature on emergency relief in the 1930s repeatedly describes the deliberate effort to employ white-collar workers. Close reading of archival documents reveals that when describing relief workers engaging in information labor, they were commonly referred to as white-collar workers. Relief administrators such as Harry Hopkins believed that putting white-collar workers to work in fields for which they were unsuited or untrained would be inefficient and wasteful: "Hopkins and his staff saw no sense in forcing artists, writers, and musicians to become third-rate laborers when they had skills that could be used in other ways."[55] Instead, relief agencies acknowledged the importance and value of white-collar projects and were flexible in allowing their creation in many forms. Information labor was part of this process. Expansion and articulation of

[54] Mosco, *The Political Economy of Communication*, 194.
[55] Taylor, *American-Made*, 127.

professional identity was certainly underway in the 1930s. The labor movement and its own power surge in the 1930s is readily acknowledged in the historical literature, yet this typically limits itself to only include industrial or blue collar workers.

It is useful to situate the notion of the information worker in the broader context of labor in the 1930s. Indeed, the struggles of the 1930s were informed by a rearticulation and resurgence of class consciousness. The subject of organized labor demands attention on the basis of numbers alone. Union membership doubled in under a decade, going from 11.6% in 1930 to 22.6% by 1937.[56] The extraordinary decline in the standard of living wrought by the Great Depression reinvigorated organization of the working class. Another reason for focusing on the labor movement in this period is that its ideas about redistribution generated a powerful influence on economic policymaking. Labor activists such as Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America head Sidney Hillman focused on working class consumption as a way of stabilizing the economy.[57] Commissioner of Labor Isador Lubin likewise believed "that underconsumption resulting from inequitable distribution of income had been a major factor contributing to the Great Depression."[58]

Likewise, one cannot appreciate the political economy of the 1930s without looking at the labor movement, and the Congress of Industrial Organizations in particular. A number of scholars have produced laudable works foregrounding these topics. The labor movement was one of the most powerful influences in the early twentieth century. This is especially true of the Depression years, when it found a new focus: the formation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Organized labor was also a major constituency for the Democratic Party; in the

[56] Carter et al., *Historical Statistics of the United States*.
[57] Steven Fraser, *Labor Will Rule: Sidney Hillman and the Rise of American Labor* (New York: Free Press, 1991).
[58] Joseph T. Goldberg and William T. Moye, *The First Hundred Years of the Bureau of Labor Statistics* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1985), 143.

1930s, Hillman and others in the CIO played a significant role in bolstering support for FDR and in the New Deal political coalition. While some policymakers were adopting a Keynesian approach to try to end the Depression, the CIO and industrial labor were arguing for redistribution as a class project. These are not opposing versions—there is overlap in the New Deal, and it is not clear in any moment which was the guiding spirit. At the same time, contingents within the labor movement disagreed over the precise role of state intervention in economic life; this is demonstrated in the formation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and its concomitant tensions with the American Federation of Labor.[59]

The CIO formed at a critical moment in American labor history. Its formation was, to some extent, a response to the conservatism of the American Federation of Labor. But its formation also signified the transformation of working class culture in the United States. The dire economic conditions brought on by the Great Depression and the federal government's initial weak response galvanized rank and file movements into militant action. An obvious indicator of labor's power and new economic policies in the 1930s was the passage of the National Labor Relations Act, which established state-sanctioned protections for unionization.

In the 1930s, the CIO was on the forefront of radical working self-organization in the United States. Robert Zieger argues that the transformation of the working class and the global economy in the pre-World War Two era enabled the conditions in which the CIO formed.[60] Other historians such as Lizabeth Cohen and Michael Denning have emphasized the importance of mass culture in this transformation of the working class.[61] Although terms like "working class" and "industrial" may be taken to exclusively mean blue collar workers, white collar

[59] Steve Fraser, "The Labor Question," in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980*, ed. Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989).
[60] Robert H. Zieger, *The CIO, 1934-1955*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).
[61] Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal*; Denning, *The Cultural Front*.

workers, including librarians, responded to and participated in this transformation, as evidenced in the establishment of white collar unions. Likewise, New Deal programs played a dynamic role in this transformation. Whether or not information professionals were radicalized by the experience of the 1930s, however, is not the subject of this dissertation.[62]

Information worker is a useful term because there were people in the 1930s whose work crossed and straddled boundaries across otherwise discrete professional identities. Robert Binkley was at times an historian, librarian, archivist, and educator. This breadth of professional skill is evident from glancing at titles in the table of contents for the posthumous collection of Binkley writings published in 1948, eight years after his untimely death from lung cancer at age 42. It would certainly be accurate to refer to Binkley as an historian, but a more apt description would be information worker or even better information activist. Binkley and others were deeply committed in the 1930s to identifying connections across types of information work and taking concrete steps to standardize and modernize processes of collection, organization, distribution, and preservation.[63]

Is "information worker" an anachronistic term? Perhaps only inasmuch as using "library and information science" is an anachronistic term. This too was not used in the 1930s, but has been used in contemporary literature when talking about the 1930s. Information worker, like the system of information provision, are terms meant to capture the breadth of activity. Finally, although my dissertation is not only about librarians, they are certainly part of the story I am trying to tell.

[62] Joyce Latham's 2006 dissertation addresses this topic in the context of the Chicago Public Library. See Joyce M. Latham, "White Collar Read: The American Public Library and the Left Led CIO; A Case Study of the Chicago Public Library, 1929-1952" (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 2007).
[63] Max Fisch, ed. *Selected Papers of Robert C. Binkley* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948).

Part of situating and articulating what constitutes the system of information provision in the 1930s' United States involves identifying key institutions and individuals. I would also like to address which experiences are not addressed but are nevertheless important, and can perhaps be set aside as topics for future research.

Individuals and Institutions in the System of Information Provision

As mentioned in the introduction, this dissertation seeks to synthesize existing scholarship on interrelated topics. This dissertation looks in depth at the American Library Association, the Joint Committee on Materials for Research, Science Service/American Documentation Institute, the National Agricultural Library, the Works Progress Administration, and the National Archives and Records Administration. I am primarily concerned with professional associations, scholarly societies, and government agencies/services; however none of these will be explored across its full range of activity. The Works Progress Administration, even to narrow to its activities involved in the system of information provision, would form the basis of an entire dissertation. Thus here I am only considering a few key aspects that allow us to get a better grasp on how these services and agencies were part of the transformation and were interconnected. The importance of collaboration and cooperation is emphasized throughout. With the WPA, the in depth consideration encompasses the various library projects overseen by Women's and Professional Projects. For the American Library Association, I am chiefly interested in the National Plan for Libraries, federal aid, and library extension. For the work of the JCMR, Science Service/American Documentation Institute, and the National Agricultural Library, I am mainly interested in the Bibliofilm Service. The Bibliofilm Service is an obvious

choice because it was an information service that involved the close cooperation of several institutions.

What is the value of looking at the system of information provision vis a vis institutions and their principal figures? Surely the Bibliofilm Service, to use but one example, is an overlooked topic in historical scholarship, as is the contribution of Claribel Barnett, the NAL librarian. These subjects could and should form the basis of a research project. Yet a key reason for structuring this dissertation as I have is to emphasize the interconnectedness. The Bibliofilm Service should be given more sustained attention and focus, but it will not occur here. Not because it is unworthy, but because it is but one part of a larger whole. This dissertation is about emphasizing the parts and the whole, and their relationship to one another.

What is left out? For one, this dissertation does not focus as much on user populations, but more on information providers. This dissertation is not a history from the bottom up. In the afterword to the second edition of *The Cultural Front*, Michael Denning notes that "This book has been a tale of that 'New Deal order,' though I have not, for the most part, looked at the dominant political and economic forces, the 'corporate' or 'multi-national' liberalism of Roosevelt's historical bloc, that won the struggles of '1934.'"[64] Similarly, Lizabeth Cohen's *Making a New Deal* focuses on industrial workers in Chicago.[65] In this sense Denning's and Cohen's works are examples of history from the bottom up. My dissertation on the other hand takes a macroscopic view, looking at institutions and agencies in the system of information provision. My approach is useful because I am connecting activities and actors in a new way that allows for a better understanding of the transformation that occurred. Users are discussed inasmuch as I try to identify intended or targeted user groups for services. For example, when

[64] Ibid., 464.
[65] Cohen, *Making a New Deal*.

discussing the American Library Association's campaign for library outreach for spreading library services to rural populations, I focus on ALA's efforts as opposed to looking at how users saw these efforts.

This is not to say that focusing on users is less important or interesting than looking at the providers. To some extent, it is a matter of perspective to divide people into such categories of users and providers, it is certainly not a matter of users versus providers. Providers themselves are users in certain contexts, and vice versa. The everyday people who provided personal and demographic information were vital to designing programs for economic recovery that were meaningful and accurate and more likely to have an impact. In a way then it is a bit crude to make such a distinction between users and providers. Nevertheless, in this dissertation I am making a case for the sake of argument that agencies, institutions, and their high-ranking officials and leaders were the information providers.

Wayne Wiegand has critiqued American library historiography for privileging the library in the life of the user versus the user in the life of the library.[66] Extrapolating from Wiegand's point, this dissertation is arguably more about the system of information provision in the life of the user rather than the other way around. Wiegand has also argued that American library history makes too much about libraries as a democratic force.[67] By incorporating the views of library leaders, who certainly believed in the library as a democratic force, my dissertation adds a

[66] Wayne A. Wiegand, Tunnel Vision and Blind Spots: What the Past Tells Us about the Present; Reflections on the Twentieth-Century History of American Librarianship," *Library Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (1999): 1-32.
[67] Wayne A. Wiegand, *Main Street Public Library: Community Places and Reading Spaces in the Rural Heartland*, 1876-1956 (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 2011).

dimension more in line with Sidney Ditzion's *Arsenals of a Democratic Culture* or Jesse Shera's *Foundations of the Public Library*.[68] I appreciate Professor Wiegand's perspective, especially in how he challenges dominant theoretical and methodological paradigms in library history. I agree with him, even though in this dissertation I am perhaps perpetuating the very kind of library history (or information history) that he finds less compelling. In fact I see my dissertation as helping to diminish the "tunnel vision and blind spots" found in mainstream accounts of library history. Of course, as Donald Case points out, "one scholar's 'tunnel vision' may be another scholar's microscope."[69] My project synthesizes many narratives and in doing so shows how they talk to one another in ways that were previously unidentified. One way that my dissertation makes a contribution is in the way that I connect library history to other interrelated historical narratives, which broadly may be characterized as information history.

Why is focusing on leaders important and how is it a useful approach? One practical justification is that people in power tend to leave extensively documented records of official business. The recordkeeping practices of professional organizations and government agencies have generated a wealth of archival documents. Consider that the National Archives' holdings of the Works Progress Administration alone is estimated at more than 7300 cubic feet and includes 159,302 items.[70] Finally, users do not exist until there are systems and services for them to use.

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[68] Sidney Ditzion, *Arsenals of a Democratic Culture: A Social History of the American Public Library Movement in New England and the Middle States from 1850 to 1900* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1947); Jesse Shera, *Foundations of the Public Library: The Origins of the Public Library Movement in New England, 1629-1855* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949).
[69] Donald O. Case, "Comment," *Library Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (1999): 537.
[70] National Archives, "Statistical Summary of Holdings," accessed on April 28, 2014, http://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/index-numeric/.

Expansion and Crisis in the System of Information Provision

Crisis and expansion are common themes in histories of the various agencies and institutions that constitute the system of information provision in the 1930s. In some cases, however, the secondary literature barely acknowledges the 1930s, suggesting or outright claiming that not much of note occurred at all during the Great Depression. For this reason, I will cite some of this research and I argue that a) the experience of economic crisis powerfully influenced the trajectory of the federal government, and b) that expansion occurred often, both because of and in spite of economic crisis. In the following section, I will specifically review these with regard to libraries, government information, and scholarly societies.

Libraries

What was the specific role of the library in the 1930s in the transformation of the system of information provision? As the library is a public information institution, excluding it from any modern information history would be shortsighted. The public library assumed an important role in economic recovery while the initial projects of the New Deal were still emerging; libraries were nicknamed "Depression College" as early as 1933.[71] Circulation statistics reported in January 1933 showed an average 37% increase in 33 cities between 1929 and 1932. Circulation increased 173% in Hammond, Indiana.[72] In the 1930s, libraries seized the opportunity to not only emphasize their value as an institution, but the importance—even the necessity—of public institutions and social welfare programs more broadly. This is emphasized repeatedly in the professional and scholarly library literature of the 1930s, both with regard to economic recovery

[71] Theodore Francis Green, "The Public Library in the Depression: As a Layman Sees It," *Library Journal*, September 1, 1933, 670.
[72] "Increase in Reading Since 1929," *Library Journal*, January 15, 1933, 77.

and democratic culture. There can be no question that libraries were shaped by and responsive to events of the 1930s.

Yet as James Carmichael observed in the introduction to a special issue of *Libraries and the Cultural Record* in 2011, "the literature of library history devoted to the Great Depression is sparse."[73] Perhaps some scholars barely acknowledge the 1930s in the attempt to write comprehensive histories of libraries spanning decades (or even centuries). Writing in 1995, Verna L. Pungitore devotes a page and a half to the Great Depression in her book *Innovation and the Library*. Pungitore's book is not exactly a history of innovation, though that is part of the narrative. Pungitore is more concerned with theorizing innovation in organizations and then looking at how this has occurred at the public library level. She does highlight some important points, like how library circulation went up nearly forty percent between 1929 and 1933, and that "public libraries began to forge alliances with the federal government during the Depression...federal aid contributed some forty percent of the amount of funding normally available to public libraries." She concludes that while public libraries made some attempts to make big changes in the 1930s, "public libraries in the 1930s had not moved very far from their turn of the century traditions."[74] Arguing in a similar vein, Michael Buckland writes that "the visions of the European documentalists appear to have been largely absent from library science in the U.S.A."[75] Buckland's assertion was based on frequency of topics published in *The Library Quarterly*, and he is quite right that the journal focused on more traditional library topics to the exclusion of documentalism. Yet when considering the 1930s in its entirety—the actions of

[73] James V. Carmichael, Jr., "Introduction: The Continuing Depression," *Libraries and the Cultural Record* 46 (2011): 252.
[74] Verna L. Pungitore, *Innovation and the Library: The Adoption of New Ideas in Public Libraries* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 51.
[75] Michael Buckland, "Documentation, Information Science, and Library Science in the U.S.A.," *Information Processing and Management* 32, no. 1 (1996): 67.

government agencies, the committees created by librarians, the collaboration between documentalists and librarians—a different picture emerges.

Library history scholars such as Michael Harris have addressed the 1930s to some extent. In earlier works published in the 1970s, Harris mentions the 1930s in connection with intellectual freedom, but on the whole he regards the decade as a less significant period in library history. Harris claims that "from roughly 1920 to 1940….the profession focused increasingly on the management of libraries, and ignored both the question of the library's role in society, and the librarian's personal obligation to behave like a professional."[76] In "The Role of the Public Library in American Life" Harris writes that "in the 1930s a few librarians began to sense the mindlessness of public librarianship in the United States."[77] He elaborates on how international political events of the 1930s helped redefine the library "as an institution which could play a vital role in promoting and preserving democracy in America…"[78] In his more recent publication, *History of Libraries in the Western World*, Harris acknowledges the role of the Great Depression in library history, noting that public libraries continued to grow throughout the twentieth century "despite the intrusion of financial crises like the great depression of 1929,"[79] and for his section on academic and research libraries, Harris points toward themes developed in this dissertation. He discusses the importance of federal aid, WPA, and the "search for new and efficient means of providing library service" in the form of microfilm, cooperative acquisitions, and union catalogs.[80] On school libraries he offers that "there was still some progress in the 1930s in spite

[76] Michael H. Harris, "Portrait in Paradox: Commitment and Ambivalence in American Librarianship, 1876-1976," *Libri* 26 (1976): 292.
[77] Michael H. Harris, "The Role of the Public Library in American Life: A Speculative Essay," Occasional Papers, University of Illinois Graduate School of Library Science 117 (1975): 17.
[78] Ibid., 18.
[79] Michael H. Harris, *The History of Libraries in the Western World* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1999), 247.
[80] Ibid., 254.

of, and partly because of the Depression."[81]

Harris' inclusion of the 1930s is helpful, but does not go far enough in describing how libraries were affected by the Great Depression. Turning to other sources, we find plenty of indicators that libraries in the 1930s felt the impact of economic crisis deeply. One way to measure this impact is to examine library budgets, while another way is to look at services demanded versus library resources available. The latter has been covered in Robert Scott Kramp's 1975 dissertation, recently printed as a monograph by Library Juice Press.[82] Kramp found that while library budgets shrank in the 1930s, library use increased. Yet his findings also revealed a growth in scholarship produced about libraries. In a review of the literature produced about library services during the 1930s, he concludes that "the studies of library services during the depression were perhaps more numerous than studies of any other phase of library activity."[83] The experience of the Great Depression hastened the need for research on libraries, triggering an expansion in scholarly production. This spike in research was found in scholarly journals like *The Library Quarterly* and in trade publications like *Library Journal*. From its inaugural issue in 1931 through the end of 1939, *The Library Quarterly* published nearly 30 articles related to economic crisis.

Library annual reports accounted for most of Kramp's analysis. In addition to library budgets, another means of gauging the impact of the Depression on the system of information provision is to look at library education. The annual reports of the Library School at the University of Illinois in the 1930s are an indicator of how libraries felt the impact of and responded to economic crisis. For the report for academic year 1928/1929 produced in May

[81] Ibid., 263.
[82] Robert Scott Kramp, *The Great Depression: Its Impact on Forty-Six Large American Public Libraries: An Inquiry Based on a Content Analysis of Published Writings of Their Directors* (Duluth, MN: Library Juice Press, 2010).
[83] Ibid., 43

1929, on the eve of the Depression, the Annual Report glowingly states that "The number of students enrolled in the Library School this past year has been the largest in the history of the school."[84] Director Phineas Windsor also notes the continuation of successful job placement, writing "One hundred and forty-eight positions in libraries were filled during the year, partly or wholly as a result of recommendations from the School offices. Of these, eighty-seven were in university, college and reference libraries, thirty-two in public libraries and twenty-nine in high school, teaching or other positions."[85]

Even in May 1930, when the annual report for academic year of 1929/30 was released, the state of the school seems by this account to be in good stead, with Windsor reporting "Due to the large increase in the Library School enrollment, it has been necessary to add two new members to the faculty this past year... The Library School enrollment in steadily increasing each year."[86] He goes on to note that "One hundred and eighty-two positions in libraries in thirty-six states were filled during the year, chiefly on recommendations from the Library School office."[87]

It is not until May 1932, when the annual report was released for academic year 1931/32, that the toll of the Great Depression is first chronicled in the pages of the Annual Report. Assistant Director Amelia Kreig reported that "The number of students enrolled in the Library School was almost as large as that of the year 1930/31 which had been the largest enrollment in the history of the school up to that time," yet "a larger number of first year students had been accepted but at the last minute an unusually large percentage of them found that adequate funds were not available and they were obliged to postpone their admission."[88] It appears faculty

[84] "Annual Report of the University of Illinois Library School," May 1929, Graduate School of Library and Information Science Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1.
[85] Ibid., 2.
[86] "Annual Report of the University of Illinois Library School," May 1930, Graduate School of Library and Information Science Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1.
[87] Ibid., 2.
[88] Ibid., 3.

workload increased with the worsening of the Depression, with Krieg noting that "The increase in the number of advanced students was the cause of a great increase in research work which developed into a heavy burden for faculty members already carrying heavy schedules."[89]

Although Kreig reported that enrollment had not decreased significantly, she does acknowledge that "The year was an unusually harassing one from the standpoint of financial difficulties. Many students started their training with insufficient funds hoping to obtain employment or student loans to eke out their money. The situation became more distressing as banks all over the country continued closing their doors."[90] Furthermore, "while the class of 1929/30 was placed without difficulty, a definite reduction in the number of vacancies reported became evident in the placing of the class of 1930/31."[91]

Kreig's report indicates that the severity of the Depression had not been well understood until that academic year: "Unfortunately the great part of the class of 1931/32 had been accepted for admission before the Library Schools and the profession had become cognizant of the potential unemployment disaster they faced."[92] Looking at the annual reports for the Library School at Illinois is one entry point for understanding how one part of the system of information provision responded to economic crisis. Just as Kramp's analysis of the annual reports of large public library systems in the 1930s demonstrated that the impact of the Depression was not immediately felt in libraries, so can we infer the same from the annual reports of the University of Illinois' Library School with regard to library education. Much as the general nadir of the Depression did not come until 1932, so it was in libraries and library schools.

[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid., 4.
[91] Ibid., 5.
[92] Ibid., 6.

Similarly, Roger Geiger concluded that "research universities comparatively unscathed by the effects of the Depression until 1932, almost three years after the initial crash of the stock market."[93] From 1932 on, however, libraries and library schools became more preoccupied with finances and budgets. One example can be found in that of librarian Jeannette Howard Foster, who left her position at Antioch College in 1933 after being informed her pay would be reduced from $1,500 to $952 per year. Foster opted to accept a fellowship for doctoral study at Chicago's Graduate Library School.[94] These cuts were felt by various types of libraries, with ALA member Paul Howard writing in 1939 that "public libraries received their greatest budgets in 1931 and their smallest budgets in 1933 and 1934."[95] Foster's experience is also consonant with the findings of the Pratt Institute's Josephine Adams, whose 1934 triennial questionnaire "showed that 63 per cent of our graduates had suffered salary cuts between 1931 and 1934."[96] The following triennial survey of 1937 found that employment conditions for librarians had improved considerably.[97]

But if we take 1932 as the low point, and historians are generally in agreement on this given the rate of unemployment, it is all the more remarkable when we consider the evidence of expansion in the system of information provision in the early 1930s. In 1931, the University of Chicago's Graduate Library School began publishing *The Library Quarterly*, a journal which would be an important source of library research throughout the decade. Just a few years earlier, in 1926, the University of Chicago had become, with funding from the Carnegie Corporation, the

[93] Roger L. Geiger, *To Advance Knowledge: The Growth of American Research Universities, 1900-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 246.
[94] Joanne Passet, *Sex Variant Woman: The Life of Jeannette Howard Foster* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2008).
[95] Paul Howard, "Library Personnel in the Depression," *Library Journal*, March 15, 1939, 219-21.
[96] Josephine A. Rathbone, "Library School Graduates and the Depression," *Library Journal*, March 15, 1935, 240-41.
[97] Josephine A. Rathbone, "The Situation in 1937," *Library Journal*, April 1, 1938, 256.

first to offer a doctoral degree in library science.[98] Research published in *The Library Quarterly* by Leon Carnovsky, Carleton B. Joeckel, and Louis Round Wilson went on to help ground arguments for the federal funding for libraries made in the 1930s (see Chapter Five).

This evidence of expansion in the midst of crisis can be found elsewhere in the realm of library education. Librarian job appointments were a regular feature in *Library Journal* during the 1930s, as they are today. Each issue (which in the 1930s appeared biweekly) listed recent job appointments in various types of libraries. Beginning in 1936, *Library Journal* also published an annual list of library school appointments.[99] This feature listed graduates by school and identified each graduate's job title and place of employment. One may infer that this new feature was meant to showcase the viability of a career in librarianship. And if the number of new library school programs that began in the 1930s is any indication, there was a demand for library training. The years between 1930 and 1939 saw the establishment of eleven new accredited library schools, including programs at the University of Denver (1931), the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1931), and the University of Kentucky (1933).[100]

Library cooperation became more popular in the 1930s as individual libraries sought to maintain or even increase services while managing decreases in funding. This kind of cooperation occurred across and between various types of libraries, including public, academic, and special (e.g., governmental agency libraries). One example of how this cooperation took on new vigor in the 1930s was in the establishment of the Association of Research Libraries in 1932.[101] I am not arguing that the ARL was established because of the Great Depression, but that

[98] Josephine Metcalfe Smith, *A Chronology of American Librarianship* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1968), 154.
[99] "1936 Library School Appointments," *Library Journal*, October 15, 1936, 777.
[100] Donald G. Davis, Jr., *The Association of American Library Schools: An Analytical History* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1974).
[101] Lee Anne George and Julia Blixrud, *Celebrating Seventy Years of the Association of Research Libraries, 1932-2002* (Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries, 2002).

it is reasonable to consider that its having been established during the Depression may have had an impact on its formation: in how it set priorities and went about accomplishing them. Certainly there were examples of inter-agency cooperation or professional associations prior to the 1930s. But that so much of it seemed to bubble up in the 1930s and particularly in the system of information warrants further consideration. It says quite a lot about the importance of information provision and cultural production in response to economic crisis, and reimagining a post-crisis world.

Government Information

It was not only libraries that demonstrated the correlation between economic decline and the upsurge of information investment. Information provision at various levels of government become more important during the crisis. This manifested itself in the creation of new statistical programs and expansion of existing information collecting activities.

Policymakers have long seen the relationship between accurate statistics and adequate planning. This is evinced in the creation of the Bureau of the Census and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Systematic collection, compilation, and dissemination of demographic information was seen as necessary for the proper functioning of government and commerce.[102] This type of information activity was seen as a means of properly assessing social conditions, which in turn allows the electorate, employers, and policymakers to make informed decisions. The basic early function of census information was to properly apportion votes and allocate the number of representatives each state should have in Congress. However, although this information was collected by the government, it was of use to the private sector as well. Employers used census

[102] A. Hunter Dupree, *Science in the Federal Government: A History of Policies and Activities* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

information in deciding how and where to provide commercial services. Both the census and the Bureau of Labor Statistics expanded their information services during the 1930s. The economic crisis of the 1930s brought to bear an information crisis through which people realized how much they did not know, and how much they did not know that they did not know about vital issues of the day.

Both the Census and the Bureau of Labor Statistics and their roles in economic crisis in the 1930s have received some treatment by scholars, and I do not mean to reiterate those findings.[103] What I mean to do by calling attention to these events is to situate the work of the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the wider system of information provision. As with other aspects of this system, entities such as the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics have been examined in isolation, cut off from their place within the larger framework. What happened in these agencies is part of the broader transformation of American society and particularly in the system of information provision; they will be addressed in greater depth in Chapter Five.

The urgency of economic crisis drove the creation of new information-dependent federal agencies such as the Social Security Administration. In order to establish and determine eligibility, the federal government required more stringent development and management of vital statistics. Social Security required systematically organized and readily accessible records. Until the 1930s, vital statistics in many localities were handwritten and disorganized, making it all but impossible to validate access for millions of Americans eligible for Social Security. Similar problems became evident in other agencies that furnished proof of age information. A 1939 report about WPA workers and the Census Bureau describes some of these problems in detail:

[103] Margo J. Anderson, *The American Census*; Goldberg and Moye, *The First Hundred Years of the Bureau of Labor Statistics*.

"under the old system, the records were preserved in the same volumes in which they had been originally compiled by the house-to-house canvassers. They were not alphabetically arranged. They were not even arranged numerically according to street and house number...two years after the Social Security Act was passed, the Bureau was completely swamped by requests for age data. Persons desiring this data had to wait as long as six months before their requests could be handled." The report goes on to state emphatically that "the modernization of our census records became imperative."[104] Verifying age information under the previous system took up to six months, while the new indexing system was purported to take only three minutes. Information workers were essential for modernizing federal and local record-keeping in the 1930s.

Similar initiatives occurred in other government locations. As the country plunged into the depths of the Depression in 1931, Congress passed the National Archives Act. In her *Chronology of American Librarianship*, Josephine Metcalfe Smith notes that such legislation had been proposed "as early as 1878," first by President Rutherford B. Hayes. Beginning in the late nineteenth century with the rise of the research university and establishment of the historical profession, historical researchers had argued for a national depository for American records. Yet it was not until the Great Depression that the National Archives came into being. In the 1930s, the National Archives played "a leading role in establishing a recognized archival profession in the United States complete with training and publication programs and a professional organization."[105]

As with the ARL, I am not arguing that the National Archives was established because there was an economic crisis, but that because the National Archives were established during an

[104] "WPA-Alphabetized Census Will Save Time and Money," WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 2.
[105] Donald R. McCoy, *The National Archives: America's Ministry of Documents, 1934-1968* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 26.

economic crisis, its early formation was shaped by that experience. When Donald R. McCoy writes that "from its earliest days, the archives aimed at being a coordinated organization dealing with federal records in diverse ways and providing an unusual range of services for government, researchers, and ordinary citizens," we can see that systematization as well as institutionalization transpired in this context as well during the Depression decade.[106] As with library services, advocates claimed that archives were crucial for political engagement. Robert Binkley wrote: "The objective of archival policy in a democratic country cannot be the mere saving of paper; it must be nothing less than the enriching of the complete historical consciousness of the people as a whole."[107] The development of the National Archives as an institution and the formation of archival policy are another indicator of a dynamism during the crisis years.

Still another prominent and rapidly changing federal information agency of the 1930s was the National Agricultural Library. The NAL of the 1930s was a focal point of the system of information provision's transformation, at the intersection of librarianship, government information, and documentalism. In the mid-1930s, the NAL "entered into a far-reaching cooperative arrangement with the American Documentation Institute and the Science Service." This cooperative agreement launched the Bibliofilm Service, "the first experimental center for supplying microfilm and photocopies of articles on a large-scale to scientific workers."[108] In the next chapter I will offer some explanations for why the NAL became the site for such groundbreaking work. For now it is enough to emphasize that the projects initiated under the NAL were emblematic of the kinds of broader changes occurring on the federal level in the 1930s. The NAL of the 1930s also underscores once more the importance of cooperation

[106] Ibid., 364-65.
[107] Robert C. Binkley, "Strategic Objectives in Archival Policy," in *The Collected Works of Robert C. Binkley,* ed. Max Fisch (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948), 273.
[108] Alan E. Fusonie, "The History of the National Agricultural Library," *Agricultural History* 62, no. 2 (1988): 203.

between different types of organizations. Outside of libraries, the Joint Committee on Materials for Research and the American Documentation Institute were arguably the most pivotal non-governmental and non-commercial organizations in the larger system of information provision.

Scholarly Societies

The Joint Committee on Materials for Research (JCMR) was established in 1929 by members of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) and the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS)—hence the "joint committee." The SSRC and ACLS established the JCMR as a means of exploring methods of reproducing research materials. They wished to determine the best possible methods, with best in this case meaning long-lasting and easily shared. They set out to establish uniform standards for reproducing research materials, including but not limited to monographs, periodicals, pamphlets, photographs, slides, and sound recordings. An article from a 1937 issue of *Library Journal* describes the purpose of the JCMR as "the enlargement, improvement and the better preservation of materials for research."[109] Leadership of the JCMR primarily fell to historian Robert C. Binkley of Western Reserve University in Cleveland. Notable JCMR board members included Harry Lydenberg, director of the New York Public Library, Solon Buck, second Archivist of the United States, and eminent archival theorist T.R. Schellenberg. Together these men represented the interests of librarians, historians, archivists, and the emergent area of documentalism, forerunner of information science. Binkley and the Committee published two key texts in the 1930s: *Methods of Reproducing Research Materials* in

[109] Ralph H. Carruthers, "Reproducing Research Material," *Library Journal*, April 1, 1937, 288.

1931 and a revised *Manual on Methods of Reproducing Research Materials* in 1936.[110] Kenneth Carpenter writes that

> Through their umbrella organizations, they formed a joint committee, which to this day continues to be the only instance in which scholars of many sorts took a long and hard look at what might be called the infrastructure of academia...The Joint Committee on Materials for Research initially focused on these problems of scholars and libraries, with emphasis on the possibility that the new technologies of reproduction, in both paper and film, could solve them by creating a new pattern of communication. They could, Binkley envisioned, diffuse among libraries the source materials for research, and then inexpensively disseminate the results of the scholar's work, even assist in the note taking and document gathering inherent in the process.[111]

Binkley was a key figure in hastening the transformation of the system of information provision in the 1930s, with obvious evidence being his simultaneous involvement in WPA library projects, the American Documentation Institute, and the Joint Committee on Materials for Research. His death in 1940 from lung cancer ended what was by all accounts an extraordinary life cut short. As a strong advocate for microfilm in libraries and other institutions, Binkley also played a role in the transformation of technology, access, and policy in the 1930s, which I discuss in subsequent chapters.

Other scholars have identified Binkley's significance, including Irene Farkas-Conn, who discusses Binkley's contributions in the context of documentalism and the history of information science.[112] Farkas-Conn has written a definitive account of the origins of information science in

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[110] Robert C. Binkley, *Methods of Reproducing Research Materials; A Survey Made for the Joint Committee on Materials for Research of the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies* (Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers, 1931); Robert C. Binkley, *Manual on Methods of Reproducing Research Materials: A Survey Made for the Joint Committee on Materials for Research of the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies* (Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers, 1936).

[111] Kenneth Carpenter, "Toward a New Cultural Design: The American Council of Learned Societies, the Social Science Research Council, and Libraries in the 1930s," in Thomas Augst and Kenneth Carpenter, eds., *Institutions of Reading: The Social Life of Libraries in the United States* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 283.

[112] Irene Farkas-Conn, *From Documentation to Information Science: The Beginnings and Early Development of the American Documentation Institute - American Society for Information Science* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1990).

the 1930s, chronicling how the American Documentation Institute evolved into the American Society for Information Science (later the Association for Information Science and Technology, or ASIS&T). She devotes a significant portion of her study to events and people of the 1930s, when microfilm was heralded as an extraordinary breakthrough. Colin Burke agrees that documentalists saw "microfilm as the basis for a data and information revolution."[113]

Insufficient research exists on the documentalist/information science projects incubated by the WPA, but the available scholarship suggests that such endeavors were as imaginative and large in scope as other information projects. The Math Tables Project employed "human computers"—people who mass-produced mathematical calculations for research applications. David Alan Grier writes how the Math Tables Project "reflected the idealism of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal," although he adds that "the Math Tables Project... succeeded as a computing organization because it was led by two highly motivated scientists who were determined to see it succeed."[114] This point could be made more broadly about WPA projects. Just as Arnold Lowan and Gertrude Blanch were determined to see the Math Tables Project succeed, the same could be said of Luther Evans and the Historical Records Survey, or Douglas McMurtrie and the American Imprints Inventory.

It is essential to keep in mind that none of these agencies functioned in isolation from one another. As already mentioned, part of what characterized the system of information provision and the general experience of relief efforts in the 1930s was a spirit of cooperation. Sometimes this cooperation was financial, such as in the way the WPA provided federal funds while requiring the host community to contribute a portion. The cooperation could involve the sharing

[113] Colin Burke, *Information and Secrecy: Vannevar Bush, Ultra, and the Other Memex* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1994), 115.
[114] David Alan Grier, "The Math Tables Project of the Work Projects Administration: The Reluctant Start of the Computing Era," *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing* 20, no. 3 (1998): 33-50.

of physical resources, such as documents or equipment. Cooperation also meant sharing of labor across agencies and institutions. There were many examples of this, some of which are described in this dissertation.

We would be hard-pressed to find an information agency or institution for which the Great Depression was an outright boon. Yet, because of the spurred creativity and innovative ways of organizing, collection, using information, revival and reimagining form a part of the experience of the Great Depression was the story of.

Information and Culture in the 1930s

What is the relationship between the system of information provision and cultural projects of the 1930s? The relief projects of the 1930s in their diversity hearkens back to the early twentieth century labor slogan "Bread and Roses": there was a simultaneous call for economic relief as well as a restoration of human dignity. In his history of the CIO, Robert Zieger argues that the 1930s saw a resurgence of radical activism in the labor movement which had not been seen in the United States since before the onset of the First World War.[115] During the 1930s activists fought against both impoverishment of the economy as well as the spirit. The system of information provision did more than offer data in service of economic recovery, it also nurtured the human spirit. No less than Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins herself said of libraries: "It is fortunate that at a time when the practical rewards of effort are at their low point, the opportunities for men and women to expand their mental outlook are better than ever before."[116] Libraries were needed, it was argued, to meet innate human needs for intellectual

[115] Zieger, *The CIO, 1934-1955*.
[116] "The New Leisure, Its Significance and Use," *Library Journal*, May 15, 1933, 444.

stimulation, political engagement, and recreation.

The cultural projects supported by the WPA presumed a similar lofty purpose, as it was felt that access to a shared culture was part of a healthy functioning democratic society. This is demonstrated not only in the number of cultural projects but also in their variety and diversity, and especially, as Michael Denning has extensively documented, the radical political character that coursed through so many of those projects, whose influence has reverberated and been felt through subsequent decades. The system of information provision was asked to contribute to this broader commitment to cultural enhancement.

In the 1930s' United States, the need for a differently organized and enlarged system of information provision became urgent. Toward the end of the decade, this urgency was further heightened by the rise of totalitarianism abroad. Information provision was then emphasized not only as a means of mitigating economic crisis but a sustaining factor in public participation and democratic governance and civic life. Shortly after assuming his post as Librarian of Congress in 1939, Archibald MacLeish declared that "those of us who are concerned, for whatever reason, with the preservation of the civilization and the inherited culture of this nation find ourselves in a situation in which time is running out, not like sand in the glass, but like the blood in an opened artery."[117] In a special issue of *Libraries and the Cultural Record* on the history of libraries and information institutions in wartime, Michèle V. Cloonan writes that

> The twentieth century, a time of maturation for the fields of preservation and conservation, was also perhaps one of the bloodiest centuries on record. It is ironic that the period that fostered new technologies to aid conservation for paper records in danger of deterioration or damage was also the century that hosted two world wars and many other world conflicts. The number of items destroyed over the last hundred years probably exceeds the number saved.[118]

[117] Archibald MacLeish, "Libraries in the Contemporary Crisis," *Library Journal*, November 15, 1939, 880.
[118] Michèle V. Cloonan, "The Moral Imperative to Preserve," *Libraries and the Cultural Record* 55 (2007): 748-49.

Here Cloonan argues that there is a moral impetus toward cultural preservation, though precisely defining morality depends on context and therefore can be difficult. This moral imperative to preserve acquired mounting importance in preservation as well as generation, collection, organization, and dissemination. Cloonan writes about "the notion of cultural stewardship." This impetus to cultural stewardship animated the activities of workers in the US agencies in new and innovative ways.

Much as the wartime mobilization of the 1940s was seen as a culmination of WPA projects and the full realization of Keynesianism, so too could the efforts of the 1930s be seen as a necessary precursor to the many successful wartime information projects. One example of this relationship is that Librarian of Congress Archibald MacLeish went on to direct the War Department's Office of Facts and Figures and serve as assistant director of the Office of War Information.[119] New information services were established to meet the needs of American defense efforts. While it could be argued that the war helped spur the renewal of information services, it is more accurate to say that American officials in the Second World War were able to take needed advantage of a system of information provision which had already been newly reorganized, systematized, and expanded.[120] By the start of World War Two, federal information provision had already been reintegrated into everyday life, and a flourishing system had been prioritized as being in the national interest. While wartime information needs highlighted gaps, it also demonstrated how many had been filled through the many projects undertaken throughout the 1930s.

While there is evidence of interagency cooperation before the 1930s, it is clear that cooperative efforts accelerated during the Great Depression as a response to economic crisis.

[119] Scott Donaldson, *Archibald MacLeish: An American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992).
[120] Burke, *Information and Secrecy*.

This cooperative approach was encouraged and facilitated by the federal government, but it is likely that even without government incentive, economic crisis would have spurred interagency cooperation. This cooperation extended not only to the organizations themselves, but to the goals within and amongst them. This is made manifest in the overlaps between technology, access, and policy.

Conclusion

The experience of the Great Depression forced Americans from all walks of life to grapple with severe economic deprivation. At the same time, it also served to propel an expansion of cultural enrichment, of which the system of information provision played a central role. In the 1930s there was a dual concern for how to effectively manage information and harness it to ameliorate the economic crisis. I argue that the 1930s was more than a period of time between the Roaring Twenties and the Second World War. The decade was a period of transformation, and while these changes have been sometimes glimpsed, they have yet to be fully understood.

A number of scholars have identified different facets of the 1930s that are important for this dissertation. Yet we have lacked a synthetic account of the system of information provision during this decade. Seen separately from one another, these changes seem perhaps no more than that - changes. Taken in aggregate, we can identify a bigger and more profound shift. Scholars have covered technology, access, and policy in the system of information provision in the 1930s, albeit in a fragmented way. The following chapters will more closely examine these core vectors of transformation and set them in relationship to one another.

CHAPTER THREE:

TECHNOLOGY AND THE SYSTEM OF INFORMATION PROVISION

Introduction

That libraries and other information organizations devised and employed technologies in the pre-computer era has long been known. JoAnne Yates' *Control Through Communication* demonstrates how the invention and application of such innovations as the typewriter and filing cabinet enabled the rise of the modern corporation, emphasizing the vital importance of information management, while Wayne Wiegand's biography of Melvil Dewey contains extensive descriptions of how libraries at the turn of the last century used numerous devices to more efficiently access, store, duplicate, and deliver materials. The modern library of the late nineteenth century employed vertical files, card catalogues, and typewriters.[1] David Alan Grier has pointed out that human computers worked out elaborate calculations both by hand and with the aid of tabulating machines before the invention of the electronic computer.[2] Michael Buckland wrote in 2006 that although "it is widely assumed that information science and modern information technology were developments that followed World War II…a wide range of developments in information technology, including radio, television, movies, punch cards, microfilm, digital circuitry, and photoelectric sensing devices, were already well developed by 1945."[3] Elsewhere, Buckland has claimed that while libraries were innovative in the late nineteenth and late twentieth centuries, there was a lag in between. In this chapter, I provide

[1] Wayne A. Wiegand, *Irrepressible Reformer: A Biography of Melvil Dewey* (Chicago: ALA Editions, 1996); JoAnne Yates, *Control Through Communication: The Rise of System in American Management* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).
[2] David Alan Grier, *When Computers Were Human* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).
[3] Michael Buckland, *Emanuel Goldberg and His Knowledge Machine: Information, Invention, and Political Forces* (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2006), 1.

evidence for why I think libraries substantially engaged with "technical and technological experimentation and innovation" in the 1930s.[4]

In this chapter, I will focus on technology-related changes in the system of information provision. Although I will pay particular attention to microfilm, I will also look at other technological advances in data processing and information retrieval, such as human computers and tabulating machines. Items from the papers of the Joint Committee on Materials for Research will figure prominently in this chapter. Because of its involvement in the Bibliofilm Service, I will also focus on archival materials from the National Agricultural Library. I highlight the ways in which cooperation amongst a range of actors made these activities possible. I consider the ways that developments in information technology affected the system of information provision, and the extent to which New Deal librarianship was reorganized around information technology.

With the advent of industrialized processes in the nineteenth century, information technologies became more ubiquitous, as well as faster and more efficient. As machines for producing, disseminating, and storing information became more sophisticated, some advocates suggested that judicious application of these technologies could usher in a more humane society.[5] This enthusiasm exploded again in the 1930s, with the adoption of a much-heralded new technology: microfilm. Librarians and other scholars sought to adopt microfilm because of its potential to better organize materials and enhance access. But perhaps more compellingly, some of these early adopters harbored utopian aspirations for microfilm, and considered it the most

[4] Michael Buckland, "Documentation, Information Science, and Library Science in the U.S.A.," *Information Processing and Management* 32, no. 1 (1996): 63.
[5] W. Boyd Rayward, "Some Schemes For Restructuring And Mobilising Information In Documents: A Historical Perspective," *Information Processing and Management* 30 (1994): 163-75.

significant technological advancement since the invention of the printing press.[6] They foresaw a network of libraries equipped with microfilm readers where users would be able to rapidly access an extraordinary array of information.

Scholars such as Irene Farkas-Conn and Kenneth Carpenter have already documented some of the ways that information technology changed, and changed libraries, in the 1930s. These works suggest that there was a transformation around technology. In her history of the origins of documentalism and the American Documentation Institute/American Society for Information Science (today the Association for Information Science and Technology, or ASIS&T), Irene Farkas-Conn observes "The early years of the ADI coincided with the period when dissemination of documents and the organization, communication, and retrieval of information were undergoing critical changes. Technologies opened opportunities for delivering research materials to users. Libraries and information services had to reevaluate their functions. Newer and more powerful technologies allowed institutions to offer services merely envisioned earlier but which users soon came to expect."[7]

As business historian James Cortada noted in 1995, "it is becoming increasingly obvious that too little is known about the role of technology on the economy during this period. What little is known indicates that technology was more significant than previously understood."[8] Technology intertwined with access and policy changes in the system of information provision. Second, and perhaps most critical in terms of how my work contributes to the history of LIS and

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[6] Susan A. Cady, "Microfilm Technology and Information Systems," in *History and Heritage of Science Information Systems*, ed. Mary Ellen Bowden, Trudi Bellardo Hahn, and Robert V. Williams (Medford, NJ: Information Today, Inc., 1999), 177-86.

[7] Irene Farkas-Conn, *From Documentation to Information Science: The Beginnings and Early Development of the American Documentation Institute-American Society for Information Science* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 1.

[8] James W. Cortada, *Before the Computer: IBM, NCR, Burroughs, and Remington Rand and the Industry They Created, 1865-1956* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 144.

social histories of the 1930s more generally, I also emphasize how scholars and practitioners pushed for these changes in direct response to the crisis of the 1930s. I do not mean to suggest a simple cause and effect relationship: i.e., because of the Great Depression, scholars and practitioners pushed for changes in the system of information provision. Many of the changes pushed for in the 1930s had precedents. The Great Depression did not cause microfilm, automated processes, or other technological innovations to become widely embraced in the 1930s. Rather, scholars and practitioners discerned opportunities that had not existed before. They saw that technological innovations provided possible creative solutions to dire problems created by economic collapse.

Closely related to these issues concerning technology are others pertaining to "organization." Organization may refer to the actual structures of organization (e.g., classification schemes), and it may also refer to the means of organization, such as information technology. Formal US classification schemes did not undergo any fundamental shift in the 1930s, which is why they are not a central component of my research. Nevertheless, questions of organization and how they could be addressed via appropriate technical applications/solutions assumed great importance during the decade.[9] The growth of the research university and of industrial research in large hi-tech corporations saw an accompanying growth in scientific and scholarly publishing. As a result, professionals became more concerned about how to manage the ever-growing body of new publications.[10] At the same time, this expansion in the volume of

[9] American Henry Bliss had developed his Bliss bibliographic classification system by the 1930s, but did not publish the first volume until 1940. The BBC never supplanted more established US classification schemes (Dewey and Library of Congress), and has enjoyed greater popularity in the UK. See Alan R. Thomas, "Bibliographical Classification: The Ideas and Achievements of Henry E. Bliss," *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 25, no. 1, (1997): 51-104.

[10] Roger L. Geiger, *To Advance Knowledge: The Growth of American Research Universities, 1900-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Stuart W. Leslie, *The Cold War and American Science: The Military-Industrial-Academic Complex at MIT and Stanford* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

contemporary material also highlighted the extent to which historical holdings lacked full documentation. One of the central solutions to the problems of efficient information storage and retrieval in this context was microfilm.

Microfilm (also referred to in contemporary literature as "microphotography" or "microphotographic processing") is a process by which images are captured and stored on 16 or 35-millimeter film reels for use with a projecting apparatus. First invented in 1839, its utility as a means of information storage accelerated in the 1920s. Microfilm was arguably the most enthusiastically promoted information technology of the 1930s, particularly in libraries. The most comprehensive history on microfilm is Susan Cady's 1994 dissertation. Cady chronicles the history of microfilm from its invention in 1839 through its more tenuous status in the early 1990s.[11] All histories of microfilm concur that enthusiasm and advocacy soared in the 1930s, especially amongst librarians and information workers. The overall social transformation of the 1930s likewise spurred great changes in technological innovation. This became all the more crucial with the implementation of the New Deal, the creation of which necessitated the more efficient management of vast quantities of information.

Works Progress Administration and Technology

Several projects initiated under the Works Progress Administration demonstrated that modern information technology—including microfilm but also automated processes, tabulating machines, indexing methods, and card files—was not only useful but crucial, and that old methods of organizing information and information retrieval were becoming at best inefficient.

[11] Susan A. Cady, "Machine Tool of Management: A History of Microfilm Technology," (PhD diss., Lehigh University, 1994).

Proponents argued that the complexity of modern life instilled growing requirements for rapid, efficient record-keeping, access, and retrieval.

Computing Technology

The urgency of more timely and reliable information was brought home by New Deal attempts aimed at ameliorating the economic downturn. An existing agency, the Census Bureau, also took a pioneering role; by the end of the 1930s the Census Bureau "was a leader in the new technology of automated analysis of statistics. This position resulted from the use of punch card equipment developed earlier by Herman Hollerith, a former employee of the Census Bureau...in the 1940s the Census Bureau played a major role in developing the earliest electronic digital computers."[12] Government agencies and libraries, therefore, and not only corporations, placed value "on control and feedback mechanisms derived from the better management of information... institutions valued information-handling tools even in the most difficult times, both in depression and in war."[13] Technological transformation in the system of information provision was especially noteworthy in the case of the Works Progress Administration.

The 1930s saw significant innovations in computing developments, both human and machine. The WPA employed human computers: people who performed elaborate large-scale mathematical calculations. David Alan Grier writes that three important computing machines were developed in the 1930s through WPA-sponsored projects, and that "the three machines show how inventors adapted new technologies and new devices to the operations of computing laboratories."[14] One of the computing machines originated in the Iowa State Statistical

[12] Joseph W. Duncan, "Technology, Costs, and the New Economics of Statistics," in *The Politics of Numbers*, ed. William Alonso and Paul Starr (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1987), 396.
[13] Cortada, *Before the Computer*, 145.
[14] Grier, *When Computers Were Human*, 225.

Laboratory, and by 1937 "it received $35,000 a year to do tabulations and analyses for the WPA and for the U.S. Department of Agriculture... Its staff processed data on farm production, analyzed crop experiments, and identified the trends in agricultural markets."

The largest and one of the most successful human computing projects was the Mathematical Tables Project, also a WPA-sponsored endeavor. Grier attests that by 1940, "it stood as the largest scientific computing organization in the United States, dwarfing the combined staff of the Aberdeen Proving Ground, the American Nautical Almanac, the Thomas J. Watson Astronomical Computing Bureau, and the mathematics division of Bell Telephone Laboratories. The WPA computing floor was home to three hundred computers."[15]

Modernization of Records

Modernization of records was another site of technological transformation in the 1930s. WPA projects on local, state, and federal levels converted handwritten, disorganized records to ones that were typed and indexed. The creation of New Deal agencies such as the Social Security Administration made quick access to these records crucial. WPA projects indexed several million public records. Indexing the 1920 census alone produced more than 57 million cards; indexing Ellis Island's records produced records for 18 million immigrants.[16] Press releases boasted that prior to the indexing projects, records requests could take up to several weeks to process; after indexing systems were put in place, the necessary information could be located in three to five minutes.[17] A "gigantic" nationwide indexing project of 21 million immigration

[15] Ibid., 242.
[16] Corrington Gill, "The Largest Indexing Job in History," March, 1938, WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; "Immigration Records Indexed at Ellis Island," May, 1939, WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
[17] "WPA Records Project Increases Bureau Efficiency," October, 1938, WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

records was described as being "geared to quick search."[18]

Changes in indexing technology provide further evidence of how government records were modernized under the WPA, specifically in how the WPA embraced the Soundex system. First introduced in 1918, Soundexing is probably best known today by people who conduct genealogical research. As a method, Soundexing attempts to accommodate variations in spelling. With the influx of immigrants and therefore "foreign sounding" names in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this was seen as a needed innovation for indexing census records from 1880-1920. In a press release issued by the WPA in 1939 entitled "WPA-Alphabetized Census Will Save Time and Money," the use and value of Soundexing is described as though it had been thoroughly tested and proven to be a superior indexing system: "The first task, that of alphabetizing the 1900 census under the modern Soundex code system, was completed in St. Louis last year. This city was selected because it had available at the time one of the largest pools of unemployed white-collar workers."[19] Because of the success of the St. Louis project, Soundexing of the 1920 census followed in short order: "The second and even larger task, of alphabetizing the 1920 census, is now under way in New York City. It is said to be the largest alphabetizing job in the history of the world."[20] Soundexing was not implemented as a uniform method for all indexing projects undertaken in the 1930s: it was specifically applied for the indexing of census records to optimize search and retrieval. However, it was illustrative of both the scale and innovation with regard to information organization in the 1930s.

[18] "Immigration Data Geared to Quick Search," July, 1938, WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 1.
[19] "WPA-Alphabetized Index Will Save Time and Money," WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
[20] Ibid.

Microfilm and the WPA

Microfilm figured into WPA-sponsored records projects as well, especially those projects co-sponsored by libraries. In a press release publicizing a Toledo newspaper indexing project, Florence Kerr emphasized the practical advantages of microfilmed sources: "The indexes and films will be of unusual value to research workers, historians, high school and college students, lawyers, newspapermen, statisticians and economists. Reels of film only require 1/200 of the space used by cumbersome volumes now in use and thus will be better protected from fire and water hazards. Estimates show that 6,500 rolls of film in 546 reels were used a day. The film, a cellulose acetate fine-grain safety type, will last a few hundred years."[21] Advocates embraced and promoted the practical advantages of innovation in information technology. Press releases for WPA projects frequently mentioned the integral role of efficient information retrieval and the need for efficient accompanying technical systems. An illustrative example is the Union Index to Medical Lore. This Boston-based project involved 75 libraries "cooperating to provide a union catalogue covering nearly a million volumes of medical lore contained in these libraries. This catalogue is the first devoted solely to scientific works and will prove of inestimable value to those who constantly refer to medical literature—particularly to physicians."[22]

The Boston project was the fourth of its kind instituted under the WPA. Florence Kerr, assistant director of the WPA, wrote that

[21] "Toledo History Being Filmed," December, 1940, WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 2.
[22] Florence Kerr, "Union Index to Medical Lore," WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 3-4.

"The first of the series was launched in Philadelphia. That project set the mould and developed the techniques. For in the Quaker City relief workers copied and indexed some four million volumes. This union catalogue, widely used by scholars and by the public in general, is now at the Pennsylvania Historical Society. A second project followed at Cleveland, Ohio. There WPA workers produced a catalogue of some three million volumes. Still a third was set up in the nation's capital to concentrate at the Library of Congress all records of volumes scattered through public, private, and government libraries."[23]

Kerr emphasized the role of cooperation, stating that "Like all others, this project is sponsored by local city and state institutions. Among them are the Massachusetts State Library, which is the principal sponsor, the Boston Medical Library, the Massachusetts Medical Society, the City Hospital, and the State Departments of Public Health and of Mental Diseases."[24] Microfilmed records were also part of this massive indexing project, with Kerr writing that "in some cities the motion picture camera has been used to speed up part of the operations. This was the case in Washington, D.C., where whole library catalogues were run through microphotographic machines." With or without microfilm, WPA records projects of the 1930s were undertaken on an unprecedentedly large scale. By 1938, WPA workers had "catalogued a total of eighteen and a quarter million volumes for various libraries, and for all institutions they have indexed a total of a quarter of a billion items."[25]

New Deal labor helped improve and modernize cataloging practices in libraries. "The most important work of all" began with the involvement of the CWA and the Civil Works Service (CWS) at the Boston Public Library, where relief workers made it possible for the card catalog to undergo a "complete overhauling."[26] Similarly, the Iowa State College Library benefited greatly from CWS labor on updating their catalogs, including making the transition from Dewey to Library of Congress Classification. Thanks to the work of the CWA assistants,

[23] Ibid., 3.
[24] Ibid., 4.
[25] Ibid., 6.
[26] "Boston, Mass., Public Library," *Library Journal*, March 1, 1934, 212.

the Library reported they accomplished more on the conversion in one year than they had in the previous eight.[27] Relief workers helped more libraries update their catalogs

Libraries and Technology

Interest in technology characterized libraries of the 1930s as much as interests in access and policy. While much of librarians' technological enthusiasm centered on microfilm, other technological innovations were embraced and promoted as well. Librarians had long been interested in how automated processes could make their work more efficient, and this continued. The growth of interest in radio, union catalogs, indexes, filing systems, and automated processes were all aspects of the technological transformation in libraries of the 1930s. Cooperative cataloging is discussed more in depth in the chapter on access (Chapter Four).

Microfilm and Libraries

We see some evidence of the American Library Association suggesting the use of microfilm in libraries in the 1920s, but it did not become a regular feature in *Library Journal* until the 1930s. Advocates promoted microphotography for use in a variety of library applications. One librarian demonstrated how microfilm could be used as a means of verifying authenticity of rare materials.[28] Librarians also mentioned the importance of adopting new technologies in order to keep pace with the ways young people used and accessed information, and the necessity for libraries to be cutting edge—similar to the twenty-first century

[27] "Iowa State College Library," *Library Journal*, March 1, 1934, 214.
[28] Dr. L. Bendikson, "Facsimile Reprints of Rare Books," *Library Journal*, February 13, 1938, 140-43.

preoccupation with accommodating the technological habits of young patrons.[29] More often than not, microfilm was touted as an inexpensive means of preserving and storing print materials.

Efforts to streamline the use of microphotography and automated processes in libraries and related information organizations were already underway prior to the onset of the Great Depression, and indeed before anyone knew how long the technologies might persist. Key visionaries seized the crisis decade as an opportunity to explore technological applications, including in light of arguments that information poverty existed, and had real economic and political consequences. Increasingly, lack of access to information in the 1930s was framed as deprivation which inhibited people from full economic and political participation in American society. Economic justifications for microfilm preceded the Great Depression; however, once the economic crisis set it, the economics of microfilm assumed even greater importance.

Libraries were ideal demonstrations sites for the promoting the adoption of microfilm. Librarians such as the New York Public Library's Louis Fox called microfilm a "miraculous accomplishment."[30] They held large collections of scholarly and popular resources (e.g., rare books, manuscripts, magazines and newspapers). Libraries struggled to balance frequency of use with the needs of preservation. Printed works are more likely to deteriorate the more frequently they are used, yet the modern library of the 1930s (as opposed to during earlier periods) was distinctive in its openness to access. How might libraries circulate items as much as users desired without destroying them—especially in the case of fragile or rare works. Microfilm was seen as a boon to libraries in that the original source material could circulate far less frequently, if at all.

[29] Phyllis Raymond and Eleanor D. Child, "The School Library Adopts Movies," *Library Journal*, March 15, 1939, 212; "Wisconsin Broadcasting," *Library Journal*, June 1, 1939, 462; "Radio Broadcasts," *Library Journal*, October 15, 1939, 790.
[30] Louis H. Fox, "Films for Folios," *Library Journal*, May 1, 1937, 361.

Proponents saw in microfilm the achievement of the twin aspirations of maximizing access and preservation. Microfilm also enhanced access because it often could be duplicated and shared more economically than paper. The size of microfilm and the amount of information that could be stored on a reel made shipping more manageable in terms of weight and size. For these same reasons, microfilm was also touted as an ideal medium with regard to storage. Scholars were concerned moreover, that, with the surge in scholarly production, libraries would face imminent storage problems.

Thomas Augst describes how "the advent of microfilm helped to speed a transformation already under way of academic institutions into centers for the advancement of learning, bound by specialized standards of training and inquiry, disciplinary associations and professional organizations, and the dissemination of a common research archive." In this assessment we perhaps see shades of the kinds of contemporary re-imagined library spaces such as "information commons." Augst says microfilm was appealing because of the seemingly endless possibilities for enhancing access, it "would preserve and make accessible newspapers, periodicals, card catalogues, and scholarly publications, but also manuscript materials, images, and imprints that had been preserved by libraries because of their uniqueness or rarity."[31]

Brown University librarian Rozelle Parker Johnson wrote in 1935 that when she began exploring the application of microfilm in libraries earlier in the decade, she had encountered skepticism and discouragement from some scholars. At a 1932 meeting at the American Philological Association, Johnson said "the majority" of those in attendance saw microfilm as having "peculiar drawbacks."[32] When Johnson inquired about bringing a camera into libraries

[31] Thomas Augst, introduction to *Institutions of Reading: The Social Life of Libraries in the United States*, ed. Thomas Augst and Kenneth Carpenter (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 19.
[32] Rozelle Parker Johnson, "The Use of a 35-Millimeter Camera in European Libraries," *Library Journal*, April 1, 1935, 294-95.

and making her own negatives, she encountered similar difficulties, writing that she "gained no encouragement from some of the leading scholars with whom I discussed the problem." Yet it seems that by the end of the 1930s, librarianship had thoroughly warmed up to microfilm. Herbert Bruncken of the Milwaukee Public Library proclaimed in 1938 that "microphotography is no longer a theory or an experiment; it is now regarded as a practical and sole solution for the preservation of printed matter."[33]

If not outright opposing microfilm, some advocated caution in how to proceed with its adoption. These words of caution came from even the most enthusiastic proponents of microfilm. They feared that if microfilm were incorporated hastily without regard to technical standardization or specification, it would risk obsolescence. Thus as early microfilm advocate Verneur Pratt argued in 1936: "we should study deeply the problems involved and not permit ourselves to adopt methods which analysis will prove are either basically unsound or at best temporary expedients."[34] Pratt noted that previous advances in general film techniques could and should be taken into account with the adoption of microfilm. However, he was also concerned in part that previous specifications could hinder microfilm's structural development, noting that "some city streets are narrow and crooked because they follow former cow-paths."[35] Pratt felt that microfilm was early enough in its infancy that standards had not become entirely fixed, and that this was a good thing. It was an opportunity to ask whether previously set film standards were optimal for the microfilming of books and periodicals. Pratt asked, for example, whether 35 millimeter or 16 millimeter widths were ideal or even appropriate. Pratt commanded some

[33] Herbert Bruncken, "Indexing and Filming Newspapers," *Library Journal*, March 15, 1938, 211.
[34] Verneur E. Pratt, "The Micro-Copy Film Situation: A Discussion of Films for Library Use," *Library Journal*, April 1, 1936, 260-61.
[35] Ibid.

authority in the field of microfilming print materials, as he was founder and President of the International Filmbook Corporation.

The integration of microfilm into library collections also raised question about how to organize microfilmed items and make them accessible, as traditional cataloging rules did not precisely apply.[36] There were other constraints in the way besides technical concerns. Any enthusiasm for microfilm's adoption had to be tempered by the realities of copyright law.[37] For items in the public domain, this was obviously a moot point; however, one of the chief interests of microfilm proponents was the reproduction of current scholarly publications, i.e., copyrighted materials. While the technology existed to cheaply reproduce, share, and store microfilm, the ability to do so raised questions about what constituted fair use in the context of the new medium. Copyright was one of the many issues tackled by the Joint Committee on Materials for Research and the American Documentation Institute, the two most visible institutional advocates for microfilm's adoption in the 1930s.

Charting the Course of Technology: Joint Committee on Materials for Research and the American Documentation Institute

Vigorous promotion by libraries and by the Joint Committee on Materials for Research aided the process of incorporating microfilm widely into WPA labor programs. Members of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) and the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) established the Joint Committee on Materials for Research (JCMR) in 1929 as a means of exploring methods of reproducing research materials, and it became the first concerted and

[36] Wyllis E. Wright, "The Cataloging of Microfilm," *Library Journal*, July 1938, 530-32.
[37] "Copyright in Photographic Reproductions," *Library Journal*, October 1, 1935, 763-64.

organized effort in support of microfilm. They wished to determine the best possible methods, with best in this case meaning long-lasting and easily shared. They set out to establish uniform standards for reproducing research materials, including but not limited to monographs, periodicals, pamphlets, photographs, slides, and sound recordings. In retrospect, this was not an auspicious moment to inaugurate or pioneer such an ambitious endeavor, as outcomes were uncertain in terms of the viability of microfilm in both technical practical terms and general attitude. Would information professionals and users want to use microfilm, either in addition to print formats or as a substitute?

An article from a 1937 issue of *Library Journal* describes the origins of the JCMR, identifying the impetus to its creation as being "the enlargement, improvement and the better preservation of materials for research."[38] Librarian and historian Robert C. Binkley of Western Reserve University in Cleveland chaired the committee.[39] Using contemporary terms, the JCMR sought to better support scholars, scientists, and librarians through the information lifecycle with the aid of paper and film reproduction technologies. Incorporating microfilm into libraries, government agencies, and research groups would aid scholars in research, dissemination, and preservation. Information would become more widely available and expenses would be reduced.

Binkley and Lydenberg first met when Binkley reportedly sent his large first-year English class to the New York Public Library (NYPL) with the directive to use available primary sources for a report on the Spanish Armada. While Lydenberg was pleased that an instructor felt so strongly about having students engage directly with primary sources, he was dismayed by the overuse. Several items in the NYPL's Elizabethan documentary collections were destroyed after being repeatedly handled in a short space of time, and Lydenberg consequently felt obliged to

[38] Ralph H. Carruthers, "Reproducing Research Material," *Library Journal*, April 1, 1937, 288-89.
[39] See the previous chapter for further discussion of Binkley and the origins of the JCMR.

impose restrictions on use by undergraduates. Lydenberg spoke with Binkley directly, and although Lydenberg was distressed about the deterioration of the NYPL collections at the hands of Binkley's students, Binkley himself made a positive first impression on him. Binkley also came to see through this incident "the librarian's problem of reconciling maximum use of research materials in the present with their preservation for future generations."[40] Kenneth Carpenter wrote that "Binkley was, along with Lydenberg, his closest colleague on the committee, a pioneer in concern about preservation."[41] Irene Farkas-Conn also discusses the importance of Binkley's contributions to the development of documentalism in the 1930s, and on the subsequent development of the field of information science.[42]

The origins of information science and the genealogy of the Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T) have been well-documented.[43] Science Service, begun in 1921 as a scientific research news service, was the fore-runner to the American Documentation Institute (ADI). Watson Davis served as director of Science Service before founding the ADI. Having an organization devoted to the development and promotion of microfilm was the key motivating factor for Davis in starting the ADI.

Microfilm, the JCMR, and the ADI

Binkley and the JCMR were directly involved in the development of the ADI, with Binkley serving as vice president. As such, Binkley was regularly in touch with founding

[40] Max H. Fisch, "Introduction," *Robert C. Binkley: Selected Works and Papers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948), 12-13.
[41] Kenneth Carpenter, "Toward a New Cultural Design: The American Council of Learned Societies, the Social Science Research Council, and Libraries in the 1930s," in Thomas Augst and Kenneth Carpenter, eds., *Institutions of Reading: The Social Life of Libraries in the United States* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 283.
[42] Farkas-Conn, *From Documentation to Information Science*.
[43] Ibid.

president Watson Davis. In a letter from Binkley to Davis dated April 13, 1937, Binkley suggests all filming projects needed a central registry, "an informational clearinghouse."[44] This information clearinghouse would serve two functions: demonstrate the applied use of microfilm, and provide information about microfilming applications. Binkley writes "I would suggest that we do not now indicate to the public that we contemplate explorations in the bibliographic field… that would give us more enemies than friends."[45] What did Binkley mean? Binkley and other JCMR members imagined that microfilm could do more than provide supplemental access; they envisioned a future where monographs would be printed and distributed on microfilm. Binkley anticipated that publishers might not warm to this idea immediately. Therefore, in order to ease print bibliophiles into a microfilm future, Binkley suggested promoting microfilm initially for producing out of print books.

Engendering positive attitudes toward microfilm was on the minds of its proponents. Emanuel Goldberg, a pioneer and early proponent of microfilm, imagined that entire books could be stored on the space of a square inch.[46] People like Binkley and other evangelists for microfilm were simultaneously enthusiastic about the utility of microfilm yet aware that users (lay users and scholars alike) might not immediately embrace microfilm as a medium, let alone as a substitute for original texts. It seems that Binkley and others foresaw, if not a paperless future, then one in which reliance on print information was drastically reduced. Yet, they were sensitive to the idea that users might find microfilm aesthetically distasteful. Thus proponents sought to improve physical aspects of microfilm access at first through research, experimentation, and standardization. This cohort of technology innovators sensed that still other formidable issues

[44] Letter from Robert C. Binkley to Watson Davis, April 13, 1937, American Documentation Institute Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Buckland, *Emanuel Goldberg and His Knowledge Machine*.

might impinge on microfilm's implementation. In a letter from Binkley to Robert Crane of SSRC dated April 17, 1937, he writes "the more successfully we develop auxiliary channels of publication to clear the bottle-neck of publication, the more definitely we must face the problem of establishing some kind of psychological reward to replace that which book authorship has hitherto given to book authors."[47] This suggests that microfilming will transform the very landscape of scholarly publishing and somehow displace monograph publishing. However, the efficiency, utility, and superiority, and perhaps also the personal advantage of microfilm as a medium had to be clearly demonstrated first. Once people could see the practical upsides of microfilm, they would be more open to letting go of any sentiment for or emotional attachment to print. Similarly Ralph Carruthers acknowledges that "to make the fullest use of the new techniques we must also change our attitude toward them and their products."[48]

Sentimental association with print might constitute a barrier to the adoption of what was seen as the far more practical and useful platform—microfilm. However frustrating or irritating or illogical sentiment might seem, microfilm proponents recognized that it was a real issue that needed to be addressed thoroughly in order to advance the widespread adoption of this information technology. They looked ahead of contemporary developments in order to forecast that a real crisis in scholarly publishing would eventually come, at which point output would overwhelm traditional production formats and methods of organization, storage, and retrieval. A thoughtful intervention was required which would not only solve immediate problems of production, access, and storage, but also adapt to and support the ongoing evolution of academic publishing.

[47] Letter from Robert C. Binkley to Robert Crane, April 17, 1937, Joint Committee on Materials for Research Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[48] Carruthers, "Reproducing Research Material."

Microfilm was heralded as the most revolutionary information technology of its time, the most significant advance since the invention of Gutenberg's press, with one librarian speculating in 1937 that microfilm "may prove to be as important to the dissemination of knowledge as the invention of movable type."[49] Klaus Musmann wrote in 1993 that "many of these early predictions equaled, if not exceeded, the current trend for extolling the virtues of the computer and its impact on the future of libraries."[50] While microfilm was often lauded with great hyperbole, there are writings from the period that more soberly emphasize its practical applications. JCMR Executive Secretary T.R. Schellenberg identified three main reasons why microfilm offered "the greatest possibilities of serving library needs:" cost, preservation, and access.[51]

Microfilm was seen as not only the technology for the information of the future, but for archiving information from the past as well. In what sounds like a harbinger of Google Books and other contemporary mass digitization efforts, *Library Journal* reported that publishing house Edwards Brothers "sent out an invitation to the principal libraries in this country and abroad, signed by the librarians of Yale, Harvard, Michigan, and the New York Public Library, to participate in a project consisting of copying on 35 mm. film all books printed in English before 1550 to be found in libraries which will permit them to be copied."[52] *Library Journal* also reported on a similar initiative launched in 1937 by "Science Service in cooperation with the newly formed American Documentation Institute" to issue classic science texts on microfilm, with works by Charles Darwin to comprise the first two slots.[53]

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[49] Fox, "Films for Folios," 364.
[50] Klaus Musmann, *Technological Innovations in Libraries, 1860-1960: An Anecdotal History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 95.
[51] T.R. Schellenberg, "Library Applications of Micro-Copying," *Library Journal*, April 1, 1935, 289-92.
[52] "Books on Films," *Library Journal*, May 1, 1936, 368.
[53] "Library Photography," *Library Journal*, September 1, 1937, 656.

One of the obvious attributes of microfilming rare books was that users could access information without fear of corrupting, damaging, or destroying the source material. Advocates touted microfilm as the cheaper, more durable, compact alternative to print. For this reason, historians were amongst the strongest advocates of microfilm.[54] In the interest of preservation, access to original prints of rare books had to be limited. With microfilm, one did not have to choose between access and preservation, since microfilm was inherently geared toward both.

Microfilm had another application for rare books. Photographic reproduction was praised as a means of authenticating rare documents. Fake copies circulated out of ignorance or deceit could be exposed as counterfeits in a cost-effective and easy way. This was not merely a matter of lining up a photograph of an original next to the purported authentic copy. Photography was used to magnify and then enlarge key identifying aspects for comparison. Microphotography could enhance images and show much finer detail than could be detected with the naked eye. Furthermore, projection equipment allowed the enhanced and enlarged images to be viewed simultaneously. Theoretically a user could apply an apparatus such as a magnifying glass for a similar purpose, but could not view more than one item at a time. In an article published in a February 1938 issue of *Library Journal*, Dr. L. Bendikson wrote that any number of good-looking forgeries could be in circulation, and they could be of such a high quality as to fool even scholars and seasoned collectors appraising scale copies.[55]

Another argument in favor of microfilm was its usefulness as a backup for printed works. Binkley wrote to Professor James T. Shotwell of the American National Committee in April 1937 that "The Historical Records Survey photographed 200,000 pages of the oldest local archives in Indiana. Then came the flood, which destroyed all the originals. The micro-copies are

[54] Maxwell Hicks Savelle, "History, Photography and the Library," *Library Journal*, November 15, 1935, 873-77.
[55] Bendikson, "Facsimile Reprints of Rare Books."

safe in the State Historical Society. This, it seems to me, is a lesson."[56] Apparently this was to be of use in demonstrating practical utility and perhaps urgency of microfilm to Europeans. The looming threat of war in Europe spurred microfilm advocates into action. In a March, 1937 letter from William Warner Bishop of the University of Michigan Library to Waldo Leland: "Personally, I am very seriously concerned with the effect on the great libraries of air raids, should war unfortunately break out in Europe. I found many of my English friends equally apprehensive. I am quite sure that we can't begin by stressing the possibility of insurance against this type of loss, which is inherent in the whole film project."[57] Microfilming was heralded as a way to make collections less vulnerable to the destruction wrought by war. States-side, *Library Journal* reported in 1937 that "the Historical Records Survey of the WPA has recently made a beginning on what is hoped will develop into a nationwide plan to microfilm important state and local public records which deserve preservation."[58]

The JCMR, the ADI, and Cooperation

Promotion of microfilm was not just limited to the ADI and the JCMR. Nor was this a purely science-driven endeavor, or one concerned solely with scientific information provision. Watson Davis wrote in December, 1936 that "microphotographic duplication (placing of reduced size photographic images of books, documents, etc., upon film) has been demonstrated as a practical and economical aid to scholarly research and publication. There is a need for a broad, energetic and intellectually-motivated development of all phases of documentation, particularly

[56] Letter from Robert C. Binkley to James T. Shotwell, April 13, 1937, Joint Committee on Materials for Research Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[57] Letter from William Warner Bishop to Waldo Leland, March 8, 1937, American Documentation Institute Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[58] "Library Photography," *Library Journal*, September 1, 1937, 656.

microphotographic duplication and its ramifications, in the fields of the physical, natural, social and historical sciences and the general sphere of libraries and information services."[59] The JCMR and ADI worked steadily and closely with leaders from the Library of Congress, the American Library Association, and the newly established National Archives. Microfilm was also put into direct service of New Deal agency information provision. In 1935 JCMR filmed nearly 300,000 pages of Congressional hearings on the National Recovery Administration and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. *Library Journal* wrote that these hearings "in this compact form will be of continuing use to students in every branch of social science for many years to come."[60]

In a letter to ADI Director Davis dated June 12, 1937, Binkley makes direct reference to cooperation with libraries: "Congratulations on your success in the Library of Congress. Let us put 70mm. paper direct by Photo-Record on our agenda… I have a telegram from W.W. Wood referring to a new microfilm trade paper, the first edition to be printed and distributed at the American Library Association meeting."[61] This quote also suggests that ALA was already being harnessed to develop commercial market opportunities for the contemporary information technology industry—a forerunner of postwar trends around computers.

Cooperation was fundamental to the mission of the ADI, as clarified in a letter from Watson Davis to Waldo G. Leland, secretary of ACLS dated June 10, 1937. Davis emphasized that "By having members of American Documentation Institute named by national organizations and institutions in scholarly and scientific fields, it is believed that the Institute will be a democratic organization responsive to changing needs and capable of performing cooperative

[59] "Plan for Documentation Institute," American Documentation Institute Archives, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 3.
[60] "What Part has the Film to Play?" *Library Journal*, January 15, 1935, 62.
[61] Letter from Robert C. Binkley to Watson Davis, June 12, 1937, Joint Committee on Materials for Research Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

functions as and when required."[62] At the ADI's organization meeting held in March, 1937, attendees included, among others, representatives from the American Association of Museums, the Library of Congress, the Society of American Archivists, and the American Library Association.[63]

In a similar vein, the ADI's articles of incorporation and by-laws dated May 15, 1937, specify the organization's role in part "to assemble, classify, reproduce, and distribute documents of all sorts in all fields of human activity… The American Documentation Institute has been incorporated on behalf of leading national scholarly, scientific and informational societies to develop and operate facilities that are expected to promote research and knowledge in various intellectual fields. The first objective of the new organization will be to develop and apply the new technique of microphotography to library, scholarly, scientific and other material."[64]

In the 1930s, the most visible way that the ADI promoted the application of microfilm was through the Bibliofilm Service, an interlibrary lending service on microfilm operated in cooperation with the National Agricultural Library (NAL), the library of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). In 1935 Watson Davis explained in a letter to USDA Secretary Henry A. Wallace's office that "so important seems the development of photographic methods in the distribution of science that Science Service is lending its efforts in this direction."[65] By 1937, the Bibliofilm Service had been judged such a success that Davis

[62] Letter from Watson Davis to Waldo G. Leland, June 10, 1937, American Documentation Institute Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[63] "List of Organizations Represented by Delegates; Documentation Organization Institute Meeting," March 13, 1937, American Documentation Institute Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[64] American Documentation Institute, "Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws," May 15, 1937, American Documentation Institute Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[65] Letter from Watson Davis to Paul H. Appleby, August 6, 1935, National Agricultural Library Special Collections, Beltsville, MD.

identified its replication nationally and even internationally as one of the core functions of the nascent ADI. Davis believed that the ADI could foster multiple "Bibliofilm centers so that the research worker in any field can secure promptly at low cost microfilm of any book or document in any library."[66] Davis and other documentalists were confident about the broader appeal of the Bibliofilm Service because of both "the development of microfilm utilizations of various sorts in many libraries during the past few years" as well as "the experience of the Bibliofilm Service operated by Science Service in the Library of the Department of Agriculture.[67] When the ADI was still in the development stage in late 1936, the "Plan for Documentation Institute" envisioned the Bibliofilm Service as the "nucleus" of the proposed institute.[68]

National Agricultural Library and the Bibliofilm Service

The Bibliofilm Service was important not only because it was innovative in itself, but also because it contributed to a more encompassing transformation in the system of information provision by highlighting a necessity for increased cooperative endeavors. I mean cooperation to describe not only that different groups work together in a mutual interest or common purpose, but also that a project of this magnitude in order to be successful required a variety of types of stakeholders. It could not have been accomplished by librarians or documentalists or agricultural engineers working on their own. The story of the Bibliofilm Service characterizes the cooperative spirit of information work in the 1930s, a trait it shared with other New Deal projects. It is unclear what Henry A. Wallace's role was in the success of Bibliofilm specifically

[66] Watson Davis, "Bibliofilm Services—A Cooperative Library Function," American Documentation Institute Archives, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 1.
[67] Ibid.
[68] "Plan for Documentation Institute," American Documentation Institute Archives, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 1.

or the NAL more generally, although the authors of his biography noted that "Under him, the department's library became —and remains—the largest agricultural library in the world."[69] We do know that the earliest conversations about the Bibliofilm Service occurred at the Cosmos Club in late 1934.[70] A few months later in August, 1935, Wallace's assistant Paul Appleby was in direct contact with Watson Davis about officially establishing the Bibliofilm Service in 1935. Appleby wrote that Claribel Barnett was "much interested" in the "very important project."[71] Before further discussion of the Bibliofilm Service, it would be helpful to provide some background on the NAL and its parent institution, the USDA.

The NAL and the USDA

Claribel Barnett was an important figure whose role in regard to microphotography has been all but neglected. For over four decades until her retirement in 1940, Barnett served as the Librarian at the NAL, the official depository of the USDA.[72] As Christine D'Arpa has argued, the USDA has a long history of leading efforts to improve the provision of agricultural information.[73] The NAL located outside of Washington, DC in Beltsville, MD was a central component of these activities. The NAL collected and disseminated information on a range of agricultural activities and provided reference services for scholars, practitioners, and politicians.

[69] John C. Culver and John Hyde, *American Dreamer: The Life and Times of Henry A. Wallace* (New York: WW Norton and Company, 2000), 228.
[70] Claribel R. Barnett, "The Bibliofilm Service: A Review of its Past Work and an Announcement Regarding its Future Plans and Arrangements," National Agricultural Library Special Collections, Beltsville, MD.
[71] Letter from Paul H. Appleby to Watson Davis, August 10, 1935, National Agricultural Library Special Collections, Beltsville, MD.
[72] National Agricultural Library, *The National Agricultural Library: A Chronology of its Leadership and Attainments 1839-1973* (Beltsville, MD: Associates of the National Agricultural Library, 1974).
[73] Christine D'Arpa, "Procure, Propagate, and Diffuse Among the People: The Information Services of the US Department of Agriculture, 1862-1888," (PhD diss. proposal, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2012).

They collected information on a range of subjects from forestry to entomology to dairying, from agricultural engineering to economics. They provided information and reference services at the main library and remotely at experiment stations. The Library regularly published catalog information and maintained a comprehensive and highly active interlibrary loan service. "It can, it is believed, be safely said," wrote Librarian Claribel Barnett in 1919, "that no other collection is no strong in the local, state and national official publications of American and foreign institutions and organizations which have to do with agriculture and the related sciences."[74]

As required by law, the librarian submitted annual reports to the Secretary of Agriculture. The nearly forty years' worth of reports authored by Claribel Barnett provide strong indications that the NAL actively sought continual expansion of services. Arguably, in terms of circulation and production, it was one of the most important federal libraries in the early to mid-twentieth century. As documented in the Library's annual reports, which are discussed below, library services grew throughout the 1930s. Prior to the 1930s the NAL had demonstrated a commitment to enhancing access to scientific and technical information for agriculture.

As was also true for other agencies and organizations, it was not evident that the Depression decade would hold much opportunity for the NAL. Yet as also proved true for some, the 1930s not only saw the NAL expand existing services but pioneer new ones as well. Circulation of held items went up in the main library and there was a spike in interlibrary loan activity. Reference services on site and for users in remote locations also expanded. The NAL functioned well enough prior to the Depression, yet seemed to thrive during the Depression.

What could account for this growth? One obvious explanation is that USDA overall grew dramatically under Henry A. Wallace's leadership. USDA staff grew from 40,000 people in 1932

[74] Claribel R. Barnett, "The Library of the United States Department of Agriculture," *Special Libraries* 10, no. 2 (1919): 41.

to 146,000 in 1940. Appropriations during that same period more than quadrupled; the Department went from receiving less than $280 million in 1932 to $1.5 billion in 1940.[75] The New Deal prioritized agricultural support through the creation of relief agencies specific to farmers. The policy choices that allowed US agriculture to expand in the 1930s likewise allowed for the NAL to grow in size and scope. This enlargement of scope is perhaps best demonstrated by the NAL's role in the Bibliofilm Service.

Growing the NAL and the Bibliofilm Service

The Science Service and the NAL officially entered into a cooperative arrangement to run the Bibliofilm Service on January 1, 1936.[76] Then, as already mentioned, the ADI was established in 1937 in Washington, D.C. The Bibliofilm Service continued to operate without issue amid the transition from Science Service to the American Documentation Institute. In the 1939 Annual Report, Claribel Barnett wrote that "cooperation of the library with the Bibliofilm Service has continued as before. The library has procured the books, carried on much of the necessary bibliographical work, and furnished the office and laboratory space for the Bibliofilm Service." She also highlighted the increase in Bibliofilm's popularity, noting a "great increase in the number [of orders] received."[77]

Prior to 1939, all Bibliofilm orders were sent directly to the NAL for processing, regardless of whether or not the NAL itself could fill the order. It was determined that the process would be more efficient and streamlined if orders were first sent to directly to cooperating libraries that could fill the orders instead of having the NAL sort orders.

[75] Culver and Hyde, *American Dreamer*.
[76] Barnett, "The Bibliofilm Service."
[77] United States Department of Agriculture, Library, "Report of the Librarian, 1939," National Agricultural Library Special Collections, Beltsville, MD, 9.

After this change was implemented, Barnett noted that the Bibliofilm Service received a total of 11,510 orders, with 9,715 sent to NAL and the rest (1,795) sent to other cooperating libraries. This was an overall increase of 58 percent from the previous year, when 6,117 orders were placed. Thus, the NAL still filled the vast majority of Bibliofilm Service orders, more than 80 percent, even after this change.

Barnett's annual reports are replete with meticulous detail about the total number of services rendered each year by the NAL. The NAL kept precise records on all transactions conducted by and through the NAL. This is notable for a few reasons. One is that in recent years, there has been an emphasis on the need for libraries to systematically maintain and provide such internal statistics in order to demonstrate quantifiable evidence of the value of library services, and that this is the primary reason for such a practice. Yet, the information provided by Barnett in her annual reports shows that libraries were providing such information as a matter of course in the early twentieth century. The annual reports of the NAL originated in the nineteenth century with the creation of the USDA. One publication from 1930 explained the origins of the NAL: "The library of the department is as old as the department itself, for the need of a library of scientific works to facilitate the work of the department has been felt from its very beginning."[78] These reports took assumed greater significance in the 1930s, when libraries were under pressure to demonstrate their worth and value to its constituent community. This perhaps attests to a wider trend toward scientific management in libraries.[79]

[78] M.S. Eisenhower and A.P. Chew, *The United States Department of Agriculture: Its Growth, Structure and Functions* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1930), 1.
[79] Alistair Black and Dave Muddiman, "The Information Society before the Computer," in *The Early Information Society: Information Management in Britain before the Computer*, ed. Alistair Black, Dave Muddiman, and Helen Plant (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2007), 3-54.

We can infer that these records and the annual reports were integral for securing ongoing funding for NAL operations, and certainly in persuading Congress to approve any requested appropriations. Internal statistics demonstrated that the library satisfied its users, and also offered proof of any need for expansion. Barnett's reports frequently made mention of how the NAL required greater financial appropriation in order to satisfactorily meet user needs and to improve on them. The information provided in the annual reports suggested that the NAL provided crucial services, and that they needed to improve upon and expand the range of services. They allowed the library information required to assess the quality of services and how they might tailor them even further to meet user needs. In this context, users included scientists, researchers, legislators, and farmworkers. The NAL of the 1930s is a premiere example of the library as a responsive institution that evolves in response to user needs.

At the same time, although such records were kept and the information subsequently provided in the annual reports, there are detectable changes in the character of the annual reports. When Claribel Barnett first assumed the role of Librarian of the NAL, her reports typically numbered an average of about four to five pages. This is relatively brief when compared with her reports from the 1930s, which typically numbered closer to 30 pages. This rise in volume suggests that perhaps more detailed records were kept, but also that the range of services increased significantly. With the exception of 1934, when appropriations were unusually low, the NAL added staff each year. Total NAL staff numbered 120 in 1939; the library had started the decade with 96 staff.[80]

Legislative reference services increased during the 1930s as well, with the Librarian's Report of 1934 describing the legislative reference work of that year as "exceptionally heavy."

[80] Ibid.; United States Department of Agriculture, Library, "Report of the Librarian, 1930," National Agricultural Library Special Collections, Beltsville, MD.

The increased need for legislative reference services was attributed, understandably, to the proliferation of relief measures.[81] Increase in services also included more library staffing and resources for various USDA bureaus. By 1939 the Agricultural Research Center, a 12,000 acre field experiment site in Beltsville, had added library services for the Division of Bee Culture, the Bureau of Dairy Industry, and the Bureau of Animal Industry. Culver and Hyde note that during Henry A. Wallace's tenure, "the department's research center at Beltsville, Maryland, became the largest and most varied scientific agricultural station in the world."[82]

Circulation statistics also suggest increased demand for NAL services. Books borrowed by the library, for example, saw the greatest increase in the 1930s. The NAL had maintained records of books borrowed by the library since 1911, starting in 1935 it began keeping statistics on the number of books it lent. The Social Security Board, the Farm Credit Administration, and the Works Progress Administration were among the top ten largest borrowers.[83] That three of the top ten largest borrowers were New Deal agencies provides further evidence of the importance of cooperation in the system of information provision.

Changing Seasons at the NAL: Close of the Bibliofilm Service and the Retirement of Claribel Barnett

The end of the 1930s saw the end of both the Bibliofilm Service and the retirement of Claribel Barnett. The Bibliofilm Service had been beset by several problems, including questions of copyright and duplication. They had also lost the backing of one of their original supporters,

[81] United States Department of Agriculture, Library, "Report of the Librarian, 1934," National Agricultural Library Special Collections, Beltsville, MD, 5.
[82] Culver and Hyde, *American Dreamer*, 228.
[83] United States Department of Agriculture, Library, "Report of the Librarian, 1939," National Agricultural Library Special Collections, Beltsville, MD, 8.

the Army Medical Library, over concerns that the Bibliofilm Service "looked out for its own interests and was more like a commercial undertaking than a scientific institution."[84] The Bibliofilm Service did not suffer, however, for lack of interest in microfilm. Instead, one of the main reasons for its decline was that libraries wanted to house their own microphotography operations instead of using a central service. In 1941, ADI ceded most of its Bibliofilm Service work to the NAL, which was now under the direction of Ralph Shaw following the retirement of Claribel Barnett.

Barnett appears to not only have been a capable and forward-thinking librarian, she was also extremely well-liked by her colleagues. In March, 1940 she announced her retirement in a letter to Henry A. Wallace. More than a dozen of her colleagues at the NAL responded with a petition to Wallace in the hope he would persuade Barnett to reconsider.[85] Although Wallace declined to take such action, it was acknowledged that her retirement presented "a real loss to the Department."[86] In response to Barnett's retirement announcement, Wallace himself wrote "You have left a definite mark upon the Department's work and it is a mark of distinction."[87]

Conclusion

In the so-called digital age or information age, "technology" has become shorthand for highly sophisticated electronic devices such as computers, mobile phones, e-book readers. Library literature is replete with warnings that librarianship risks obsolescence should the

[84] Farkas-Conn, *From Documentation to Information Science*, 87.
[85] Petition from Mildred B. Williams, et al to Henry A. Wallace, March 22, 1940, National Agricultural Library Special Collections, Beltsville, MD.
[86] Memorandum for Mildred B. Williams, et al, April 1, 1940, National Agricultural Library Special Collections, Beltsville, MD.
[87] Letter from Henry A. Wallace to Claribel R. Barnett, March 22, 1940, National Agricultural Library Special Collections, Beltsville, MD.

profession fail to incorporate these technologies, the implication being that libraries are technologically backward. The notion, however, that libraries are technological laggards that have only recently begun to move away from the book-centered services, is historically untenable. During the 1930s, in the depths of economic depression, some visionary information workers seriously considered on whose terms and to what ends new information technology could be integrated into librarianship.

Microfilm and other changes around information technology resonated in both the private and public sectors, with business, government, and nonprofit organizations embracing new ways to more efficiently manage ever-growing quantities of information. Prior to the onset of the Great Depression, microfilm's most widespread application had been in banks. With its most reliable customer all but devastated in the 1930s, microfilm's popularity could very well have dried up.

As it turns out, enthusiasm for microfilm reached its zenith in the 1930s, thanks in large part to librarians, the Joint Committee on Materials for Research, the American Documentation Institute, and the New Deal. Librarian Claribel Barnett of the National Agricultural Library was especially instrumental in the promotion of microfilm for scientific research purposes, particularly because of her groundbreaking work with the Bibliofilm Service. The NAL was already a highly productive and important information agency prior to the Depression, and its significance grew during the 1930s. The interest in expanding access to the Bibliofilm Service was one of the primary justifications for the establishment of the American Documentation Institute in 1937.

Microfilm and technological innovations around filing, indexing, and cataloging were part of librarians and information workers' interest in making information more widely accessible. How librarians, scholars, and New Deal agencies worked to increase access, and why access assumed such urgency, is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR:

ACCESS AND THE SYSTEM OF INFORMATION PROVISION

Introduction

In 2014, the American Library Association defines access as "providing the full range of information resources needed to live, learn, govern, and work" to "people of every age, income level, location, ethnicity, or physical ability."[1] In the most recent edition of the *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences,* access is described in relation to the concept of universal service: "Exploring the egalitarian concepts at the heart of universal service facilitates understanding of the rationale for access...Universal service arises from the firm belief that some services are foundational because they supply the knowledge necessary for self-government and because informed citizens are essential to the maintenance of a democratic government. Support for universal service emerged through the nation's experiences in founding four historic systems--postal and telephones services, education, and broadcasting. Today, this translates into a strong national belief in universal access."[2]

This definition therefore was a consequence of a long history. It also exhibits distinct facets. As opposed to previous approaches to librarianship, the modern public library sought to foster inclusivity. This is evident in the development of open stacks and the notion of the free library, open to all residents of a community. This support for access is also evident in the expansion of remote user services. When users did not have immediate geographical access to

[1] American Library Association, "Key Action Areas: Advocacy for Libraries and the Profession," accessed February 13, 2014, http://www.ala.org/aboutala/missionpriorities/keyactionareas.
[2] Betty J. Turock and Gustav W. Friedrich, "Access in a Digital Age," in *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences*, 3rd Edition, ed. Marcia J. Bates and Mary Niles Maack (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2009), 24.

library holdings, they could potentially access library materials through interlibrary loan, traveling libraries, or bookmobiles.

Inequality of access to information existed prior to the Great Depression, and inequalities existed at the end of the 1930s. That information provision serves as a democratizing force is a long-held ideal that has often fallen short in practice. While Wayne Wiegand and others have shown that the democratizing function of libraries can be overstated in library history literature, it is important to remember that many librarians have endowed librarianship with important democratizing potential—New Deal librarians certainly did.[3] What makes looking at access in the 1930s interesting is that there was such effective expansion and promotion of access throughout a protracted economic crisis. This expansion frequently occurred in innovative and creative ways. While this creativity and innovation must be in part attributed to financial constraints which made "business as usual" infeasible, this creativity and innovation was also in the spirit of the 1930s in which some people saw possibility in the economic wreckage and devastation to rebuild something better. Thus, though the Great Depression had the potential to exacerbate pre-existing inequalities and reduce access for those who had previously enjoyed it, many information workers and their allies instead saw opportunities to improve information access. They were not looking to merely restore access to what it had been in 1929, they were looking to make it what they felt it should be. Access, it turns out, encompassed numerous and expansive initiatives, from building libraries to developing services for the visually impaired. Of course, real limits continued to characterize this process, as we will see, for example, in expansion of access for African Americans.

[3] Wayne A. Wiegand, *Main Street Public Library: Community Places and Reading Spaces in the Rural Heartland*, 1876-1956 (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 2011).

In the 1930s, enhancing access was important for libraries, government agencies, and scholarly societies for several key reasons. One was the perceived connection between access to information and economic recovery. Government agencies required more efficient, accurate, and timely access to, for example, unemployment statistics in order to respond effectively to economic crisis. Another was the widely held relationship between access to information and democracy. This hearkens back to the role of public education and how libraries fit into this mission, and even the creation of the post office and government involvement in promoting access to information—that if people were properly informed regarding local and national civic affairs, they could then make informed decisions at the ballot box. Access to information also strengthened communities. A community can mean the people living in one's neighborhood, scholarly communities, and perhaps even imagined communities. By community I mean there is a sense of shared connection with cultural heritage and the past. The creation of the Historical Records Survey, Federal Archives Survey, library cataloging and indexing projects, and the National Archives reflects this sense of shared connection with cultural heritage and the past. Finally, transformation of access was manifested in improved efficiency amongst and between the employees who formed the community of government agencies.

Evidence suggests that the 1930s were a watershed in expansion of information access in academic libraries, with the founding of Association of Research Libraries, the Joint Committee on Materials for Research, and efforts to improve scholarly communication. Enhanced access was prioritized in government agencies, with changes in the Bureau of the Census, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Department of Agriculture. The federal government also prioritized enhancing access to the past, with the creation of the National Archives and Records Administration. This emphasis on historic preservation also was evident in the founding of the

Society of American Archivists and in the many WPA programs dedicated to documenting historical records. Library access was prioritized by libraries and library supporters, as evinced in the increased appropriations for library budgets, creation of new types of library services, and successful efforts in library extension. The application of WPA funds "meant that libraries could spend more of their meager budgets on materials and books, remain open longer, and inaugurate new services, particularly to isolated areas...Urban libraries benefitted too, as WPA workers made permanent contributions by reworking card catalogues, compiling union lists, indexing urban newspapers, initiating special collections, and expanding services to hospitals and shut-ins."[4]

In this chapter I will address what access means, including: how did the definition of access change during the 1930s? What were the specific organizations and agencies concerned with access, and how did they prioritize it? What role did the federal government and the WPA play in enhancing access? What other agencies and institutions besides libraries prioritized expansion of information access, and why? What accounted for expansion of access in the midst of the Great Depression?

Finally, it is important to keep in mind that enhanced access was part of simultaneous efforts to integrate modern technological processes and promote legislation in support of improved access in and to the system of information provision. We cannot thoroughly understand or appreciate the story of access without acknowledging the concomitant roles of technology and policy. In this chapter I show how for 1930s' librarians and information workers, access was neither merely physical nor merely intellectual: it is social and political.

[4] Martha H. Swain, *Ellen S. Woodward: New Deal Advocate for Women* (Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 1995), 83, 84.

Historical Efforts to Improve Information Access

Unfettered access to information as a prerequisite for perpetuating an enlightened citizenry has long been a purported aim of the federal government, as evidenced by the establishment of the postal system. Postal networks were established through ongoing government subventions. These subsidies underwrote the building of post roads, the construction of post office buildings, and the salaries of postal employees. The post office's commitment to access is also demonstrated by the subsidies for newspapers, which were meant to encourage nationwide circulation and exchange of information. As a result, newspapers and periodicals circulated easily and freely—to a point. Legal policies reinforced by racist, sexist, and classist attitudes made it so that only some people were permitted to read, and in some cases there were reading materials deemed inappropriate or even dangerous in the wrong hands. Nevertheless, even with its limitations, the postal system has endured as a public network and demonstrates a long-standing interest in information provision by the US government.[5] Thus, expansion and enhancement of information access was a priority before the 1930s and the onset of the Great Depression. The inauspicious circumstances of the 1930s significant were seized upon to pursue expansion on a large scale. By large scale, I mean to gesture at national initiatives as well as community-led initiatives.

The previous chapter explored the role of technology in the 1930s system of information provision. The interest in applying technology to better organize information stemmed, in part, from some librarians' commitment to improving access. Expansion of access is also evident in the growth of different types of libraries (e.g. special libraries, school libraries, and federal libraries) and outreach aimed at underserved populations (e.g. African Americans, youth

[5] Richard R. John, *Spreading the News: the American Postal System from Franklin to Morse* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

services, rural users, and itinerant workers). The American Library Association's Library Extension Board as well as the Works Progress Administration helped extend access where there had previously been little or none. Commitment to expansion of access is further demonstrated in the growth of library cooperation and regional library systems in the 1930s, including the establishment of the Association of Research Libraries in 1932.[6] As we saw, it was evident as well in the expansion of scientific resource sharing networks such as the National Agricultural Library's Bibliofilm Service. Expansion of access extended beyond current information. The creation of the National Archives and Records Administration in the early 1930s and the numerous inventory projects in state archives indicates a concern for providing access to past records.[7]

Most noteworthy are the explosion in resource-sharing across institutions and the numerous user populations targeted for outreach. That such expansion occurred during a Depression decade suggests that a considerable number of people, including policymakers, freshly prioritized information access, and that the depth of the crisis bolstered rather than diminished their commitment to this process.

Scholarly Communication and Access

American researchers were deeply concerned with scholarly communication in the 1930s, particularly with respect to access. In 2014, the Association of Research Libraries defined scholarly communication as "the system through which research and other scholarly writings are

[6] Lee Anne George and Julia Blixrud, *Celebrating Seventy Years of the Association of Research Libraries, 1932-2002* (Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries, 2002).
[7] Richard J. Cox, *Closing an Era: Historical Perspectives on Modern Archives and Records Management* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000).

created, evaluated for quality, disseminated to the scholarly community, and preserved for future use. The system includes both formal means of communication, such as publication in peer-reviewed journals, and informal channels, such as electronic listservs."[8] In the previous chapter, scholarly communication was discussed in relation to technology and specifically to microfilm—because of its potential to enhance access.

New organizations concerned with scholarly communication were founded in the 1930s. These are important not only as historical instances of dynamic expansion, but also as enduring advocates for scholarly communication. One was the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). The ARL's establishment in 1932 is emblematic of a commitment to enhancing access through cooperation. Another was the American Documentation Institute (ADI), today known as the Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T) (discussed in the previous chapter). It is worth mentioning that when Science Service was reorganized as the ADI, its letterhead stated that it stood for "the promotion and development of documentation in scholarly and scientific fields" and that its members were "nominated by scholarly and scientific agencies."[9] This statement demonstrates once again the interest and commitment to cross-collaboration between institutional actors.

What drove the development of the Joint Committee on Materials for Research (JCMR), the ARL, the Bibliofilm Service, and the ADI? By the early 1930s, many scholars and scientists had begun to observe the growth of scholarly publications with concern. Without clearer mechanisms for managing scholarly publications, they feared that access would become more difficult.

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[8] Association of Research Libraries, "Scholarly Communication," accessed on March 24, 2014 from http://www.arl.org/focus-areas/scholarly-communication/.
[9] American Documentation Institute, "Circular of Information," May, 1937, ADI Archives, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Dissertations and Theses

Access to theses and dissertations was one aspect of the wider drive to reorganize scholarly communication during the 1930s. *Science* published a list of dissertations in 1898 in the pages of the journal, although the list was limited to dissertations in natural and physical sciences. From 1912 until 1938 the Library of Congress published its annual *List of American Doctoral Dissertations Printed*. This approach was also limited because a printed dissertation was not required by all universities, and of those printed, not all of them were deposited with the Library of Congress. As a result, "this left buried in obscurity more than half the dissertations accepted each year in the United States."[10] Furthermore, these lists only covered dissertations and not theses.

One of the JCMR's projects, in cooperation with the Professional and Technical Press, was "to establish somewhere in the United States a central-loan library for the better theses and dissertations produced in our colleges, universities, professional schools, technical schools, and other institutions of higher education conferring advanced degrees," as described in the "Outlines of the Proposed Central-Loan Library for Theses and Dissertations."[11] This document was circulated to institutions which expressed interest in participating in such an endeavor as well as to those identified as potentially having interest or a stake. The use of the qualifier "better" suggests that the JCMR did not see the collection of all dissertations and theses as a reasonable goal. Limiting by some measure of quality was perhaps a way to make the proposed collection manageable.

Although scholars were chiefly in dialogue with one another as to how to preserve and

[10] Frank M. McGowan, "The Association of Research Libraries, 1932-1962" (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1972), 98.
[11] "Outline of the Proposed Central Loan Library for Dissertation Theses and Research," Joint Committee on Materials for Research Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 1.

enhance access to scholarly publications, they also saw their efforts as being in service to a wider public. In a letter to Binkley dated January 10, 1934, Elbert Boughton of the Professional and Technical Press relayed the following position on the theses and dissertations collection: "the use of the library is not to be restricted to people connected directly with education but will be available to all research workers in all fields."[12] He listed several participating organizations in the project, listing the American Library Association first (not in alphabetical order), the American Council of Learned Societies, the Association of American Universities, and the National Education Association.

What does the creation of such a project in the 1930s tell us? That scholarly production did not slow in the 1930s, as indicated by Roger Geiger when, speaking of American research universities, he wrote "The rapid pace of scientific advance and the latent competition between institutions further assured that university research would continue to expand despite persistent financial difficulties. The result was a paradox of a sort: university research tended to prosper during the 1930s despite the severe pressures felt elsewhere in the universities."[13] Perhaps if anything the slowing down in the US economy allowed a time and space for reflection and revision. Binkley observed rising volume of scholarship at a time of economic crisis, and foresaw that this would only increase in the coming years. In "Outlines of the Proposed Central-Loan Library for Theses and Dissertations," they wrote "In recent years there have been many thousands of these documents presented to the institutions of higher education in part fulfillment of the requirements for degrees. In 1933, there were 1,343 doctorates conferred in sciences alone in American universities…in a vast majority of cases, only a few copies of the finished work are

[12] Letter from Elbert S. Boughton to Robert C. Binkley, January 20, 1934, Joint Committee on Materials for Research Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[13] Roger L. Geiger, *To Advance Knowledge: The Growth of American Research Universities, 1900-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 246.

made and, in very few cases, are they printed and sold or otherwise widely distributed."[14] Scholars were attempting to imagine more efficient system of organization and access.

Interest in better organization of theses and dissertations was also indicative of scholars' commitment to fostering access beyond monographs. The "Outlines" bluntly states that "It goes without saying that society at large will be appreciably benefitted if the best of these are made as available as books of the same quality." This reference to "best of" once again indicates an interest in setting priorities with an eye toward collection manageability, though it is ultimately unclear what is meant by "best of" and "better" dissertations and theses. They commended previous efforts by the US Office of Education to create an annotated (if incomplete) bibliography of education theses and dissertations, noting that funding and support were inadequate and the result was limited use of this pamphlet. They also cited similar efforts by the Library of Congress, which "has a file of 225,000 of such documents, but only a small part of these are available for loaning and only to a limited extent and for brief periods."[15] The report notes that while some universities and colleges make their own theses and dissertations available, such a system provided limited circulation and access.

In order to fund the establishment of the central loan library, they planned to petition the Carnegie Corporation to provide funds "at least for the first two years until it is well established and its usefulness demonstrated."[16] This support would fund the creation of a catalog. They wanted to provide copies to libraries and other research repositories for free, as they did not wish to rely on catalog sales to recoup expenses. They anticipated participation from "at least 500 colleges, universities, and professional and technical schools. They noted that "it has been

[14] "Outline of the Proposed Central Loan Library for Dissertation Theses and Research," Joint Committee on Materials for Research Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 1.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid., 5.

suggested that all applicants for degrees shall, in addition to their theses and dissertations, be required to furnish abstracts of them."[17] Although they wanted to have a large central database, they did not plan to include every single thesis or dissertation produced by an institution of higher education in the United States: only those deemed to possess sufficient quality. They wrote that "the custodian of the library should probably be authorized to return any of these documents to the institutions where they originate provided he considers them of insufficient value to justify their being included. In this way, the borrowers will not be spending time on contributions of little value, and the expense will thereby be reduced."[18] In this way lofty ambitions were tempered by some fiscal restraint, which they resolved by imagining a system of inclusion based on quality. They also considered the possibility of a ranking system for the included theses and dissertations, which would indicate "the rank of excellence or other desirable fact…There is a growing demand for such a rating."[19] Although there is no further explanation of the cited growing demand, we can speculate that given the emphasis on volume, the ratings system would have helped catalog users identify the most useful items more quickly—perhaps an early instance of relevancy ranking.

While the JCMR was working on developing such a list, the ARL expressed similar interest in the organization of dissertation and theses. Founded in December, 1932, during the midwinter meeting of the American Library Association, the ARL was established by participants from 42 university and research libraries who "recognized the need for coordinated action and desired a forum to address common problems."[20] ARL members first identified access to doctoral dissertations as a priority in 1933, having also recognized that while dissertations

[17] Ibid., 3-4.
[18] Ibid., 4.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Blixrud and George, *Celebrating Seventy Years of the Association of Research Libraries*, *1932-2002*, 6.

were a potentially useful scholarly resource, lack of organization inhibited more robust access.[21]

In 1935, the ARL became aware of a Northwestern University librarian who was compiling a bibliography of dissertations and theses. A letter from ARL Executive Secretary Donald Gilchrist to Robert Binkley dated September 19, 1935, relates that Gilchrist is "anxious to get on with the matter of the doctoral dissertations bibliography being compiled by Mister Coleman," noting that ARL's proposed list "covers all fields and all institutions and includes only doctoral dissertations, not master's theses."[22] It seems the work of Northwestern first became known to the JCMR when Northwestern's Thomas Palfrey sent a letter to Binkley dated September 8, 1935, in order to solicit his interest, stating "It has occurred to us that your committee might be interested either in publishing our bibliography or else in contributing at least a part of the cost of its publication."[23] On September 24, 1935, a letter to Binkley from Palfrey clarifies that their work is not a bibliography of dissertations, but a list of lists. He writes it is "a bibliography of lists and abstracts of theses…Naturally we made several inquiries in various quarters in order to ascertain whether or not a similar enterprise had been undertaken by others. The ALA assured us that no such project had been reported."[24]

Microfilm went on to play a central role in providing access to dissertations and theses. Eugene Power established University Microfilms, Incorporated (UMI) in 1938, which sold microfilmed copies of dissertations. UMI provided a list of its microfilmed dissertations in its quarterly publication *Microfilm Abstracts*. The ARL negotiated with UMI to provide bibliographic data on all dissertations, whether or not the entire dissertation had been filmed.

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[21] Frank M. McGowan, "The Association of Research Libraries, 1932-1962."
[22] Letter from Donald Gilchrist to Robert C. Binkley, September 19, 1935, Joint Committee on Materials for Research Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[23] Letter from Thomas Palfrey to Robert C. Binkley, September 8, 1935, Joint Committee on Materials for Research Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[24] Letter from Thomas Palfrey to Robert C. Binkley, September 24, 1935, Joint Committee on Materials for Research Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

In 1952, UMI in cooperation with the ARL began offering access to Dissertations Abstracts, a microfilmed bibliography of American doctoral dissertations and some master's theses.[25]

It is worth mentioning that the rise of UMI occurred while the Bibliofilm Service declined. As described in the previous chapter, the Bibliofilm Service did not cease due to lack of interest in microfilm. This is all the more obvious when we take into account the success of UMI. The success of UMI likely has much to do with that it was founded for a very specific service: microfilming and preserving access to dissertations and theses. The Bibliofilm Service, on the other hand, was overwhelmed by its role as a general microcopying service.

The National Agricultural Library

The National Agricultural Library's place in the story of access in the 1930s is interesting because it encompasses more than libraries. The NAL is a special library, and in the 1930s it was significant in the rise of documentalism. Keeping with the trend of increased circulation that characterized libraries generally in the 1930s, Alan Fusonie notes that likewise the size of the collection and the scope of services grew at the NAL. Its expansion necessitated more space, and in 1932 the NAL moved to a larger and more centrally located site in Washington, DC.[26] Was the NAL's expansion distinctive? For further insight we may consider the NAL's relationship to its host, the United States Department of Agriculture.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the USDA of the 1930s was headed by Henry A. Wallace, a man renowned for his extensive scientific interests and agricultural knowledge, as well as his commitment to redressing economic inequality. His zeal for research and belief in its necessity for improving agricultural processes were reflected in how research activities and the

[25] Frank M. McGowan, "The Association of Research Libraries, 1932-1962."
[26] Alan E. Fusonie, "The History of the National Agricultural Library," *Agricultural History*, 62 (1988): 189-207.

NAL fared under his tenure. We already know that the NAL became the largest agricultural library in the world, and that the agricultural research center in Beltsville "became the largest and most varied scientific agricultural station in the world."[27] Part of the growth under the NAL included its involvement with the Bibliofilm Service, which "became the first experimental center for supplying microfilm and photocopies of articles on a large-scale to scientific workers."[28] Central to all of this activity was the leadership and stewardship of Claribel Barnett. We can perhaps consider Barnett as a pioneer of information science, though she is never credited as such in the information science literature. Claribel Barnett (who deserves a more thorough biographical treatment for this and other reasons) remains the longest-serving NAL librarian, having worked in that position for nearly 40 years. While Wallace should be acknowledged for his commitment to scientific research and library services, the day to day operation of the NAL itself was Barnett's purview. Fusonie himself credits Barnett specifically for how NAL came to partner with the ADI in the Bibliofilm Service, stating it was "under Barnett's leadership."[29]

As described in the previous chapter, Claribel Barnett's internal recordkeeping and annual reporting shows a steady and progressive increase in circulation at the NAL during the 1930s. The popularity of the Bibliofilm Service furnishes further evidence that some information workers were not only committed to increasing access to information generally, but also to expanding and enhancing the means access, and to providing new points of access. Scholars and scientists felt that there needed to be other more suitable ways to access and share information more easily, and libraries were a central part of this process. Better search and retrieval became

[27] John C. Culver and John Hyde, *American Dreamer: The Life and Times of Henry A. Wallace* (New York: WW Norton and Company, 2000), 228.
[28] Fusonie, "The History of the National Agricultural Library," 203.
[29] Ibid.

urgent due to economic crisis; this is demonstrated in the emphasis that WPA projects placed on improving information access.

Works Progress Administration and Access

The WPA routinely provided access about its programs in order to gauge effectiveness. Therefore, the research information functions of the WPA played a key part in providing access to information about the work of the WPA itself. Looking back on the 1930s, former WPA director Colonel Harrington described how research was an intrinsic component of WPA programs and had been so for the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA). He notes that "when the FERA began operations in 1935 the Federal Government had very little information about the relief problem other than the number of persons receiving aid."[30] FERA was begun as an emergency relief program under the Hoover administration, but for the electorate these efforts were too little too late. But it seems that in Harrington's assessment, the FERA inherited by the Roosevelt administration was ill-informed to thoroughly serve its purpose. Harrington goes on to describe the research program undertaken by FERA: "In order to administer the program properly, therefore, the FERA called upon its research group to enumerate the relief population in October 1933. Data were collected on the nature of the relief problem. For this purpose facts were gathered for the first time on the age, sex, color, residence, and family size and composition."[31] FERA would ultimately provide work for 20 million people, and in order to do so the agency generated specific information about the unemployed, their

[30] Colonel Harrington, "Draft of a Statement by Colonel Harrington Explaining the Functions of the Research Division for the Congressional Investigating Committee," April 27, 1940, WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 2.
[31] Ibid.

communities, and an assessment of existing and needed programs and services. This awareness of the importance of such information gathering also infused FERA's successor, the WPA. By the end of the 1930s, this information gathering served a wider purpose. Colonel Harrington declared that "through the research activities of the successive federal relief agencies, we know more about unemployment and relief than ever before."[32] Harrington also took pains to clarify that the WPA Research Division conducted unique research in service of the WPA, and did not overlap with research conducted by other federal agencies or programs. Here Harrington argued that the WPA and the federal government's information gathering activities were comprehensive in scope yet distinctive in focus. Furthermore, information acquired by other agencies likewise would enable them, he believed, to operate more efficiently.

Some in Congress challenged the need for dedicated research divisions for each agency: could not research agendas be set and supervised from a more central location within the government? Harrington and others argued that without specialized research divisions, information gathering would be less relevant and applicable to the problems and issues at hand, in turn rendering the agencies less efficient in administering their programs. Whereas Congress saw the existence of several research agencies as redundant and therefore in need of consolidation, Harrington and others countered that on the contrary without research divisions tailored to each agency, information gathering could potentially become redundant and inefficient. Having several research divisions in different government agencies was what made the programs so effective.[33]

Criticism dogged WPA projects throughout the 1930s. These criticisms typically took the form of charges of inefficiency or political impropriety. The Federal Theater Project, which was

[32] Ibid., 4.
[33] Ibid.

shut down before the end of the 1930s, was one such political casualty, after Congressional hearings tainted the project's credibility. WPA information projects and information workers of the 1930s took pains to respond to allegations of inefficiency in the attempt to dispel such criticism. In 1936, National Director of the Survey of Federal Archives Philip Hamer released a memorandum to Regional Directors and Assistant Directors entitled "Need for Accurate Work." Hamer advised the directors that while they should ensure "there be no loafing" they were to "emphasize quality rather than quantity."[34]

Philip Hamer had a similar professional pedigree to that of his contemporary Robert Binkley. Hamer was trained as an historian, earning his PhD in history from the University of Pennsylvania in 1918. After completing his doctorate he spent the next 17 years as an academic before joining the newly-established National Archives in 1935. In January 1936 he became the Director of the Survey of Federal Archives while retaining a position in the Division of the Library with the National Archives.[35] Like Binkley, Hamer was an historian with interests in libraries and archives with a particular focus on preservation of and access to historical documents.

A number of WPA projects put people to work improving access through better organization and management of government records. At the 1932 annual meeting of the American Library Association, A.F. Kuhlman stated that

[34] P.M. Hamer, "Survey of Federal Archives Memorandum No. 36: Need for Accurate Work," WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
[35] Oliver W. Holmes, "Philip M. Hamer," in *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services*, 3rd edition, ed. Robert Wedgeworth (Chicago: American Library Association, 1993), 337-38.

> "Government documents have acquired a new significance as indispensable for research…Today, in government documents inventions, discoveries, and the birth, growth, and operations of our social institutions are to no small extent recorded. Hence, it is from these sources that the historical process and social research must emerge… Research now means the use of primary source materials in the search for sound principles, rather than a recasting of secondary materials. It means reference to data rather than authority."[36]

WPA workers typed, indexed, and organized several million public records in the latter part of the 1930s. The indexing project at Ellis Island allowed access to records for 18 million immigrants who had come through the Port of New York.[37] Access to vital statistics was crucial for the implementation of Social Security, with WPA workers employed in hundreds of cities to organize and index birth records, marriage licenses, and death certificates.[38] WPA workers indexed police department files, census records, and hospital records. These projects have not been studied, they were large-scale endeavors worthy of attention.[39]

Press releases for each of these projects tended to emphasize both the size of the task and the quality of the work, as indicated by titles such as "21 WPA Workers Finish Huge Clerical Task for Hospital" and "Gigantic Card Index Set Up By 3000 WPA Workers."[40] Modernization in records management was also mentioned frequently, as records tended to be disorganized and handwritten before getting the WPA treatment. The New York Alphabetical Index Project was "the largest indexing project in history." It employed 3,600 people to index the 1920 census,

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[36] A.F. Kuhlman, "The Next Steps in the Organization of State Document Centers," June, 1932, Joint Committee on Materials for Research Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[37] "Immigration Records Indexed at Ellis Island," WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
[38] "Better Bookkeeping for Birth and Death Records," WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
[39] "St. Paul Revises Police Records," WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; "The Largest Indexing Job in History," WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; "21 WPA Workers Finish Huge Clerical Task for Hospital," WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
[40] "21 WPA Workers Finish Huge Clerical Task for Hospital," WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; "Gigantic Card Index Set Up By 3000 WPA Workers," WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

which generated nearly 58 million index cards over an eighteen month period.[41]

Organization and classification methods pioneered by librarians, and that were well-established and reputable before the Depression, helped validate these methods in records projects under the WPA. They were demonstrations of efficiency and effectiveness through cooperative cataloging and federated databases.

Library Services Division

In addition to improving access to public records, the WPA also supported information access through library extension. The Library Services Division was a subset of Women's and Professional Projects. Ellen Woodward was appointed the first director of Women's and Professional Projects. In 1938 she tapped Edward Chapman of the Indianapolis State Library to head the Library Services Division. A national library consultant, Chapman was brought in to serve as a central point of contact for all library projects within the WPA.[42]

Ellen Woodward was selected by Harry Hopkins to head Women's and Professional Projects after her work with the Democratic Party in Mississippi. Hopkins had established a women's division under FERA because he knew that women were being turned away from jobs on emergency relief because employees felt men should have priority in a job crisis. Hopkins felt "that FERA should have a women's program as soon as a suitable division head could be found."[43] With the support of Democratic Party leadership, including Molly Dewson and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, Hopkins announced Woodward's appointment to head the Women's Division of FERA in August, 1933. Reflecting the turmoil of the times, Woodward's job

[41] "The Largest Indexing Job in History," WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
[42] Swain, *Ellen S. Woodward*.
[43] Ibid., 40.

description changed almost immediately with the creation of Civil Works Administration and Civil Works Service. Upon their expiration, Woodward assumed control of the Division of Women's and Professional Projects (WPP) under the newly created Works Progress Administration.

Woodward had a history of civic involvement before a special election in 1925 made her the third woman to serve in the Mississippi legislature, after her husband the state legislator died of a heart attack, serving out the remainder of her husband's term. She agreed to be put on the ballot after the urging of friends, and handily won the special election. Woodward was not entirely a stranger to civic life, having long been active in public and social organizations in Mississippi. The remainder of her husband's term for which she was elected ended in January, 1928, and she made it known she had no interest in running formally for political office. After the end of her term, she joined the staff of the Mississippi State Board of Development. During her stint with the MSBD she proved herself to be engaged and adept in fundraising and research in support of social welfare for Mississippians, and further acquainted herself with state political figures and civic leaders. Her commitment only deepened as the Great Depression engulfed her state. In the wake of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, Woodward was appointed the sole woman on the board of Mississippi's first State Board of Welfare. In the meantime, Woodward actively campaigned for Roosevelt in 1932. Her biographer writes that in the seven years after she won the seat in the Mississippi legislature, "Ellen Woodward had demonstrated a growing ease and expertise in working with professionals in the field of social services. There were signs, too, that she had the makings of a first-rate public administrator."[44]

[44] Ibid., 34.

The Women's Division provided what were considered "traditional" jobs for unemployed women. These included sewing, nursing, teaching, and library labor. In her oversight of library projects through the WPP, Woodward worked closely with librarians and ALA leaders. Swain writes that "Woodward's commitment as a clubwoman and a state legislator to library expansion and education accounted in large measure for her interest in the projects her division developed under FERA and CWA. Julia Wright Merrill, chief of the American Library Association's Public Library Division, hit it off well with Woodward...one historian of these programs has concluded that ALA and work-relief proposals meshed so closely that it is difficult to determine their origin."[45]

One of the most popular and controversial components of the WPA's library work was bookbinding, which repeatedly faced challenges by commercial publishers. As Ellen Woodward frequently had to defend the necessity and utility of the bookbinding projects, it is worthwhile to mention them here. Commercial publishers alleged that relief bookbinding took business away that was rightfully theirs, and that WPA labor furthermore produced inferior bindings. Woodward regularly addressed these claims and defended WPA bookbinding, while *Library Journal* often showcased WPA bookbinding in their pages, occasionally punctuated by a complaint from commercial bookbinders. The stated functions were as follows: "The library projects are grouped under three distinct headings: book circulation, book repair, and cataloging and indexing. Library extension projects are designed to establish library service in communities where such service has been discontinued or has never existed."[46] The WPA itself also released notices as the one cited above as positive promotion in support of bookbinding projects.

[45] Ibid., 50.
[46] "Libraries of Nation Benefit Under WPA Program," WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

However, it would seem that over the course of the 1930s the book repair program was one that could be chalked up to a loss in terms of successful projects.

The problems around bookbinding however should not be taken as condemning evidence against the utility of library projects under the WPA as a whole. Consider how much had been accomplished by 1941: "WPA project workers had repaired and put back into circulation 98,622,000 volumes belonging to school or public libraries. By the end of 1940 they had typed almost 40,000,000 book catalog cards. By the end of 1939 they had transcribed almost 4,000,000 pages for Braille books for the blind." Also by 1941,

> "The WPA had purchased over 260,000 new books for use in library service demonstrations, and had assisted approximately 150 different counties in obtaining bookmobiles for extending library service to rural areas. During July, August, and September, 1941, over 1,700 or more than half of all the counties in the United States, were receiving some library assistance from the WPA... These WPA-operated library services had a combined book stock of nearly 8,000,000 volumes, and they were serving an estimated total population of almost 14,000,000 persons… Thus, in summary, the most important single fact concerning WPA assistance to libraries is its magnitude."[47]

When we consider this magnitude of WPA library projects, the bookbinding's alleged inferior quality proves the exception rather than the rule. We can extrapolate from here to apply this assessment to all relief efforts of the 1930s. Was every single one of them unilaterally professional and successful? No, of course not. But on the whole, the work undertaken by the WPA was by and large more useful than not. Bookbinding put books back into circulation and therefore improved access.

Woodward remained head of WPP until late 1938, when she was appointed to the Social Security Board. In her final year with the WPP she also headed Federal One. This offers evidence to suggest a correlation with regard to mission and purpose between library work and "other" types of cultural labor.

[47] Ibid., 257.

WPA Library Extension

One of the most iconic WPA projects, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), is also significant for its incorporation of library services for its laborers as well as its agency employees.[48] Led by Mary Utopia Rothrock, TVA library services functioned, in a general sense, as they might for any public library population: library workers noted which items circulated most frequently and attempted to provide books in line with the users' expressed interests, for a broad range of reading interests including fiction and nonfiction, and for a wide age range. The means of access is what makes the story of TVA library services interesting. The first library site at Norris Dam is especially noteworthy for the innovative ways in which library services were provided for employees and their families. Clearance employees, who were charged with clearing the reservoir, were living and working quite literally off the beaten path. Their location made it difficult but not impossible to access library services. The clearance workers of Norris Dam and their families had access to a rotating collection that could hold more than 800 books. The books were kept in waterproofed boxes adjacent to the toolboxes, where men would have visited on a daily basis. The books were replenished weekly.

Harry Bauer was the librarian with the TVA's technical library, the purpose of which was "to provide a reference, research, and information service for the employees of the Authority." Bauer writes how "the need for such a library was recognized from the start for in Washington early in 1933, a Division of Information, Research, Reference and Library was organized...in March, 1934, a librarian was employed to take charge of the Technical Library."[49] Bauer boasts that in its six years of existence, this collection grew from 800 books to "approximately 10,000

[48] Mary Mallory, "The Rare Vision of Mary Utopia Rothrock: Organizing Regional Library Services in the Tennessee Valley," *Library Quarterly* 65 (1995): 62-88.
[49] Harry C. Bauer, "The Technical Library of the Tennessee Valley Authority," *Library Journal*, February 13, 1939, 136.

volumes, 500 periodical titles, and 85,000 newspaper clippings."[50] Cooperation was once again affirmed as beneficial: "Since the collection is highly specialized and purposely limited in size and scope, it is imperative that we rely on other libraries for help."[51]

The article goes on to describe in detail the various functions, tasks, and services performed under the auspices of the TVA Technical Library. But the TVA Technical Library did more than provide access to collections for its immediate user base, its workers also prepared bibliographies and checklists of information about the TVA, which were updated regularly, and Bauer noted were "always in demand."[52] The TVA Technical Library was also responsible for maintaining monthly progress reports required of each TVA department. These, presumably, could be used to deflect criticisms of WPA and New Deal projects as boondoggles with little to no accountability and oversight. In many WPA projects, accountability and oversight were built in.

The TVA Technical Library was not unique in its providing library services for agency workers. By 1934 nearly a dozen such libraries had been organized in response to the New Deal. In addition to the TVA Technical Library, there were library services offered for agency employees through the Farm Credit Administration, the Public Works Administration, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the Federal Housing Administration, and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation.[53] The TVA's library services are, perhaps, unique in that it provided dual services for both TVA workers and agency personnel.

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[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid., 139.
[53] James T. Rubey, "A List of Certain of the Recovery Agencies of the Government with Special Reference to their Libraries," *Library Journal*, February 15, 1935, 149-51.

Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps also enjoyed access to library services. Library services to CCC camps were one of the more enduring library activities tied to emergency relief, as the CCC was one of the first programs. As the decade wound down so did the number of CCC camps. By 1937 there were just over 2000 camps and a year later in 1938 there were just over 1600. CCC camp library services consisted of a permanent collection, a traveling library, and donations. CCC library services like other library services were tailored to user needs and user feedback was assessed regularly. Services were therefore dynamic, and intended to be responsive to user needs.[54] Cooperation, once again, was also key, with the author of one article noting that CCC camps needed "all the cooperation the state and county libraries, as well as other nearby libraries, can give them."[55] In 1934, when FERA established a Transient Bureau in Atlanta, a library was established as well. In explaining the need for a library, the state transient director expressed his belief that there was "a mental as well as physical aspect to consider" in providing relief. In October of 1935, when the library had been open for nearly eighteen months, there had been more than 25,000 visitors.[56]

Traveling libraries were another notable example of library extension under the WPA. Claiming that "library extension has become one of the outstanding functions of the Division of Women's and Professional Projects," one WPA press release noted that "more than 5,800 traveling libraries are carrying books into sparsely settled rural areas." "These traveling libraries are a picturesque feature of the extension program," continues the press release, and goes on to describe how "Books are carried by pack-horse to the mountaineers of Kentucky, by houseboat

[54] Harmon J. Chamberlain, "CCC Libraries," *Library Journal*, April 15, 1938, 299-302.
[55] Ibid., 302.
[56] "A Library in a Relief Agency," *Library Journal*, October 1, 1935, 761.

to remote communities along the Yazoo River in Mississippi, and by motor truck and car in rural sections of several other states."[57]

The packhorse libraries of Kentucky have endured in the popular imagination. They are the subject of Donald Boyd's 2007 article in *Libraries and the Cultural Record*, and in Nick Taylor's exhaustive chronicle of the WPA, his section on library projects devotes the most attention to packhorse libraries.[58] The packhorse libraries were unique means of delivering library services in a period of economic deprivation. At a time when library services might have been cut, instead they were expanded to the poorest and most desperate people: ways were found to enlarge access.

The same press release describes how "as many as 32 mountaineers have been found waiting at a sub-center for the packhorse carrier." The sub-center was a church, general store, post office, school, or even someone's home. The packhorse libraries were a popular and distinctive demonstration of what library extension would look like. Of course, the packhorse libraries, like the WPA itself, were not meant to be permanent solutions. They were temporary solutions—stopgap measures to provide emergency relief until more long-term solutions could be established. In the case of the WPA, the optimal situation was full employment, with temporary employment provided in the meantime. For libraries and ALA, WPA projects such as the packhorse libraries were immediate actions to provide access until the ideal solution—full library service—could be achieved. Packhorse libraries and other WPA projects served as useful

[57] "Federal Aid Extends to Libraries in 45 States (At the Same Time, 14,500 Needy Workers Get Useful Jobs)," WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 1-2.
[58] Donald C. Boyd, "The Book Women of Kentucky: The WPA Pack Horse Library Project, 1936-1943," *Libraries and the Cultural Record*, 42 (2007): 111-28; Nick Taylor, *American-Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA* (New York: Bantam Books, 2008).

demonstrations of the popularity of library services, demonstrating the demand for library services. Edward Chapman characterized packhorse services as "operating under the most unfavorable topographical and social conditions" in order to extend library service to the remotest parts of Kentucky, and that "before the inception of the WPA pack-horse libraries in some twenty mountain counties of Kentucky, there was almost no library service except in the larger centers of population, and here the libraries were mainly church and club libraries, privately subsidized."[59]

Chapman believed that one reason packhorse libraries were successful is that they were staffed by members of the community. He wondered whether the idea of public tax-supported library service would have been embraced by rural Kentuckians "if the WPA pack-horse library carriers had not been native women, familiar with the social usages of the section." He goes on to claim that library extension in Kentucky "has been and still is, largely, a house to house selling campaign, with substantial help afforded by word of mouth endorsement of the services to neighbors by families whose resistance to and distrust of 'foreign' helps has been overcome."[60] Chapman also stresses that without federal assistance in the form of the WPA, library extension of this intimate nature would not likely have emerged on its own, asserting that "the form of the service is entirely too expensive to operate on local budgets. It is difficult to visualize by what other method this almost uniformly necessary door to door service could be rendered."[61]

The provision of WPA information services in rural areas amid mistrust toward the federal government was also an issue for the Federal Writers' Project (FWP). Jerre Mangione

[59] Edward Chapman, "WPA and Rural Libraries," 1938, WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 7.
[60] Ibid., 10.
[61] Ibid., 13.

wrote that in Wyoming, for example, "there was deep resentment that the government should be using taxpayers' money to pay salaries to writers. The term 'writer' coupled with 'WPA' connoted everything that New Deal haters considered scurrilous about the Roosevelt Administration."[62] Hostility toward the Roosevelt Administration and the New Deal was not just confined to rural areas, as Mangione wrote that in Chicago one FWP employee "found it expedient not to identify himself with any government agency but to represent himself as a researcher for the University of Chicago."[63]

A mainstay of WPA library programming was library demonstration projects, temporary displays meant to show what adequate library service or library extension might look like. In areas where library service was previously unavailable, WPA library demonstration projects showed users and legislators what library services could do. Often, the idea was that local and state allocations would be made to support library services on an ongoing basis. As Edward Chapman said, "the statewide service project is a means to an end and not the end itself."[64]

Cooperation was essential for library extension—cooperation between the federal government, the American Library Association, civic organizations, and libraries themselves (addressed in the next chapter). Part of what makes expansion of access and the success of library extension so remarkable is that success was not hindered by the participation of multiple stakeholders, but was aided by it. The success of library extension it seems pivoted on cooperation. With the assistance of people like Ellen Woodward and Edward Chapman, ALA nurtured relationships with WPA administrators, ensuring that libraries would be given priority.

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[62] Jerre Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal: The Federal Writers' Project, 1935-1943* (New York: Equinox Books, 1972), 171.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Edward Chapman, "Theory and Practice in the Organization and Operation of WPA Library Service Projects," ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 3.

As a result, "through contact with the A.L.A. headquarters, the conviction of the national administrators of WPA in regard to the need and desirability of well-organized library service projects was strengthened."[65]

Through this cooperative process different agencies surveyed and determined needs, best practices, and protocols. Cooperation then meant assuring proper adherence to state and federal guidelines. Guidelines for establishing WPA projects, including library services, were precise. Likewise, library laws differ from state to state. Establishing library extension required developing programs in accordance with these laws while also considering how to expand and improve upon existing services. In other words, library projects, whether or not under the auspices of the WPA, could not just be brought into being on a whim. As tax-supported institutions, libraries are bound by the local, state, and federal laws that govern them. In the 1930s there was the added consideration for establishing library service projects in accordance with emergency relief. Establishing library services required forethought, planning, and means for sustained support.

Libraries and Access

There are several important examples of how librarians themselves directly enlarged and expanded access. I will introduce the section by describing some of the more creative ways librarians transformed access. Then I will turn the focus to ALA and the Library Extension

[65] Edward Chapman, "State Library Agencies and the WPA," 1938, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Board, followed by access in the context of state library agencies, library buildings, and African American communities. This allows us to take a broad view of access by looking at institutional actors, physical infrastructure, and users.

Library access was transformed in the manner of going from the inside out, by innovating "outdoor" or "open air" libraries. Expansion of access in this manner was not unique in terms of bringing library services to new places, as traveling libraries and bookmobiles had been in service for decades prior to the Depression. However, the fully outdoor library does seem to have been a 1930s invention. What made accessing libraries in the out of doors an appealing means of access?

Gerald S. Greenberg claims the first outdoor library started in the summer of 1905 at the New York Public Library's Rivington Street branch, when a rooftop reading room opened to attract patrons who would otherwise patronize the library but wanted to enjoy the precious fresh air and daylight of summer. While Spain began building dedicated open air libraries sometime in the early twentieth century, such a model did not take root in the United States until the 1930s. Open air reading rooms of the 1930s included sidewalk libraries, park libraries, and even beachfront libraries.[66]

There was a practical element. As in the case of Montclair Public Library in New Jersey, the sidewalk book stalls opened on May 1, 1933, were meant to attract and engage passers-by, bringing library service to people. But this was also a practical move, in that having outdoor library service helped draw attention to older books and to "relieve the over-crowded main building." Hugh Grant Rowell of Columbia University's Teacher's College asked "how may the

[66] Gerald S. Greenberg, "'On the Roof of the Library Nearest You': America's Open-Air Libraries, 1905-1944," in *Libraries to the People: Histories of Outreach*, ed. Robert S. Freeman and David M. Hovde (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2003), 181-191.

library, an indoor institution, make a vital contribution to this outdoor side of the community life?"[67] Rowell urged libraries to offer outdoor access to library services, yet acknowledged that "it may seem strange to urge to greater and broader service an institution which statistics prove is having greater and greater demands put upon it in these days of wide-spread [sic] enforced leisure."[68] Why should the library go outdoors when library usage was extraordinarily high already? For libraries of the 1930s, the commitment to access attempted to broaden beyond existing models. The goal was to reach as many patrons as possible, and also to demonstrate the importance of the library in the community. Bringing library access to the outdoors not only fulfilled an extension mission, it also indicated to the person on the street—who quite literally may have been living on the street—that they too were part of the user base, and could and should benefit from library services.

Another popular type of traveling library of the 1930s was the "library of the high seas": library services for the United States Navy and merchant marines. The American Merchant Marine Library Association provided reading materials "to American merchant marine vessels, marine hospitals and asylums, lightships, lighthouses, Coast Guard stations and cutters."[69] The program was established in 1921 following successful ALA involvement in providing library services to soldiers during the First World War. In 1936, a study was commissioned by the American Merchant Marine Library Association to evaluate its effectiveness and determine whether it was providing a valuable service. The study, funded by a grant from the Carnegie

[67] Hugh Grant Rowell, "Can a Library Go Outdoors? The Type and Paper Country Club," *Library Journal*, May 15, 1933, 431.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Robert D. Franklin, "The Public Library of the High Seas," *Library Journal*, March 15, 1938, 227.

Corporation, concluded that library services for merchant marines were "essential to shipboard life."[70]

Library Extension Board: Background

One of the most active efforts to enhance library access was the work of ALA's Library Extension Board. The work of the Library Extension Board is significant and warrants more in-depth discussion because of its vigorous efforts to promote access, and for how it not only articulated and coordinated federal library policy but also promoted relief projects. The Library Extension Board's role has not been fully acknowledged (if at all) in this regard.

ALA had been officially involved in library extension since the early 1920s, however the Great Depression seems to have reinvigorated the Board's activities. The Library Extension Board's Executive Assistant was Julia Wright Merrill, a prominent figure in ALA leadership. The Library Extension Board sought to make access to library services a reality for each and every person. In June 1931 at ALA Annual, the state library extension agencies of New England were invited to present on how widespread library services were. The reports indicate how far-reaching ALA staff and members of the Library Extension Board envisioned that access could be. Using a "town" as a unit for service, New England was deemed to have more "complete service than any other section of the United States," with Massachusetts reporting a library in every town and Rhode Island having only two towns without a library. New Hampshire, Vermont, and Connecticut all had 15 towns or less without libraries; Maine was the outlier with regard to lack of library service with 175 towns without libraries.[71]

[70] Ibid.
[71] American Library Association, "Library Extension Board Open Meeting," June 20, 1931, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

When the Library Extension Board met again at ALA Midwinter at the end of December, 1931, budgetary issues came to the fore. This makes sense considering that 1932 was the nadir of the Great Depression. ALA and the Library Extension Board felt the economic desperation, yet this did not discourage staff and committee members from moving forward with existing library projects and developing new ones. The December 1931 meeting was nevertheless a kind of reality check, a sobering meeting perhaps, where members had to prioritize agenda items in light of projected severe budget constraints going into 1932. This is reflected in the list of suggestions generated at the meeting, including "do a few things well rather than attempt too much" and "work with state library extension agencies."[72] These suggestions seemed aimed at achieving the practical while working toward the ultimate ideal goal of universal library service through cooperation.

Much work was done which became useful for establishing library service projects under emergency relief later on, especially with the establishment of the WPA in 1935. The ALA could not know in the early 1930s that its work would become so useful. Indeed, it seems we must attribute the WPA library projects' success in part to the thorough and attentive work undertaken by ALA in the first half of the decade. There were likely so many successful library extension programs under relief because the ALA had been envisioning and planning for what full-bodied library extension would look like and what it would require. This is an important detail. The existing scholarship on library extension in the 1930s seems to address either the WPA or the ALA, but not both.[73] Yet this is one of the more convincing and important examples of cooperation between libraries, library associations, and the state.

[72] American Library Association, "Library Extension Board Open Meeting," December 30, 1931, ALA Archives at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
[73] See for example Stanford's *Library Extension Under the WPA* as an example of the former and Molz's *National Planning for Library Service 1935-1975* as an example of the latter.

Library Extension Board: 1932

Minutes from the business meeting of the Library Extension Board's December 1932 meeting show that regional demonstration projects were under consideration in Michigan, Vermont, Tennessee, and the Southeast. There was also a presentation by Louis Round Wilson, then of Chicago's Graduate Library School (GLS), on conducting studies under the auspices of GLS in service of the work of the Library Extension Board.[74] In addition to its business meeting, the Library Extension Board also held a joint meeting with the Board on the Library and Adult Education, where the main topic of discussion was "The State Library Extension Agency and Adult Education." The presentation by Julia Wright Merrill observed that opportunities for extension and cooperation were ripe "in light of present interest in social, economic and governmental problems." Meeting participants observed increased interest in reading in their libraries, which they found heartening; at the same time they wanted to understand what prompted this interest, in order to better formulate plans for library extension.[75]

The enthusiasm and dedication on the part of ALA leadership at the end of 1932 was not naive. They did not know, of course, that library extension would proceed or develop as they hoped. Carl Milam acknowledged the realities of economic crisis and their effect upon maintaining existing libraries, let alone on the creation of new library services via library extension, saying soberly "I myself do not see very much promise in an effort on our part to extend the geographic limitations of any library unit, or the establishment of any new library." While Milam noted his concern, he also emphasized that ALA was getting "innumerable questions" about how to manage libraries in economic crisis, that "there has come a demand such

[74] American Library Association, "Library Extension Board Meeting," December 28, 1932, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
[75] American Library Association, "Minutes, Joint Meeting of the Adult Education Board and Library Extension Board," December 28, 1932, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

as we have never felt before at Headquarters, for advisory service on public library budgets, or what we might term the public administration of public library service."[76] Alice Tyler of the Library Extension Board described the relationship between ALA and state library agencies as one of "first aid."[77]

At the very core of these Library Extension Board discussions was identifying the overarching purpose and mission of the library, which in turn would guide the efforts of the Board. J.O. Modisette, a vocal library advocate and longtime member of the Louisiana Library Commission, asked which was the more important focus of the Library Extension Board: directing reading, or educating people about the importance of libraries? Modisette argued that "the American Library Association ought, above all else, to try to blaze forth this campaign of education, of teaching the public what library service means."[78]

Library Extension Board: 1933

An important part of the Library Extension Board's work involved collaborating with various library committees and other allies in extending library services. This collaboration was driven by a mutual commitment to similar goals and a belief that no one agency or group of people were likely to accomplish these goals on their own. At the October, 1933, meeting in Chicago the Library Extension Board was looking to the Southern United States for such fruitful collaboration. Regional Field Agent Tommie Dora Barker offered that "the joint meeting of the Southeastern and Southwestern Library Associations" would be meeting in the fall of 1934, and that "seems to offer an opportunity for developing long-time programs for the whole section."[79]

[76] Ibid., 2.
[77] Ibid., 4.
[78] Ibid., 5.
[79] American Library Association, "Library Extension Board Business Meeting," October 15, 1933, ALA Archives,

This federated structure of which ALA was the nucleus was similar to what would be put into place in the 1930s for federal emergency relief. The ALA could serve as a touchstone for various library agencies and organizations, but ALA did not dictate how they should function. What made this model work was that each group operated independently while receiving guidance and support from ALA. After all, each community would know what was best for itself. The participation of state and regional organizations in the Library Extension Board helped provided needed evidence on what worked, and in turn the Library Extension Board could fine-tune their efforts to be more effective.

The October, 1933 meeting was also significant for members' discussion of the New Deal. Board members were keen to address how emergency relief could accelerate library extension, including the idea of demonstration projects as part of emergency relief. From this discussion it was agreed that there was a need for "strong state leadership" and "studies of the population and wealth required for a unit of rural library service."[80] Again, this shows ALA did not merely wish to extend library service, they wanted to do so in a scientific way.

Finally, the October, 1933 meeting was also important for the resolution on state library agencies and library extension in economic crisis sent by the Board to ALA Council. The resolution emphasized that "this time of flux and rapid change" necessitated "a reaffirmation of the importance of the state library extension. Council was asked to reaffirm

> Its faith in the fundamental economy and effective results of adequate support and vigorous functioning of state library extension agencies in the advance of library services to meet these rapidly changing conditions. We urge all friends of culture and popular education to cooperate in the efforts to provide for all citizens easy access to books by the establishment of coordinated large-scale systems of public libraries, the development of library service under trained and expert leadership, to the end that our common life may be enriched by universal education and all other cultural means.[81]

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1.
[80] Ibid., 2.
[81] Ibid., 3.

Library Extension Board: 1934

That the Library Extension Board held a special meeting in April, 1934 in Knoxville, Tennessee indicates a continued interest in library extension efforts in the South, with special attention to the Tennessee Valley Authority. The Library Extension Board saw the TVA as a planning model that could be extrapolated for library planning. TVA head Arthur E. Morgan spoke at the meeting about what he saw as the possible role for libraries in everyday life and his organizational philosophy in guiding the TVA.

Also present at the special board meeting was longtime proponent and activist for Southern library extension, and Library Extension Board member and TVA librarian Mary Utopia Rothrock. With Rothrock, Tommie Dora Barker, and J.O. Modisette on the Board, Southeastern librarians were well-represented. It is reasonable to infer that the relatively dire state of library services in the Southeastern United States spurred librarians of that region to action.

In his opening remarks to the Board, Arthur E. Morgan acknowledged that his planning philosophy was congruent with his approach to his previous work as President of Antioch College. Whether planning an educational curriculum or a rural electrification project, Morgan believed in a holistic approach in which no "single factor of development" should be pursued, but that there needs to be "a sense of proportion in which we develop all factors and all elements of the situation in good relation to one another…"[82] Morgan saw how this approach also extended, as it were, to library extension, acknowledging that "the discussion of library policy is not at all aside from what I see to be our job."[83] He waxed nostalgic about his own boyhood

[82] American Library Association, "Library Extension Board Meeting," April 16-18, 1934, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 3.
[83] Ibid.

library and how its collection of "great literature" was a highly influential factor in his own development, and sought to generalize to a wider process of cultural uplift. Morgan speculated that appreciation for "great literature" requires dedication and does not merely happen. He stated his belief in the possibility that "through design we could build up a hierarchy that would lay a basis for good reading - there would be almost a science of learning to read." To which Carl Milam responded "I think we ought to admit we know very little about that science, but that during the last three or four years we have made a beginning which may some day tell us about that." Milam's remark seems possibly related to the formal establishment of graduate education and research in library science at the University of Chicago.

Embedded in this question was access for whom**.** Morgan contended that the library's purpose was to promote good taste in reading, and disapproved of including lowbrow materials. Morgan's position would later be echoed by the findings of the Public Library Inquiry, which suggested libraries cater to exceptionally bright and engaged users. Milam and Modisette were skeptical of this approach, as they believed that libraries should serve the widest range of people. Modisette tied this perspective on access to economic crisis when he declared "to me it is much more important from an economic cultural standpoint to have all our people educated and developed to a sense of responsibility, to a certain level, let it be high or lower, than it is to have a few privileged classes educated to the limit of responsibility and the masses far down in the valley."[84] Some ALA leaders seemed to believe, therefore, in equality of access. Mary Utopia Rothrock told Morgan directly that he was "challenging some dearly held convictions of librarians when you bring up the idea of a few leaders versus the mass of the community."[85]

[84] Ibid., 8.
[85] Ibid., 9.

Morgan, however, insisted that libraries should have books that make people think, and he intimated that it is better to have no reading at all than to read "trash".

Identifying the source of funding was crucial to any systematized enlargement of access. Modisette cut right to the chase about securing federal and state funding for libraries, asking "Don't you think we ought to go to Congress and the Legislature? There are so many people who are apologetic when it comes to asking for appropriations - they are afraid to ask for what they need - they go back home and they are supported out of the funds of the Community Chest and box suppers, instead of standing out as strong representative men and women in a fundamental educational movement."[86] In a similar vein, Mary Utopia Rothrock spoke to the relationship between New Deal agencies and library extension, and how this might serve as an argument in support of federal aid for libraries: "You spoke of the possible strategy of getting appointments in the Office of Education—of developing this national aspect. We library people have been watching with much interest the New Deal educational enterprises - the CCC camps, the CWA, and the TVA, and others, and we wonder if it might be possible for us to get some sort of library activity into the federal set-up in the way in which adult education has gotten into the CCC camps."[87] Morgan affirmed that even the most difficult or abstract of ideas can be successful provided there is good leadership; with able leadership and a vision, broader support will follow. Then as Morgan was about to depart, Modisette asked "If the American Library Association saw fit to get behind a movement to get Congress to appropriate one hundred million dollars for library development, they could get it over if they really wanted to start it?" To which Morgan responded encouragingly "Yes—they will find some crack in the door."[88]

[86] Ibid., 12.
[87] Ibid., 13.
[88] Ibid., 14.

After Morgan's departure, the meeting recommenced with Milam making an observation about cooperation in library extension and other types of planning: "...there is an inevitable overlapping of interests in state planning, regional planning, and that the only thing you can do is coordinate…"[89] Milam went on to identify libraries as being positioned to be part of the emerging interest in cultural planning: "In all the national planning the emphasis so far has been on the economic and physical, and we feel that some of these days cultural planning will come into the picture equally, and we want to be as nearly ready for that as we can."[90]

The Board discussed the possibility of the TVA as a site for demonstrating both what economic relief and library services could do, with H.A. Morgan[91] saying "I think it is of tremendous interest to library people to know why this area is a good area in which to conduct these experiments." H.A. Morgan believed that if a TVA library program was going to be created "that is going to be of national interest," this necessitated an understanding of why the South was the most suitable site for such a demonstration. Morgan stated that "The Valley was selected as an exceptional area in which to place the yardstick on our civic, economic and social problems."[92] Milam echoed some of Arthur Morgan's previous statements, saying "We are almost as interested in the whole educational program as we are in the library program, because we are convinced that no educational institution can prosper until the whole thing prospers." Attendees at the meeting discussed how regional and state library organization might or might not fit with the organization of the TVA, which was a multi-state operation. How could different states cooperate under a central library agency, considering different states had different library laws? They also discussed the possibility of the creation of a state educational body that also

[89] Ibid., 15.
[90] Ibid., 16.
[91] No relation to Arthur Morgan.
[92] Ibid., 19.

included museums and libraries. Modisette warned against this idea, that there was still the likelihood that libraries would be overlooked in such a scheme, unless it could be ensured that the director of such a body would be a person familiar with and appreciative of library services.

The following day after some deliberation over wording, the Library Extension Board voted to "authorize and instruct Miss Barker and Miss Rothrock to make a study of the region and formulate a library project for the proposed TVA demonstration area and submit it to the Board."[93] The Board also voted to send a communication to the TVA encouraging the TVA to support library demonstration in a specific area of the Valley as part of the "general social and educational experiment" being undertaken.

Board Chairman C.B. Lester mused that "library relations with the TVA might be an entering wedge for federal aid" while Mary Utopia Rothrock "suggested that library service to CCC camps might be a 'crack in the door.'"[94] Milam confirmed he had already been in talks with CCC leaders. Meanwhile, Modisette wondered if "a popular campaign [were] needed to organize support of various organizations and press associations behind a movement for large scale federal aid, and then a direct approach to leading senators and representatives…that it would not go through in one administration, but would ultimately."[95] Board member and ALA President Gratia Countryman responded by telling of her work talking to local Congressmen about federal aid for libraries.

Action was swift with regard to library extension and the TVA. At the June, 1934 Board meeting held during ALA Annual in Montreal, Mary Utopia Rothrock "reported that the library situation in the TVA had advanced since the April meeting," with more library staff, more books,

[93] Ibid., 28.
[94] Ibid., 29.
[95] Ibid., 30.

and improved library space.[96] Mary Mallory's article describes what followed with Rothrock and the TVA. Meanwhile, ALA Council passed a resolution affirming the value and utility of relief projects in and with libraries, and urged "that the services of greater numbers of the more able professional workers be made available even if they are not completely destitute."[97] It is interesting that this was resolution was attached to the minutes of the Library Extension Board, as this is an indication of how Library Extension work was making headway in ALA more broadly, and was also a harbinger of how the Library Extension Board was moving in the direction of writing and influencing federal policy. Because the subsequent work of the Library Extension Board in the 1930s is policy-related, I will leave further discussion of the Library Extension Board to the next chapter.

State Libraries: Archives and Issues of Access

State libraries and archives were closely intertwined, and in the 1930s we see examples of how archives were prioritized at all levels of government: federal, state, and local. We also see involvement of local libraries in the development of archives. First, when we speak of archives, we are not talking about information management within private institutions, but government archives—which were seen as a necessary and important government function, one important enough to warrant funding during a protracted economic crisis. The importance of archives is demonstrated in the founding of the National Archives and Records Administration (1934) and the establishment of the Society of American Archivists (1936).[98]

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[96] American Library Association, "Library Extension Board Meeting," June 24 and 29, 1934, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1; Mallory, "The Rare Vision of Mary Utopia Rothrock."
[97] American Library Association, "Library Extension Board Meeting, Exhibit A," June 24 and 29, 1934, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2.
[98] Society of American Archivists, "About SAA," accessed on September 12, 2014, http://www2.archivists.org/about; National Archives, "About the National Archives," accessed on September 12, 2014, http://www.archives.gov/about/history/.

The Illinois State Library opened a new State Archives building amid much fanfare in October, 1938. The new building, which cost nearly one million dollars, was opened during a joint convention of the Society of American Archivists and the Illinois Library Association. Here is another example of collaboration and cooperation: this time between archivists and librarians. Margaret Norton, the Illinois State Archivist, said of the opening: "This is the third building in the United States devoted exclusively to the preservation and storage of archives, the other two being the National Archives at Washington and the Maryland Hall of Records at Annapolis."[99] In her detailed description of the Archives building, Norton made a point of mentioning that the most modern methods were used, including the presence of "a photographic laboratory for microphotography and photostating."[100] The new building also housed the editorial offices of the Historical Records Survey. Norton concluded by saying "the State of Illinois is justifiably proud of the forward step it has taken in the protection of the records upon which the legal rights of its citizens and its government depend."[101] Here we can infer a direct relationship between state archives and democratic participation. Perhaps the intensive promotion of state archives in the 1930s was part of a demonstration of government transparency, provided as a contrast to political authoritarianism abroad.

Many WPA projects took place in archives and focused on preservation. The commitment by state legislatures to erect permanent archival infrastructures was important, because WPA projects were meant to be temporary. If there was to be ongoing effort to maintain state archives and to initiate new projects, the state would have to make this a priority. This point was driven home by Dorsey Hyde of the National Archives: "the information made available by the WPA

[99] Margaret C. Norton, "Illinois State Archives Building," *Library Journal*, February 1, 1939, 95.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid., 97.

surveys presents merely an OPPORTUNITY which must be properly capitalized if the advantages gained are to be made permanent. There is little use in listing records whose location is not definitely fixed or which are stored in a temporary or inadequate depository."[102] Sadly, this is precisely what came to pass in states which did not prepare for permanent archival infrastructure or figure out how to integrate WPA archival inventories surveys into ongoing archival programs. One archivist writing in 1974 found that "with the exception of one state, or possibly two," all of New England's Historical Records Survey records "had disappeared."[103]

Library Buildings

One of the obvious physical manifestations of expansion of library services was in the tangible form of library buildings. Construction of new library buildings, as we have already seen, did not halt in the 1930s. It is important to acknowledge that the construction of library buildings under the New Deal was not just about providing aid to libraries, but also about providing employment for construction workers. Nevertheless, the construction of library buildings was not just "make work" projects; they both demonstrate that libraries are infrastructure as well as the success of library advocates for expansion of access.

In some cases, real urgency hastened the construction of new buildings. Fire destroyed Oregon's Capitol in 1935, which also housed the State Library. In the planning to rebuild the Capitol, it was determined that two buildings would better suit the needs of Oregonians.

[102] Dorsey W. Hyde, Jr., "The Integration of Work with Archives and Historical Manuscripts," *Library Journal*, July 1939, 540.
[103] Leonard Rapport, "Dumped from a Wharf into Casco Bay: The Historical Records Survey Revisited," *American Archivist* 37 (1974): 208.

The new Oregon State Library opened in 1939, "a beautiful building erected by the state with WPA aid."[104] WPA aid helped erect 1,000 new libraries in the 1930s, but an important part of this story is that the commitment to expanding access also shows in the ready appropriation of state funding for libraries.[105] State library agencies were successful in garnering state financial support in the midst of the Great Depression. Library extension in the 1930s was possible through both increased federal and state appropriations. The former came in the form of WPA funding, while the latter was often the result of focused legislative campaigns to increase state library funding. Since campaigns for library funding are more properly in the "policy" category, the specifics of these funding campaigns will be discussed in greater depth in the next chapter. Suffice to say that such campaigning and articulation of library policy was crucial for library extension and enhancement of access to library services in the 1930s.

State library agencies were active in variety of ways, and not just within their own buildings. Like the Library of Congress, state libraries began as collections in service to legislators, but then branched out to serve a great many more users in a variety of contexts. Field representative John Henderson described how the California State Library promoted library extension services, in part, through its support of the establishment of county libraries; Henderson noted that "there is a particularly close relationship between the county libraries and the State Library."[106]

Extension in California involved reaching out to geographically remote populations, but also meant serving patrons who had other access needs. For example, reading for users with

[104] Harriet C. Long, "The Oregon State Library," *Library Journal*, June 1, 1939, 446.
[105] Robert D. Leighninger, "Cultural Infrastructure: The Legacy of New Deal Public Space," *Journal of Architectural Education* 49, no. 4 (1996): 226-236. This figure represents library buildings that received federal support, and not new library buildings that were privately financed (e.g., private academic libraries).
[106] John D. Henderson, "The California State Library," *Library Journal*, June 15, 1939, 481.

visual impairments (referred to as "the blind") was an area where libraries sought to improve and enhance access. The California State Library began reaching out to blind users in 1905. Blind users had access to "a comprehensive collection of books" that could be mailed from the State Library free of charge thanks to government frank. In-home adult education services for blind patrons were also available, with teachers visiting "private homes, public and private charitable institutions, soldiers' homes, county hospitals, and poor farms." It is of note that "the California State Library was designated a western depository for blind publications" but especially so that this designation was made through "an annual Federal appropriation voted in the 1930-31 session of Congress."[107] As the nation was plunging into economic depression, Congressional appropriations were being made to enhance access for people with visual impairments! In 1936 the California State Library began sending out talking-book machines to patrons, which were "sent out on indefinite loan to blind persons unable to purchase them."[108] The talking-book machines and the talking-books (records) were circulated free of charge for blind patrons who requested them.

Striking examples of library expansion could be found across the United States. In Berkeley, California the prosperity of the 1920s supported the construction of three branch libraries, under the stewardship of Carleton B. Joeckel, one of the key figures involved in the transformation of the system of information provision in the 1930s. Joeckel served as the director of the Berkeley Public Library until 1927 and presided over its expansion. In that time the main branch outgrew its facility and required a larger building. The new main branch of the Berkeley Public Library was dedicated in January 1931, with money provided by a city tax levy. This suggests that the full impact of the Depression was not felt evenly and at the same time.

[107] Ibid., 484.
[108] Ibid.

It is possible that the Berkeley Public Library was able to open a new main branch in early 1931 not in spite of the Depression but because the Depression had not yet wrought its destruction.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that library construction was not stalled or halted, indicating that users valued their libraries, not to mention that there was strong federal support for putting construction workers back to work. This is made all the more clear when considering that Berkeley opened the new North Branch Library in October, 1935, funded in part by a PWA grant and a surplus in the library building fund.[109] Yet Berkeley Public Library users were not the only ones to benefit from this prosperity—it appears to have been shared and distributed in the spirit of cooperation that characterized the system of information provision and libraries in particular of the 1930s. Catalog Department Chief Lolita Carden reported in 1939 that "work with the schools has been continuous. Guidance in adult education activities for clubs and individuals has been increasing. Branch library collections have been growing more flexible and have been aiming to interpret more fully the needs of their particular reading public. A program of interlibrary loan service and cooperative book selection for the whole Bay district has been considered… In brief, the Library is looking beyond its four walls in the realization that there are further voyages of discovery and roads of experimentation in a broader service, individual and cooperative, in this Metropolitan area."[110]

Farther south near Bakersfield, WPA funds supported the building of adobe style branch libraries in Kern County.[111] WPA funds helped convert an historic church building into a space for the new Pensacola Public Library, and also paid for the book repair and cleaning.[112] In Brooklyn, ground for a new central library was first broken in 1912, yet it was not until the

[109] Lolita L. Carden, "The Berkeley Public Library," *Library Journal*, June 15, 1939, 494-97.
[110] Ibid., 497.
[111] Gretchen D. Knief, "Adobe Construction Branch Libraries," *Library Journal*, February 1, 1939, 100-01.
[112] "New Pensacola Public Library," *Library Journal*, January 1, 1939, 112.

1930s that sufficient funds were available to complete construction on the new building.[113]

On the other side of the country, Librarian Eleanor Leonard described how library expansion became a priority in northern Virginia's Arlington County with the formation of the Arlington County Library Association in 1936. The Library Association was able to secure its first county library appropriation for fiscal year 1936-37. Leonard notes her work as county librarian was "varied and full" and that she had "been librarian, counselor, janitress, painter, carpenter, fireman, and beggar."[114] Leonard said that she had, just the same, insisted on "high standards with no half measures."[115]

In Texas, the Fort Worth Public Library opened the doors to its new building in June 1939. Staff and the Board of Trustees began arguing for a new building in 1926 because they needed more space, but a new building did not take off until the 1930s, with the help of the Public Works Administration. Librarian Harry Peterson acknowledged that "there has been frequent comment on the excellence of the construction. This is due in no small measure to the splendid cooperation given by George M. Bull, Regional Director of the Public Works Administration...The total cost of the building was approximately $400,000, of which $180,000 was PWA grant and $220,000 city loan."[116]

There are many examples of new buildings for academic libraries in the 1930s. The Friedsam Library at New York's St. Bonaventure College opened in 1938.[117] Goucher College's new library, a "center of modern educational effort," and the Mother Irene Gill Memorial Library

[113] "Brooklyn's Central Library," *Library Journal*, January 1, 1939, 31.
[114] Eleanor C. Leonard, "Pioneer Work in Arlington County," *Library Journal*, October 1, 1939, 742.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Harry N. Peterson, "Fort Worth's New Public Library: Including a Brief History from its Beginning," *Library Journal*, December 15, 1939, 966. Microphotography is not mentioned specifically in the article, but one wonders if that was a possibility the designers of the new building had in mind.
[117] I.J. Herscher, "The New Friedsam Library of St. Bonaventure College," *Library Journal*, May 1, 1938, 345-49.

at the College of New Rochelle both opened in 1939.[118] Private donations funded new libraries at Brown University, Westminster College, and Drew University.[119]

Building a new library offered the opportunity to incorporate modern points of access. When Drew University's Rose Memorial Library opened in June, 1939, it included a "forward-looking photography department" based on the sense that "photography has become so closely related to the current library program and is likely to occupy a greater place in the future."[120]

Cooperative Cataloging and Access

Initiatives to improve access also developed around cooperative cataloging, and they originated prior to the Depression. According to "A Restatement of the ALA Plan for the Promotion of Research Library Service by Cooperative Methods," ALA's Committee on Bibliography first introduced a cooperative cataloging proposal to ALA Council in March, 1926. At that meeting Council voted to authorize funds to continue and extend "union card lists of books, manuscripts and special collections available in libraries throughout the world…[and] for funds to organize such aspects of the problem of research books as cannot be handled by the Library of Congress…"[121] A pamphlet published in August 1926 suggested a five year plan, which included recommendations for creation of an "association of research libraries under the auspices of the Executive Board of the American Library Association for the cooperative purchase of books…"[122] The updated 1930 report restated that "main objective of the ALA plan"

[118] Charles H. Brown, "New Library Building at Goucher College," *Library Journal*, April 1, 1939, 276; Anne M. Cieri, "The New Library of the College of New Rochelle," *Library Journal*, April 1, 1939, 262.
[119] "New Building at Brown," *Library Journal*, January 1, 1938, 31; Mildred A. Ailman, "Ralph Gibson McGill Memorial Library," *Library Journal*, November 15, 1938, 864-66.
[120] O. Gerald Lawson, "Rose Memorial Library of Drew University," *Library Journal*, August 1939, 580.
[121] American Library Association Committee on Bibliography, "A Restatement of the Plan for the Promotion of Research Library Service by Cooperative Methods," November 3, 1930, Joint Committee on Materials for Research Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 3.
[122] Ibid., 4.

was the "Union Finding List of Printed Books in American Locations." They projected that "the number of works existing in America which might be quickly located by inexpensive methods of cooperation, copying and pasting, was estimated at 6,000,000."[123] Although microfilm was not mentioned in the 1930 report, it is clear that these goals dovetailed with those of the nascent Joint Committee on Materials for Research.

This initiative was not swept aside by the Depression. Seeded with a grant of $13,500, the ALA Cooperative Cataloging Committee was established in June, 1931 to "investigate the possibilities of cooperative cataloging among libraries dealing with research material." In the fall of 1931 Paul North Rice, Executive Assistant to the Committee and Librarian of the Dayton Public Library, visited 43 large Midwestern and east coast libraries to discuss cooperative cataloging plans. In a September, 1932 report submitted to the General Education Board, the Cooperative Cataloging Committee stated that Rice found "the attitude of almost every one with whom he talked was very encouraging."[124] He also highlighted the "great value of the Union Catalogue" of the Library of Congress, "and urged the importance of the Catalogue's continuance and enlargement."[125] Cooperative cataloging was seen as being more efficient because it eliminated the unnecessary duplication of records. Whatever initial investment would be required to start an effective cooperative cataloging system, and however much it cost to maintain it, would be more cost-effective and efficient in the long run than continuing a dispersed cataloging system. Cooperative cataloging was also seen as a revenue generator, as cooperative cataloging would be an opt-in system. Thus, while a library would pay something for

[123] Ibid.
[124] "Report of the A.L.A. Cooperative Cataloging Committee to the General Education Board," September, 1932, Joint Committee on Materials for Research Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[125] Ibid.

items in the shared cataloging system, it would still cost less than if they had to catalog the item on their own.

Cooperative cataloging was a means of combatting unemployment, according to a *New York Times* piece published in late 1932 by Library of Congress consultant, Ernest Cushing Richardson. Stating that "the outstanding economic situation is joblessness. Every one meets this situation—even a librarian," Richardson proposed putting people back to work on creating a union catalog for all of the United States. One of the virtues of such a project was that it required "not only unemployed librarians but untrained workers in large numbers of precisely the type for which it is hardest to invent really useful employment in depression times…[126] Again, creating a union catalog not only would enhance access to libraries, but also put people back to work. The creation of a union catalog for 146 Philadelphia-area libraries, for example, employed hundreds of typists, stenographers, and file clerks.[127]

African American Communities and Access

Studies about library services for African Americans tend to focus specifically on the Southern United States, such as David Battles' 2009 book *The History of Public Library Access for African Americans in the South*.[128] Battles draws extensively from Eliza Gleason's 1941 book *The Southern Negro and the Public Library*, which was based on her doctoral dissertation at the University of Chicago's Graduate Library School.[129] Another key source on library services for African Americans in the 1930s is Ann Shockley's 1960 study, *A History of Public Library*

[126] Ernest Cushing Richardson "Union Library Catalogues Suggested to Aid Jobless: Project Would Give Employment to Many Untrained Workers and Increase Service," *New York Times*, December 18, 1932.
[127] "Union Catalogue Combines Index to 146 Philadelphia Libraries," August, 1937, WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
[128] David M. Battles, *The History of Public Library Access for African Americans in the South, or Leaving Behind the Plow* (Landham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2008).
[129] Eliza Atkins Gleason, *The Southern Negro and the Public Library* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941).

Services to Negroes in the South, 1900-1955.[130] This may reflect the fact that until the early twentieth century, African Americans still lived disproportionately in the South. All of these works address the 1930s to some extent, but not within the larger context of the transformation that occurred.

Once again, with respect to library services to African Americans, some efforts had been made before 1930 to improve access. Julius Rosenwald, a founder of Sears and Roebuck, first began pledging money for African American causes in 1911, and he established the Rosenwald Fund in 1917.[131] Again, the Depression did not curtail these initiatives. Battles says of the Rosenwald Fund that "part of the tremendous blow of the Depression was softened by a $500,000 gift by the Rosenwald Fund to southern states for libraries."[132] The gift was granted in 1930 and spread out over five years. The Southeastern Library Association, formed in 1920, would go on to play an important role in library extension generally and specifically for African Americans in the South. By 1931 the Southeastern Library Association, which included Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia "had written into its resolutions that 'library service to Negroes should be part of every library program."[133] That was a forward-thinking position in this period of entrenched Jim Crow.

Efforts were made by ALA members to improve access for American Americans, though not without struggle. The Work With Negroes Round Table was created in 1922 at ALA's annual meeting. The Round Table met exactly once more, in 1923, when it was disbanded due to

[130] Ann Allen Shockley, *A History of Public Library Services to Negroes in the South, 1900-1955* (Dover, DE: Delaware State College, 1960).
[131] Louise S. Robbins, "Changing the Geography of Reading in a Southern Border State: The Rosenwald Fund and the WPA in Oklahoma," *Libraries and Culture* 40, no. 3 (2005): 353-397.
[132] Battles, *The History of Public Library Access for African Americans in the South, or Leaving Behind the Plow*, 67.
[133] Shockley, *A History of Public Library Services to Negroes in the South, 1900-1955*, 11

controversy—Shockley writes that the work ended "disastrously when it developed into an inter-sectional and inter-racial feud."[134] The American Library Association's Committee on Library Extension, the forerunner of the Library Extension Board, published a study in 1926 on public library services to African Americans—just one year after its establishment, suggesting this was a priority.[135]

A significant moment for African American librarians in the 1930s was the 1936 ALA Annual Conference held in the segregated city of Richmond, Virginia. In the May 1, 1936 issue of *Library Journal*, in advance of the Richmond conference, Edith Snow wrote "I understand that colored librarians are to be segregated at the Richmond meeting...Is this the best the A.L.A. can do? I am shocked to think so… I think the A.L.A. can do no less than refuse to meet in such states until they progress a bit."[136] A letter published two weeks later explained how segregated facilities would impact attendees at Annual. *Library Journal* asked for member comments "from those who feel that, if it was impossible to find a meeting place where such conditions could be avoided, announcement should have been made in the official *Bulletin* of the American Library Association accompanied by an expression of regret at its inability to extend to all members the full rights and privileges which its acceptance of their membership dues tacitly promised."[137]

The conference was held in Richmond that month, and in the June 1, 1936 issue of *Library Journal* the letters began pouring in. A member named Beatrice Winser wrote "I am perfectly aware of the feeling toward the Negro in the South and that the A.L.A. could not be expected to change conditions. I wish, however, to protest against the A.L.A. holding a meeting in any section of the country where all its members of whatever race are not welcome.

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[134] Ibid., 9.
[135] Gleason, *The Southern Negro and the Public Library*.
[136] Edith Snow, "Letter," *Library Journal*, May 1, 1936, 341.
[137] "Letter," *Library Journal*, May 15, 1936, 387.

We certainly betray our profession if we do not maintain libraries, and all their ways, as the most democratic and human institutions in the world."[138] Frederick A. Blossom wrote even more forcefully, calling ALA "a pusillanimous organization" that "weakly yields to medieval bigotry" and concluded by saying "I have heard it said that that Richmond discriminations were 'degrading' to our Negro fellow members. This is incorrect. It is not they but our association that has suffered degradation."[139] The letters filled a page and a half of comments in another June issue of *Library Journal*, a large amount considering the letters typically took up just a couple of paragraphs per subject. The conversation continued into the next issue, when Wallace Van Jackson asked his fellow members to support African American librarians "in the endeavor to have the association hold its annual conferences in cities where all of its members may participate equally in the meetings, sessions, and round table discussions."[140]

The postmortem of the Richmond conference as it played out in the pages of *Library Journal* can be viewed as a barometer of member attitudes toward equality for African American members. Most of the letters to *Library Journal* were from writers who believed that ALA had acted wrongly to hold a conference in city that enforced segregation. The backlash against segregation at the 1936 Annual is a far cry from the controversy that erupted amongst membership in 1923 in response to the Work With Negroes Round Table. It seems that in a little over a dozen years, support for greater access had increased. Something about ALA member attitudes had changed by 1936. ALA had held conferences in cities with segregated facilities before Richmond. Just four years prior it had the Annual Conference in New Orleans.[141]

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[138] Beatrice Winser, "Letter," *Library Journal*, June 1, 1936, 427.
[139] Frederick A. Blossom, "Letter," *Library Journal*, June 1, 1936, 427.
[140] Wallace Van Jackson, "Letter," *Library Journal*, June 15, 1936, 468.
[141] American Library Association, "Past Annual Conferences, 1876- Present," accessed August 13, 2014, http://www.ala.org/conferencesevents/past/pastannualconferences

Why was segregation so disturbing to membership in 1936 Richmond? One possible explanation is the growing activist momentum for African American equality in the 1930s, and that librarianship likewise reflected this consciousness around race.

Jean Preer's 2004 article shows how it is impossible to talk about the Richmond conference without addressing race.[142] Her article also points to how the 1936 Annual Conference can be remembered as a landmark event for other reasons, namely for the emphases on technology, advocacy, and federal aid. It was in Richmond where ALA voted to endorse federal aid for libraries, though this endorsement was hard-won and not without vigorous debate. The contours of this debate will be more closely examined in the policy chapter. Hand in hand with the emphasis on federal aid was an emphasis on the need for librarians to be vocal advocates for library support in their communities and states. Federal aid would come more readily to libraries if librarians demonstrated their own commitment while also enlisting users to advocate for libraries.

The Richmond conference is also memorable for its sessions about technology in libraries. A *Library Journal* article from 1936 predicted that a "thorough demonstration of microphotography" would be "an outstanding feature of the Richmond conference" and "an illuminating experience for everybody."[143] Preer writes "The 1936 conference itself demonstrated how librarians could use new communication media to reach larger audiences of library users and supporters."[144] These media included radio, film, and microphotography, with "a daylong symposium on microphotography."[145] In addition, engineer David Cushman Coyle

[142] Jean L. Preer, "'This Year--Richmond!' The 1936 Meeting of the American Library Association," *Libraries and Culture* 39 (2004): 137-160.
[143] M. Llewellyn Raney, "Microphotography at Richmond," *Library Journal*, May 1, 1936, 368.
[144] Preer, "'This Year--Richmond!' The 1936 Meeting of the American Library Association," 147-48.
[145] Ibid., 149.

delivered a speech entitled "Technology and Culture" during the conference's first general session. Had the conference not occurred in segregated Richmond, perhaps it would have been remembered for being an historic moment for its emphases on technology, advocacy, and federal aid—positive harbingers of transformation of the system of information provision. Instead the Richmond conference in the history of librarianship is more of a notorious and embarrassing event in ALA history. However, it is possible to see the way race was discussed as a positive harbinger. In the past ALA had held conferences in locations with segregated facilities. The outcry over segregation at Richmond can be seen as a change of consciousness. By 1936, much of ALA's membership felt that its claim to promote democracy was incongruent with holding a conference in a segregated city.

Attempts to encourage or perhaps show support for greater access for African Americans are found with some frequency in publications from the 1930s. A typical example is a May 1936 short piece in *Library Journal* entitled "Reading for Negroes." The piece reports that in March 1936 "to make reading a part of Negro community life in Texas, and to make the slogan of 'The right book to the right person at the right time' a reality to Negroes in Texas, were the two objectives named by colored librarians at their second annual conference…" The article goes on to report the resolutions that African Americans should be included in state library extension services, and that there should be African American representation in the Texas Library and Historical Commission. The resolution called for "at least one" African American trained librarian to be involved. Finally, the resolution asserted that outreach to African American library users of Texas should be "of interest to every educator, regardless of race."[146]

[146] "Reading for Negroes," *Library Journal*, May 1, 1936, 369.

Others too felt the 1930s were an auspicious period for African Americans in libraries, as users and workers. In 1939 one writer optimistically characterized the decade: "During the last few years great interest has been shown by the Negro in the library movement in the United States. In many large cities branches have been opened for Negroes, and Negro colleges have added materially to their libraries… A recent study disclosed the fact that by 1938 over 200 Negro librarians had completed the first year course in library science at accredited library schools in the United States and Canada."[147] The author goes on to emphasize, however, that African Americans have long "held an important place in the development of libraries in the United States," noting that African Americans were pioneers "in the branch library movement in the East and the South."[148]

Sadie Peterson-Delaney's 1938 article for *Library Journal*, "The Place of Bibliotherapy in a Hospital," describes the therapeutic properties possible in reading, written from the perspective of a fellow librarian engaged in such an approach. For example, Peterson-Delaney describes how her library serves "the mental patients who come from the closed wards...Here they are aided in the development of their dormant qualities through books, and are given individual attention and sympathetic direction."[149] She also paid daily visits to patients confined to bed rest, and assisted other users with developing leisure interests or working toward educational goals.

At the same time, Peterson-Delaney's article is also a sketch of library services for African Americans in the Deep South in the 1930s. She writes that "the atmosphere of the library is conducive to reading. Its green walls are hung with maps, paintings, and pictures of Negro

[147] Wallace Van Jackson, "Some Pioneer Negro Library Workers," *Library Journal*, March 15, 1939, 215.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Sadie Peterson-Delaney, "The Place of Bibliotherapy in a Hospital," *Library Journal*, April 15, 1938, 305.

leaders and authors of books as well as other outstanding persons who have attained great heights through books. There are nearly 6,000 volumes in the general collection, and a separate collection of books by and about the Negro."[150] Here we see that access for African American veterans meant not just the provision of general reading materials and other general sources of information, but information of potential interest specifically to African American veterans. The library itself was decorated in such a way to emphasize the contributions of African Americans. In this way, African American library services provided the sort of moral uplift that is commonly associated with outreach efforts during the 1930s.[151]

As an historically marginalized group, African Americans bore a disproportionate burden during the Great Depression, with half of the African American population out of work in 1932 as opposed to the national rate. Nevertheless, more room was made in the 1930s for African Americans to use and work in the system of information provision. With financing available from the Rosenwald Fund, growing pressure from ALA members for equal services, the work of the Library Extension Board and the Southeastern Library Association, and emergency relief, access to library services for African Americans expanded in the 1930s.

Conclusion

Efforts to enlarge and expand information access were robust in the 1930s. Increased attention to archives followed with the creation of the National Archives in the 1930s, and the various federal programs under the Works Progress Administration devoted to archival work. Access to scholarly resources was emphasized in the creation of organizations such as the Joint

[150] Ibid.
[151] Joyce M. Latham, "White Collar Read: The American Public Library and the Left Led CIO; A Case Study of the Chicago Public Library, 1929-1952" (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 2007).

Committee on Materials for Research and the American Documentation Institute. With the passage of Federal Emergency Relief Act in 1935, the promise of emergency relief for libraries was close at hand, galvanizing many librarians into action, advocating for an allotment of funds for their libraries while offering detailed proposals for how such funds could be spent. In May 1935, director of the Pennsylvania State Library Gertrude MacKinney provided an outline of how an emergency relief project would play out in Pennsylvania. While the plan overall sought to improve upon existing or traditional library services in Pennsylvania, MacKinney's plan also sought "to enable libraries and [the] state library agency to participate helpfully in federal programs of emergency education, youth activities, student aid, rural rehabilitation, subsistence homesteads, CCC camps, transient centers, et cetera."[152] MacKinney notes that she based her proposal on the "ALA Federal Project."

It appears, then, that the National Plan for Libraries and proposals for emergency and permanent funding for libraries struck a chord with many librarians. Likewise, the increased attention to archives, government records, and scholarly communication deepened in the 1930s. In this case librarians' desire and conviction turned into political action. One the marked features of the 1930s system of information provision was the many ways that information policy was articulated. These things could be achieved or made stronger because they were part of a policy framework.

What are some possible explanations for this multiform trend to enhance access? One is that the federal government was extending into the political economy nationwide—including library support. There was also persistent and successful lobbying and networking by librarians and professional organizations like the American Library Association. At the same time, the

[152] Gertrude MacKinney, "A Pennsylvania Emergency Library Project," *Library Journal,* May 1, 1935, 378.

growth of adjacent activities in scholarship and science led to a strong need for improved library service. Finally, the self-organization of the working class and anti-racism activities of the era contributed to the push for increased access.

This is not to suggest that information access was total in the 1930s. There were barriers to access preceding the 1930s that persisted into the decade and beyond. Moreover, it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to ascertain the extent to which enlargement of access helped public library users become more politically informed or active, improved the quality of scholarly research, or made economic decision-making on the federal level. Nevertheless, it was the belief of the various institutions described herein that broader access was a good thing, and it was possible.

In some cases, as with MacKinney, ALA's efforts inspired librarians to act and create a vision as to how federal funding could be put to work in their libraries. ALA's federal funding proposals also rankled some librarians who found the idea suspect at best and reprehensible at worst. While ALA had previously been engaged in some policy work prior to the 1930s, and libraries themselves are fundamentally political institutions, the efforts on the policymaking stage accelerated during the Great Depression. This more energetic foray sparked the imaginations of some for what federal funding could do, while igniting heated debate. The role of policy in libraries and the system of information provision is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE:

POLICY AND THE SYSTEM OF INFORMATION PROVISION

Introduction

Information policy is the third and final site of transformation considered in this study. As this chapter will show, information policy efforts intensified significantly in the 1930s. This expansion is particularly evident in the activities of the federal government and the American Library Association (ALA). For one of my primary research findings is that during the 1930s, policymakers made financial support for libraries a top priority in their wider modernization of the system of information provision. Libraries and librarians therefore took a central place in the New Deal's modernizing overhaul and expansion of the system of government and public information provision—serving both internal/administrative and external/societal functions—in technology, access, and policy.

Evidence suggests that the Roosevelt administration prioritized information provision by creating and enhancing policies for the generation, collection, preservation, and dissemination of information. Demonstrably affected were the sorts of information the federal government collected and used, particularly in respect to the economic crisis. ALA's policy efforts in the 1930s have been described and documented to some extent, most thoroughly by Kathleen Molz, but she does not emphasize the significance of the Great Depression.[1] The 1930s were, however, a watershed decade in ALA's history. The organization's rising involvement with information policy took hold alongside the profession's embrace of social science research at the organizational and educational levels. The University of Chicago's Graduate Library School

[1] Redmond Kathleen Molz, *National Planning for Library Service 1935-1975* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1984), 62.

(GLS) produced several reports throughout the 1930s in support of federal and state aid for libraries. At the height of the Depression, ALA was able to rally considerable support using data generated from these studies, frequently invoking the statistic that 40 million Americans were without access to library services. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) library projects then served as demonstration sites for what expanded access might look like and how valuable it could be. This momentum for library expansion, amplified during the Depression, continued into the 1940s and 50s. The Public Library Inquiry, still the most exhaustive study of the public library in the United States, was published in 1950, but ALA Executive Secretary Carl Milam and grant makers at the Carnegie Corporation had begun discussing the possibility of such a study in the 1930s. Finally, it is worth reiterating the growth in librarian positions in the 1930s as described in the first chapter. Michael Denning notes that librarians formed one of two occupational categories that almost quadrupled between 1920 and 1950 (the other was college professors).[2] In addition, the government spend upwards of $100 million in support of library services under the WPA.[3]

I have already tried to correct the view, exemplified by Michael Harris, that the 1930s was a rather dull decade in library history save for the profession's embrace of intellectual freedom.[4] This was no mean feat in itself, however, and the ascendance of intellectual freedom as a central tenet of librarianship has rightly been the focus of studies by library history scholars

[2] Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 2010)
[3] Edward Barrett Stanford, *Library Extension Under the WPA: An Appraisal of an Experiment in Federal Aid* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944).
[4] Michael H. Harris, "The Role of the Public Library in American Life: A Speculative Essay," Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Occasional Papers 117 (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, 1975).

including Evelyn Geller, Christine Jenkins, Joyce Latham, and Rosalee McReynolds.[5] The assertion of intellectual freedom policies was a major shift in the profession during the 1930s. However, the 1930s were a watershed in the history of librarianship more generally. In an article on Singapore's library development, Brendan Luyt quotes a contemporary mentioning as if it were common knowledge that "the very great contributions to all fields of librarianship *which emerged in the United States of America in the 1930s* and which have since developed to such a peak that American librarianship and American library training have led the world ever since in virtually every field," (emphasis mine).[6] In a different article, Luyt charges that prior histories on libraries and the Depression focus on either "individual librarians" or "how the federal government came to the rescue" at the expense of focusing on "the library as a social institution constituted by a set of economic, political and cultural relationships in wider society; relationships that during the turbulent years of the Depression were under considerable need of revision or repair."[7]

In this chapter, I want to look at the ways in which information policy was newly visible and effectual in the 1930s. Attention to policy is evident in the government initiatives and ALA activity; thus I focus on materials from the National Archives and ALA Archives. I will gesture at the wider system of information provision by briefly looking at some of the ways in which the federal government prioritized the collection, preservation, and dissemination of information.

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[5] See Evelyn Geller, *Forbidden Books in American Public Libraries, 1876-1939: A Study in Social Change* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984); Christine A. Jenkins, "'The Strength of the Inconspicuous': Youth Services Librarians, the American Library Association, and Intellectual Freedom for the Young, 1939-1955" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1995); Joyce M. Latham, "White Collar Read: The American Public Library and the Left Led CIO; A Case Study of the Chicago Public Library, 1929-1952" (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 2007); Rosalee McReynolds and Louise S. Robbins, *Librarian Spies: Philip and Mary Jane Keeney and Cold War Espionage* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2009).

[6] Brendan Luyt, "Colonialism, Ethnicity, and Geopolitics in the Development of the Singapore National Library," *Libraries and the Cultural Record* 44, no. 4 (2009): 422-23.

[7] Brendan Luyt, "The ALA, Public Libraries and the Great Depression," *Library History* 23 (2007): 85, 86.

Most of the chapter is devoted to how librarians and the American Library Association engaged in policymaking. The dedicated policy efforts of librarians in the 1930s shows how librarians and ALA were a central part of the transformation of the system of information provision.

All these signs of libraries' growing importance gave prominence to information policy. Let us consider what is meant by "information policy" and its role prior to the 1930s. Information policy refers to the laws, rules, and procedures that govern information provision: "creation, processing, flows, and use."[8] The federal government had prioritized information provision well before Roosevelt took office. To enumerate all of the ways that the federal government did so would be beyond any one scholar, as entire books and dissertations have been written about numerous single agencies. The previous chapter discussed government information policy in the context of access, looking at the Post Office and the Department of Agriculture. In the 1930s the Bureau of the Census and the Bureau of Labor Statistics also enlarged and expanded the range of public information collected, analyzed, and disseminated in service of federal decision-making in response to economic crisis. Although these are but two agencies, some discussion of them will gesture at the wide range of what falls under the system of government information provision.

[8] Peter Hernon and Harold C. Relyea, "Information Policy: United States," in *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences*, Third Edition, edited by Marcia J. Bates and Mary Niles Maack (New York: CRC Press, 2010); Sandra Braman, preface to *Change of State: Information, Policy, and Power* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).

Government Information and Policy

The Census

By the start of the 1930s, numerous government agencies relied on the collection, management, and use of information. I will focus here on the Bureau of the Census and the Bureau of Labor Statistics because they are particularly illustrative of the breadth of changes that government agencies underwent during this time.

The Bureau of the Census is an important example of the nexus between information management and government policy. The first census was taken in 1790 and has been conducted every ten years hence. The census is such an established feature of everyday life that the work and intention that are required to perform it are often invisible. It is perhaps for this reason that, according to Margo J. Anderson "Census data are taken for granted. They seem to most of us given, obvious, uncontroversial—part of the background information we all absorb in our everyday lives."[9] Census data is "some of the most reliable information the nation has."[10] Yet the collection, analysis, and management of census data is not accidental or incidental, but policy-driven. Federal statistical analysis is a long-standing feature of the federal government. Census data is used for apportioning funds and Electoral College votes. It is the primary source of demographic information about the United States population.

The perceived lack of action on the part of the Hoover administration to combat the Depression was reflected in its indifference to census policy. The 1930 census could have been revised in some way to collect data that would yield information to help understand and alleviate the economic downturn. On the one hand, Hoover dismissed concerns about unemployment in the early days of the Depression and "cautioned the country that statements about the severity of

[9] Margo J. Anderson, *The American Census: A Social History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 1.
[10] Ibid., 2.

unemployment were not based on solid data." With the 1930 census scheduled to be taken April 1, just five months after the stock market crash, it could have been tweaked to better gauge information about the economy and unemployment. Anderson writes that "the public naturally looked to the responses to the inquiries on the 1930 census to clarify the unemployment situation...Unfortunately, despite Hoover's statement of 1930, the decennial census was not planned to address such concerns."[11] Thus it appears that the 1930s census was a missed opportunity. The Hoover Administration's unconcern, however, "began a controversy about the collection and reporting of unemployment and other population data that raged for the next ten years. In the process, the Census Bureau went through an institutional restructuring that transformed it into an agency to serve Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal."[12] What did this transformation of policy and practice entail? Anderson writes: "By the early 1940s, then, the Census Bureau had achieved most of the goals set forth in the early days of the Roosevelt administration for the nation's population statistics. Its personnel had changed, and the Statistical Research Division of the bureau stood at the cutting edge of probability sampling and survey research. Broad new initiatives had been made in the decennial census."[13] In summary, like so much of the system of information provision in the 1930s, "The Census Bureau and its programs were restructured to meet the new realities."[14]

The 1940 Census, tellingly, introduced more elaborate and detailed questions about employment status. Questions about employment were added to include those employed through emergency relief programs. Questions for recipients of emergency relief employment were asked if they had worked with the WPA, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the National Youth

[11] Anderson, *The American Census*, 160.
[12] Ibid., 161.
[13] Ibid., 190.
[14] Ibid., 237.

Administration, or some other relief agency. A new question was added about income. Questions also reflected the upheaval of the 1930s by asking about people living in camps and other temporary dwellings. Census questions attempted to assess internal migration by asking where the subject lived on April 1, 1935, and whether that had changed by 1940.[15]

The 1940 census was the first decennial census to employ statistical sampling methods. In addition to the regular forms, a smaller segment of the population (the sample) was asked to answer additional questions. This was done in 1937 and applied to unemployment data. After the limited use of statistical sampling in 1937, it was broadly used for the first time in the 1940 decennial census.[16] The incorporation of statistical sampling methods in the 1930s is further evidence that the information policy of the crisis decade widened.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) existed prior to the Great Depression (indicative of a previous acknowledgement of the importance of economic information), but its activities were transformed in the 1930s—expanded in size and scope. After July 1933, when Isador Lubin became the Commissioner of Labor Statistics, the BLS underwent a transformation, with Goldberg and Moye writing that "The Bureau expanded greatly during his tenure, first to meet the needs of the New Deal agencies set up to deal with the emergency and then to provide the information needed for guiding the economy during the war years."[17]

[15] United States Census Bureau, "About the 1940 Census," 1940 Census: Official 1940 Census Website, http://1940census.archives.gov/about/.
[16] United States Census Bureau, "Developing Sampling Techniques," accessed on April 16, 2014, http://www.census.gov/history/www/innovations/data_collection/developing_sampling_techniques.html.
[17] Joseph T. Goldberg and William T. Moye, *The First Hundred Years of the Bureau of Labor Statistics* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1985), 140.

Lubin's philosophy on the relationship between government and economic life was consistent with that of many of his contemporaries, in that he believed that a healthier economy required increased government involvement and oversight. Lubin also believed that one of the key causal factors of the Great Depression was economic inequality which resulted in lack of consumption. A policy of increasing the government's role in economic life would help ensure income was distributed more equally, resulting in more purchasing power for a greater number of people. Lubin further believed that information was a key component of this policy reorientation, indeed that "more and better information on employment and unemployment was of vital importance."[18] He and Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins were eager to expand the statistical work of the Department of Labor.

Under Lubin's leadership during the 1930s, the BLS made several improvements and adjustments to its information work, including moving beyond employment statistics. The Bureau expanded the national cost-of-living index to adjust for food prices and population, while improved analysis yielded more detailed and specific information about wholesale commodity prices. The Bureau also began producing its monthly series on average hourly wages and average weekly hours in 1932, and separate data specific to women was collected beginning in 1937. Overall, as Goldberg and Moye attest, "The Bureau's employment statistics were of crucial importance in assessing the extent of the industrial recovery from the Great Depression and, later, in monitoring the defense and war programs."[19] The Bureau's work thus was key for recovering from economic crisis and had lasting impact beyond the 1930s. More importantly, the

[18] Ibid., 144.
[19] Ibid., 165.

Bureau's many improvements were part of a larger policy of attempting to expand and improve information management in service of public life.[20]

The Great Depression made it clear how badly the information system needed reorganization, not only in government statistics but in science and research across the board. As Dupree argues "The Roosevelt Administration, like nearly all its predecessors, developed no over-all policy for or against science. The essentials of the New Deal rested on other bases than research and its results." Burton Adkinson made a similar observation in *Two Centuries of Federal Information*, writing that "For the most part, federal agencies and departments established sci-tech information services to serve specific programs" and that "no attempt was made to coordinate these until after World War II."[21] At the same time, Dupree acknowledges that "on a pragmatic level, the government in the New Deal years threw off the blight of the depression and raised the scientific establishment to unprecedented opulence. The more consistent inclusion of the social sciences added a new dimension to the government's research effort, while the coupling of science with planning increased its effectiveness." Dupree added that "the concept of research as a national resource served well in the crisis. The techniques such as the use of contracts for joining federal and nonfederal research were valuable in setting up an emergency organization."[22]

The New Deal and its constellation of programs necessitated policies to generate new kinds of government information. Programs such as the Historical Records Survey also spurred the inventorying of local, state, and federal records. These New Deal initiatives served to

[20] A. Hunter Dupree, *Science in the Federal Government: A History of Policies and Activities*, Paperback Reprint (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 258.
[21] Burton W. Adkinson, *Two Centuries of Federal Information* (Stroudsburg, PA: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross, 1978), 10.
[22] Dupree, *Science in the Federal Government*, 368.

simultaneously demonstrate the new expansion of records generated by government activity and the previous neglect of such records. The Social Security Administration (SSA), for example, required the generation and management of more kinds of information about the population. Existing records were sometimes available, but they were disorganized. The creation of the SSA urged the creation of an information life cycle data chain of reporting between the local and the national levels.[23]

Central Statistical Board

Unnamed as such, information provision and its various interdependent components were actually seen as vital to economic recovery and the realization of democratic participation. The government required accurate and timely information about the population and the economy in order to provide the most appropriate policy response. When creating relief agencies, the government required those agencies to regularly collect information and generate analytical reports about their activities. This helps counter the arguments made by some that relief agencies were a "boondoggle," or a hastily made band aid with no accountability or purpose.

The New Deal typically attempted to formulate and study the problems at hand to design relief responses, and to create the infrastructure needed for evaluation. The Letter of Transmittal from the Central Statistical Board illustrates the larger practice. The Central Statistical Board was charged with coordinating all federal statistical services. In this first annual report submitted on April 15, 1935, the director described the origins of the Central Statistical Board: "this Board was established by Executive order to plan and promote the improvement, coordination, and

[23] Kirstin Downey, *The Woman Behind the New Deal: The Life and Legacy of Frances Perkins—Social Security, Unemployment Insurance, and the Minimum Wage* (New York: Anchor Books, 2010).

economical operation of the statistical services pertinent to the recovery program."[24] He goes on to acknowledge the precedent in such information gathering activity at the federal level:

> "As early as 1908 an interdepartmental committee was established to investigate the problem. During the war an effective coordinating agency was established, but it was subsequently allowed to lapse. The coming of the depression made the need for a statistical coordinating agency far more urgent than it had previously been. The formulation and administration of policies directed toward economic recovery and the stabilization of revived business activity brought demands for more extensive and for better organized statistical data and at the same time for a more economical conduct of statistical work. The number of Federal agencies engaged extensively in statistical work was already large in 1929; that number has since been materially increased. The Federal Statistics Board, established in 1931 with somewhat limited powers and without a staff, was inadequately equipped to cope with the problem, and in August 1933 it was replaced by the Central Statistical Board, five members of the old Board becoming members of the new Board. During the year and a half since its establishment the Central Statistical Board has been able to record continuing and substantial accomplishments in the coordination, improvement, and economical operation of the statistical services."[25]

The Central Statistical Board and other informational projects, including library projects, developed during emergency relief were considered white-collar jobs. I turn now to the WPA Library Services Division.

WPA Library Services Division

How did policy function or how was it operationalized in a practical way? One important instance may be found in the information projects and services of the WPA. The WPA and its multitude of projects were subject to rigorous documentation procedures, all of which generated a voluminous paper trail (and now a rich historical record). Recordkeeping is one of the core features of information policy. Government agencies are required to document, maintain, and

[24] Central Statistical Board, "Letter of Transmittal," 1935, WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 1.
[25] Ibid.

distribute records describing transactions within and between agencies. The Library Services Division shows what these recordkeeping practices looked like. At the highest level of that division, director Edward Chapman was required to write and submit reports on the visits he regularly made to state library projects. The library services division was part of Women's and Professional Projects (later the Professional and Service Division), so he submitted these reports to the head of that project (Ellen Woodward for most of its existence). The head of Women's and Professional Projects would generate reports on all of its projects, including the Library Services Division, based on the reports submitted by division heads, and submit that cumulative report to the head of the WPA, which for most of the 1930s was Harry Hopkins.

This recordkeeping also holds true with regard to permanent federal bureaus and agencies of the 1930s, both the previously existing and the newly established. But even the phrase "generating reports" only makes the vaguest of statements and does not get at the specifics of this recordkeeping. Let us return to the Library Services Division for further insight into this process. Edward Chapman, as previously mentioned, made regular visits to states to advise and assess state library projects, and wrote reports for all of these visits and field trips. Chapman also, as a matter of course, submitted monthly reports of his division's activities. This cumulative report would include but was not limited to many state library project visits. Chapman also made visits to city projects, as evidenced by reports of trips to Baltimore or Indianapolis. It seems more common for Chapman to have made generalized state reports when visiting places with few to no urban centers. Chapman as director also oversaw the generation and distribution of general guidelines and manuals for WPA library projects. Statewide or regional projects were responsible for generating guidelines and manuals specific to their projects, e.g. Robert Binkley and the newspaper indexing projects. At Chapman's level, the kinds of manual and guidelines he

was responsible for were meant to clarify the state-federal relationship, as well as the responsibilities and obligations of both, including expectations and requirements for financial contributions. Statewide projects were required to provide 25% of costs.

Women's projects started as a way to provide dedicated relief work for women. When men and women were competing for relief jobs, men (and particularly white men) were more likely to find employment. Women were discriminated against because they were seen as being less needy than a man looking for work. Ellen Woodward wrote to Carleton Joeckel in March, 1935 about women's projects being accomplished through the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA).[26] Joeckel replied five days later, thanking Woodward for her efforts and following up with a query - could ALA count on Woodward to be an ally in advocating for a library relief program? "Surely" Joeckel implores "it is one of the most effective ways in which to secure employment of women."[27]

Emergency relief helped libraries in its many forms. Library services were expanded through the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the Public Works Administration (PWA), and the WPA. ALA was keen to support this and encourage libraries to be part of emergency relief. A feature in a March 1934 issue of *Library Journal* profiled more than twenty libraries that had benefited from civil works support, including libraries in Boston, Brooklyn, and Chicago.[28] These projects employed people with a variety of skills, such as clerical, artistic, building, and professional. That so many projects were underway to go to press in March of 1934 shows how quickly libraries seized the chance for

[26] Letter from Ellen S. Woodward to Carleton B. Joeckel, March 15, 1935, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
[27] Letter from Carleton B. Joeckel to Ellen S. Woodward, March 20, 1935, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
[28] "'Civil Works Service' in the Library," *Library Journal*, March 1, 1934, 212-18.

emergency relief. One of the most common program assessments shared was that emergency relief not only allowed libraries to continue providing their usual services but also to embark on projects they otherwise would have been unable to. Another article in a 1934 issue of *Library Journal* described how PWA and CWA funds built five new libraries in Nebraska. "The depression has been hard on libraries," wrote librarian Sibyl Jarrett," both in increased demands for their services and in restricted resources, yet the depression has borne fruit…"[29]

ALA threw its support behind emergency relief from the start and added weight to the policy of providing new—though modest—federal funding for libraries. In October 1933 Council approved a resolution endorsing "work relief projects for unemployed librarians in connection with state and community adult education and leisure time programs for the unemployed."[30] The resolution explicitly called on the Library Extension Board to "take immediate steps to further such a program; and request prompt action on the part of the state and local library and educational agencies to cooperate…"[31]

ALA was in touch with other library programs besides those under the Library Services Division, as not all WPA libraries were administered under the Library Services Division. For example, the CCC camps' library services fell under the "Library Advisory Service for CCC Camps," and the CCC itself came under the US Army. ALA was in contact with CCC camps about their library services. A letter from Jed Taylor of the CCC Camps' Library Advisory Service suggests ALA surveyed and reported on all types of WPA library services.[32] As Harmon Chamberlain described in a 1938 article for *Library Journal*, when the Library Services Division

[29] Sibyl B. Jarrett, "CWA Helps Nebraska to Five New Libraries," *Library Journal*, December 15, 1934, 956.
[30] Council of the American Library Association, "Work Relief in Adult Education," October 21, 1933, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Letter from Jed H. Taylor to Carleton B. Joeckel, September 10, 1937, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

of the Office of Education was first established, one of its first tasks was surveying the library services in 24 camps located throughout six eastern states.[33] The survey revealed that camps were served by three types of collections: permanent, traveling, and donated. An issue identified in the survey and discussed in letters with Joeckel was the lack of trained librarians at every camp. It was not enough to have a collection, adequate library service also meant having trained, permanent, and reliable library personnel.

Library services, it was argued, were needed in order to navigate the increasing complexity of modern life. In a July 1937 letter from Mary Rothrock to Carleton Joeckel, she writes that "such federal legislation as the AAA and the Social Security Act, as well as the implications involved in the rural electrification and the national planning movements, clearly point to the need for better machinery for developing informed and alert public opinion than may have seemed necessary when the national government was more remote from our daily lives."[34] The extent to which library extension actually developed informed and alert public opinion is unclear, nevertheless it was a stated aim of Rothrock and many others in ALA leadership.

Much as the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) brought electrification to rural areas and electric utilities, the policy of expanding access to library services was predicated on viewing libraries as a social utility. A utility in this sense is a resource that has been harnessed and organized for distribution because it is seen as providing indispensable benefit. Rothrock urged Joeckel to put greater emphasis on the TVA and its implications for federal library administration. She wrote "I am inclined to think that the corporate nature of the TVA, its objectives, and its techniques of cooperation with other agencies--local, state, and national--call

[33] Harmon J. Chamberlain, "CCC Libraries," *Library Journal*, April 15, 1938, 299-302.
[34] Letter from Mary U. Rothrock to Carleton B. Joeckel, July 23, 1937, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

for an analysis of its library activities from the viewpoint of their possible significance in later developments of nation-wide library service."[35]

For understanding the size and scope of federal emergency relief library projects, there remains no better source than Edward Stanford's *Library Extension Under the WPA* published in 1944 by the University of Chicago Press.[36] Subtitled *An Appraisal of an Experiment in Federal Aid*, Stanford's exhaustive study can be read as a demonstration of how extensive library access could be made under the aegis of federal support. Absent from Edward Stanford's otherwise comprehensive study of WPA library projects, however, is an acknowledgement of the role of the American Library Association. The success and spread of library extension via the WPA library projects was undeniably assisted by the support and involvement of ALA leadership and active members. In describing the value of library projects before 1935, Stanford writes "neither relief authorities nor librarians were ready with carefully thought out programs when federal relief was begun on a nation-wide scale in 1935."[37] It is true that librarians and the ALA did not have an immediate plan. At the same time, given the uniqueness of such a massive program of federal emergency relief, it is doubtful that any organization was prepared for such a project. In that sense, with its planning in the early 1930s, not to mention its emphasis on extension work in the previous decade, ALA was relatively well-positioned in 1935 to make use of federal relief funds.

Let us look at the numbers. Stanford writes that all told, the amount spent on library projects under the WPA was significant: "From its establishment, in 1935, the WPA alone spent nearly $100,000,000 of federal funds on library service projects, or almost double the amount

[35] Letter from Mary U. Rothrock to Carleton B. Joeckel, July 16, 1937, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
[36] Stanford, *Library Extension Under the WPA*.
[37] Ibid., 31.

usually spent in support of public libraries throughout the entire United States each year."[38] This perhaps helps to account for the dramatic growth in librarian jobs as described by Michael Denning.[39] Since Stanford only discusses WPA funding of public libraries, this does not include funds made available for public libraries that were not emergency relief, such as through state and regional appropriations, nor does it include funding for other types of libraries such as academic or school.

At the same time, Stanford acknowledges that there are several ways to quantify the scope of WPA library projects: "Expenditures on library projects are but one measure of the extent of the library assistance rendered by the WPA. Statistics on employment and on selected aspects of project achievement also help to describe the scope of the WPA's library program. Library project employment fluctuated considerably from month to month each year. In 1938, when the WPA program was at its peak, library projects were providing full-time work for over 38,000 persons, or more than the number normally employed as 'librarians and library assistants' throughout the entire nation."[40] Stanford uses the census data from 1930, which showed 31,478 people employed as librarians and library assistants.

The following excerpt was used in the fourth chapter, but bears repeating here. By 1941, "WPA project workers had repaired and put back into circulation 98,622,000 volumes belonging to school or public libraries. By the end of 1940 they had typed almost 40,000,000 book catalog cards. By the end of 1939 they had transcribed almost 4,000,000 pages for Braille books for the blind." Also by 1941

[38] Stanford, *Library Extension Under the WPA*, 255.
[39] Denning, *The Cultural Front*, 49.
[40] Stanford, *Library Extension Under the WPA*, 257.

> The WPA had purchased over 260,000 new books for use in library service demonstrations, and had assisted approximately 150 different counties in obtaining bookmobiles for extending library service to rural areas. During July, August, and September, 1941, over 1,700 or more than half of all the counties in the United States, were receiving some library assistance from the WPA... These WPA-operated library services had a combined book stock of nearly 8,000,000 volumes, and they were serving an estimated total population of almost 14,000,000 persons… Thus, in summary, the most important single fact concerning WPA assistance to libraries is its magnitude.[41]

State library agencies played a crucial rule in the success of WPA library projects, specifically "the existence of a strong and active state library agency, ready to plan and supervise a sound library assistance program." This combined with "a popular and articulate citizen interest in the state-wide extension of tax-supported public library service" had a measurable impact on the success of library extension, with Stanford concluding that "states in which these factors were present naturally tended to benefit proportionally more from the program than others lacking in active, organized professional and lay library leadership."[42] A strong state agency and popular support were the key factors in the success of a library extension program. Another way of putting this is that successful library extension necessitated a strong policy base - political infrastructure (state agency) and the consent of the electorate (popular support). And, it must be added, powerful library advocacy groups such as the American Library Association. The 1930s and the introduction of federal relief in libraries made policy work crucial and central in a way it never had before.

Similarly, in the report "WPA and Rural Libraries," Edward Chapman addresses library extension in South Carolina and attributes its success in part to public support and enthusiasm, writing "The strongest supporters in the popular movement were, and are, the organizations of farm women. Because of the insistence of rural women and the citizens' committees, many

[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.

county appropriating bodies are beginning to give partial support from local tax sources to the WPA organized county libraries. The activity of the county citizen library committees, the endorsement and aid of various groups, and the ever expanding demand of new readers, insure the continuance of this library service aided by WPA."[43] Also writing about South Carolina and the WPA, Robert Gorman said that although library conditions were "daunting" prior to 1935, the state had steadily taken actions to improve library services in the run-up to the Depression. These actions, including the creation of regional library systems, had positioned South Carolina libraries to become greatly improved, with the WPA being the "galvanizing force that could provide funds and central leadership."[44]

American Library Association and Policy

Library expansion falls under policy in the 1930s for two main reasons, one broad and the other specific to the decade. The first reason is that as public institutions, the establishment or expansion of a library makes it a policy issue. Public libraries, academic libraries in public colleges and universities, and special libraries operate on public funds and are accountable to the communities they serve and rely on their support. In order for a library to grow, it must have the institutional support of the constituency it serves. The second reason, specific to the decade, is that in the 1930s the American Library Association (ALA) focused its sights on establishing a federal library agency that would ensure permanent funding for libraries.

[43] Edward Chapman, "WPA and Rural Libraries," 1938, WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
[44] Robert M. Gorman, "Blazing the Way: The WPA Library Service Demonstration Project in South Carolina," *Libraries and Culture* 32, no. 4 (1997): 429.

ALA began its federal and state policymaking support efforts in earnest in the 1930s, when the organization sought legal changes at federal and state levels that would provide ongoing financial support for libraries. These efforts arguably laid foundations for the later passage of the Library Services Act of 1956. Of course, ALA did not accomplish this on its own. In addition to lobbying at the federal level, ALA personnel worked strategically alongside local librarians, politicians, and community groups to bolster the cause. Postwar changes were prepared during the 1930s.

One of the most prominent examples of how ALA sought to influence policy for libraries was in the campaign for Librarian of Congress. When Herbert Putnam was forced to retire in 1939, he had held the position for forty years. Seeing an opportunity to have a supporter of federal library funding appointed, ALA tried to convince President Roosevelt to select ALA Executive Secretary Carl Milam. Although unsuccessful—Roosevelt appointed Archibald MacLeish instead—the campaign nevertheless demonstrates ALA's interest in influencing policymaking, particularly at the federal level.[45]

State Aid

The push for increased allocations for libraries from state governments was a major thrust of ALA's policymaking efforts in the 1930s. State library aid was considered necessary complement to federal aid. A 1936 report by ALA's Public Library Division entitled "State Grants to Libraries and in Related Fields" provides an overview of the evolution of state aid to American libraries of different types. The report begins by pointing out that state aid for public

[45] Peggy Sullivan, *Carl Milam and the American Library Association* (New York: H.W. Wilson, 1976); Dennis Thomison, "F.D.R., the ALA, and Mr. MacLeish: The Selection of the Librarian of Congress, 1939," *Library Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (1972): 390-98.

libraries was not entirely without precedent, as states began making small grants for public libraries beginning in the 1890s. The provision of these grants was contingent upon certain requirements, similar to the requirements on which Carnegie library money was provided. There had to be proven a means for continuing local financial support, and there had to be demonstrated need. In Maryland, for example, libraries receiving $1,000 or less per year were eligible to apply for annual grants of an admittedly paltry $20-$30. As of 1929, eighteen states provided similar grants for school libraries.[46]

The report goes on to describe efforts for provision of state aid for "large unit libraries," meaning in this instance county or regional libraries. That "bills calling for generous state grants for county libraries were introduced in 1928, 1929 and 1930 in Louisiana, New York and Virginia" suggests that library extension efforts at the centralized level of ALA during the 1920s were also active at state levels.[47] Pennsylvania succeeded in 1931 in securing "an appropriation of $20,000 to encourage the establishment of county libraries." This amount was reduced to $17,000 per year from 1933-35, but nevertheless showed a successful effort in the fight for state appropriations. In the spirit of the Cultural Front, in paying tribute both to what was imagined as well as what was accomplished, the same report describes efforts to secure state appropriations that although unsuccessful, were still important. Looking at failures served a couple of purposes. One, they could be instructive. Library advocates could consider what worked and what did not, and use this analysis when developing future campaigns for state funding. Two, they could be encouraging for other campaigns. Even when such campaigns failed, the very example made by states with focused attempts to legislate state aid could be inspirational.

[46] American Library Association Public Library Division, "State Grants to Libraries and in Related Fields," (Chicago: American Library Association, 1936).
[47] Ibid., 7.

In the interest of providing practical guidance in advocating for state funding, the ALA publication includes examples of bills, letters, and applications used by advocates in states that had organized around state aid for libraries. These examples provided possible templates for other libraries to use in drafting language for legislation, for soliciting support from librarians and their other allies, and imagining how such state aid could be distributed. Importantly, the sample literature included sample texts used in Ohio, where campaigns for state aid to libraries had been resoundingly successful. This helped librarians think about the follow-through of a successful campaign - what would come next.

Information about state aid to public schools was also furnished, presumably so that library advocates could think about the piece of the pie that could or should be allocated to the library in the school. But the information about allocation to public schools makes no specific mention of libraries. So perhaps the information about state aid to public schools is provided as additional argument or justification for why states should provide aid to libraries. The logic being that if states provide, as a matter of course, aid for public schools, because education is the responsibility of the state, and libraries provide an educational function, therefore it is natural and logical for states to provide aid to libraries. In the continental United States the average contribution from the state in grant money to public schools in 1933-34 amounted to 23.4 percent of the school's budget. Delaware outpaced all other states in terms of state aid to public schools, with 92.9 percent of total school expenditures funded by the state. In second place at 64.9 percent is North Carolina. The average state contribution was in the 20-30 percent range, and the states of Nebraska, Colorado, and Wyoming brought up the rear with less than 1 percent of total school expenditures coming from state aid.

Robert Scott Kramp called Judson Jennings "the foremost proponent of state aid" amongst directors of the country's largest libraries in the 1930s.[48] As director of the Seattle Public Library, Jennings was one of the most prominent library leaders of the time. He wrote that "in its legislation for libraries the state should not fail to establish beyond question the principle that the library is an educational concern of the state."[49] Jennings argued that libraries, like schools, were a public good that required government subsidization: "the federal government and the state government are both interested in education, and since for this reason they render financial assistance to the schools, they should for the same reason render financial assistance to libraries."[50] The traditional means of funding libraries were insufficient, and equal service could not be provided if local tax base was the sole means of providing library service.

Was such an argument—that where local resources were scant the state should supplement funds—unprecedented in the system of information provision? As Jennings argued, certainly not. Public schools were one example. Compulsory education signified that the state government had to contribute funding, because if building a school drew solely on local tax funding, then schools would not get built. But that was against the law, so education was considered a public good. Another precedent was the postal system. The federal government provided consistent and often large subsidies for the development of postal infrastructure in order to make long distance communication more accessible. In places where there was not a local urban infrastructure in place to support the building of post offices, the federal government took steps to bring postal services to the people.

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[48] Robert Scott Kramp, *The Great Depression: Its Impact on Forty-Six Large American Public Libraries* (Duluth, MN: Library Juice Press, 2010), 115.
[49] Judson T. Jennings, "State Aid for Libraries," *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, February 1936, 4.
[50] Judson T. Jennings, "Library Planning for the State of Washington," *Library Journal*, May 1, 1935, 375-76.

One of the more illustrative and useful examples for the purposes of ALA's library extension campaign of the 1930s was the development of Rural Free Delivery at the turn of the twentieth century. While postal services were ubiquitous in urban areas, rural populations more often than not had residences located miles away from the nearest post office. Access to the post office was a burden for these people. Without intervention, they would continue to suffer from lack of service. Rural Free Delivery was organized around the principle that geographic location should not mean unequal service, that rural residents should enjoy access closer to the level of city dwellers. Providing mailboxes and mailing addresses for rural residents, however, required massive government intervention. After concerted struggles to achieve this result, federal support was won. The new norm became because postal services were a public good, geography should not prevent unequal service.[51]

Using state and federal funding for schools and postal services—for education and communication—as examples, libraries had precedent to use in arguing for a policy of government aid. Government funds has historically been used to support the expansion of access to the system of information provision, of which libraries are a part.

State Aid in the Midwestern United States

Many state library agencies were successful in garnering state financial support in the midst of the Great Depression. This was especially true of Midwestern states, which Joeckel observed were likewise disproportionately targets of federal aid.[52] James Foutts of the Ohio State Library wrote about 1935 that "only one dissenting vote was cast when the Ohio legislature

[51] Wayne E. Fuller, "Good Roads and Rural Free Delivery of Mail," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 42, no. 1 (1955): 67-83.
[52] Letter from Carleton B. Joeckel to Greta E. Brown, May 23, 1935, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

passed the law appropriating $100,000 for State Aid to libraries on the fifteenth of last May."[53] State aid was specifically allocated for library extension to rural and underserved populations in Ohio. How did they come up with this figure and how did they convince the state legislature to appropriate these funds for library extension in the midst of the Great Depression? First, a statewide survey was undertaken to assess the character of library access in Ohio, and ascertain its strengths and weaknesses. Conducted in 1934, the survey assessed library services up until 1933. In January 1935, a follow-up survey was administered to see if any noticeable change had taken place in 1934. Survey results mirrored the experience of the rest of the country: resources and support kept diminishing, while circulation kept going up. The survey revealed that nearly 500,000 Ohioans in twenty counties were without libraries. However, the 500,000 was just the beginning. It was determined that an additional 1.5 million people had only nominal library service, meaning they lived in an area with library service, but none that was close by, requiring them to travel several miles to visit the nearest library. Therefore, the survey underlined, "although there were only half a million people in the state without nominal library service, there were approximately two million people without actual service." The State Library presented its case to the Ohio Library Planning Board and was aided by Julia Wright Merrill of the ALA, herself one of the most active ALA staff in the 1930s, alongside Carl Milam, in pushing for library extension and federal aid for libraries.

While a bill for libraries went to Ohio's State Assembly, the State Library wasted no time enlisting political support from allies, contacting "every organization in the state known to be friendly to libraries." The State Assembly received hundreds of letters urging them to approve the bill for increased library appropriations. After the bill was signed by the Governor, the State

[53] James C. Foutts, "State Aid and Library Planning in Ohio," *Library Journal*, January 1, 1936, 18.

Library joined forces with the Ohio Library Association to create committees responsible for drafting policies for how to administer the funds. Libraries were then invited to submit applications for state appropriations, and the State Library worked with libraries individually to help them as needed and learn about specific issues. They also appointed a State Organizer to conduct additional surveys and administer funds accordingly. Paul Noon was optimistic for a $500,000 appropriation in 1937.[54]

And what of it—was Ohio successful in this regard? State Librarian Paul Noon affirmed the continued support poetically, writing in 1937 "While rivers and streams were swelling the Ohio River to unprecedented flood stages during January, another more quiet flood in Ohio went unnoticed. This second flood was a constant stream of letters pouring into the legislature--letters from members of the Ohio Library Association, the Ohio Library Trustees Association, The Citizens Library Committee of Ohio, the Ohio Federation of Women's Clubs, the Ohio Congress of Parents and Teachers, the American Legion Auxiliary of Ohio, the Ohio Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Ohio Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, the Ohio League of Women's Voters, the Ohio Conference for Social Work Among Negroes, the Ohio Probation Association, the Ohio Public Health Association, the Ohio State Grange, and the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation. These letters urged support for House Bill Number 14, appropriating $200,000 to aid the public libraries of the state."[55]

This recounting is striking in part for in part how it emphasizes the cooperative aspect and the coalition-based organizing campaigns libraries and library organizations were doing in the 1930s. This also demonstrates the importance of cooperation with diverse interest groups—

[54] Ibid., 18-21.
[55] Paul A.T. Noon, "Ohio's Second Successful Campaign for State Aid," *Library Journal*, February 1938, 277.

clearly Ohio sought to work with and enlist the support of African Americans, women, and rural populations together to expand library service. Paul Noon goes on to describe how $150,000 was approved, and rightfully so, for "the library program of the state would suffer a terrific blow, if it were deprived of these funds. Less than two years ago there were nine libraries in the State which were giving county extension service. Today, libraries in thirty-eight counties are extending book service to all residents of those counties by establishing branches, deposit stations, and book truck service."[56]

Ohio's existing library infrastructure paved the way for WPA library projects. This infrastructure gave WPA workers something to plug into without having to create a state network from scratch. Ohio benefited from WPA library projects as well. WPA workers helped expand library services as mandated by the changes made in Ohio state law in the 1930s. Edward Chapman wrote in 1938 that "Since public libraries in Ohio are obliged to give county library service, WPA is supplying the additional personnel to man the new units needed for such a service. Because of the increased demands for reading created by an enhanced county library service aided by WPA workers, the appropriation for state library support in one county jumped from $3,000 to $13,000 per year."[57]

Michigan was another state that pushed for state appropriations for libraries. Beginning in 1932, the nadir of the Depression, the Michigan Library Association and its Planning Committee began actively campaigning for professional leadership in the State Library, increases in state aid, and increased cooperation between libraries and other Michigan organizations. Here Michigan provides a useful example of the different ways state libraries may be organized.

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[56] Ibid.

[57] Edward Chapman, "WPA and Rural Libraries," 1938, WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 7.

Although a State Library existed, in the 1930s Michigan did not have a State Librarian. The Michigan Library Association felt that in order to fully and adequately advocate for state aid for all Michigan libraries, they needed professional library leadership in the State Library itself. These efforts ultimately resulted in two laws being passed in 1937, one of which established a State Librarian position, while the other "set up a continuing appropriation of $500,000 per year for State Aid to public libraries, with a ten-year plan to equalize public library opportunities and stimulate the organization of library service on a county or regional basis, where practicable."[58] Michigan library leaders encountered trouble with full implementation of the laws. Existing state laws made it complicated to immediately establish committees and appoint a State Librarian, while fluctuations in the economy made appropriations of the full amount impossible. The governor vetoed full allotment, and by early 1939 the future of continued appropriations for Michigan libraries hung in the balance. Nevertheless, proponents felt that "State Aid had the desired effect" of stimulating "local interest and responsibility in libraries."[59]

Illinois librarians embarked on campaign similar to that of Ohio's for state aid, through legislative action. Like Ohio in 1935, the Illinois Library Association lobbied alongside civic organizations and with the assistance of ALA, for an appropriation of one million dollars; they ultimately secured $600,000. In 1936 Anna May Price of the Illinois' Library Extension Division wrote "The influence of the appropriation on the legislature will be more or less lasting. No matter how the personnel of the two Houses may change, there remains the record that the 59th General Assembly appropriated $600,000 to the public libraries of the state for the purpose of books and periodicals."[60]

[58] Loleta Dawson Fyan, "Two Steps Forward and One Step Back," *Library Journal*, September 1, 1939, 636.
[59] Ibid., 637.
[60] Anna May Price, "Illinois Progress in State Aid," *Library Journal*, April 15, 1936, 305.

Missouri was another site for focused organizing around expansion of information access and library extension in the 1930s, and where access for rural populations was a critical issue. A 1936 survey revealed that nearly 1.5 million people were without library service: nearly half the state's population. In an interesting contrast it was noted that, "almost 95 per cent of the rural population receives no public library service although more than 95 per cent of the urban population is served."[61] What helped stimulate this commitment to expansion of access in Missouri? The sensitization and awareness-raising of the Great Depression was itself an overarching factor, with Sarah Moloney of the Missouri Library Commission Extension Library noting this paradox: "Our years of prosperity gave little impetus to the organization of libraries while the depression seems to have encouraged their development."[62] Related to that was the availability of federal funds for this purpose, and Moloney credited CWA, FERA, and WPA with creating new libraries and library services, and she held that their success and popularity indicated "that the need for library service is being felt and that the demand for it is being made."[63] Like other states in the 1930s, Missouri library leadership, in this case the Missouri Library Commission, seized the opportunity for federal funds to make specific allocations for libraries. It was the altered federal policy that was decisive—here, as in other ways. As federal money became available beginning in 1934, Missouri appointed a State Planning Board. Determined to have a seat at the table, the Missouri Library Commission successfully lobbied for the creation of a State Library Planning Committee in 1935. Meanwhile, throughout the 1930s the Missouri Library Commission continued to identify gaps in library services and to propose ways of closing those gaps. Moloney talked about the importance of requiring certified

[61] Sarah S. Molony, "Library Situation in Missouri," *Library Journal*, June 1, 1938, 442.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., 443.

librarians, expanding school library services, and even considered alternative or additional taxation schemes for ensuring ongoing and adequate funding for Missouri libraries. So for example, in addition to the traditional local property tax model, the Missouri Library Commission also saw sales tax revenue as a possible funding source for libraries. Making these changes involved amending Missouri state laws. What is also interesting about Missouri is the emphasis on informed decision-making, which seems to have infused so much of the thinking about libraries in the 1930s: "Needs must be known before they can be satisfied."[64]

State Aid in Southern Libraries

Library advocacy was also strong in in the Southern United States. With a staunch advocate in J.O. Modisette, it is perhaps not surprising that the Louisiana Library Commission endorsed a $2 million plan in for statewide library improvement and extension in April 1934.[65] Louisiana Library Commission Executive Secretary Essie Culver argued "If we can afford to spend fourteen million for public education, colleges and universities, why not place two million in library service?"[66]

Mississippi was another Southern state enjoying robust library advocacy. Federal aid in the form of emergency relief brought library services to places where none had existed. James V. Carmichael writes that "in 1933, Mississippi Library Commission Secretary Elizabeth Robinson...organized a state-wide library project under CWA which provided 43 counties with their first free public library service."[67] Robinson explained in 1935 that the application of

[64] Ibid.
[65] "State-Wide Plan Endorsed," *Library Journal*, June 1, 1934, 475.
[66] Essie Martha Culver, "State Planning in Louisiana," *Library Journal*, May 1, 1935, 383.
[67] James V. Carmichael, Jr., "Tommie Dora Barker and Southern Librarianship" (PhD diss. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1988), 332.

federal aid for libraries in that state was nurturing "a vision of a more democratic and universal service."[68] In 1937 the Arkansas Legislature voted for state aid for libraries, with an appropriation of $100,000. The appropriation allowed for library extension to the "154,449 rural residents of Arkansas who have been without library service."[69]

In addition to being involved in the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Southeastern Library Association, and the Library Extension Board, Mary Utopia Rothrock also chaired the Tennessee Educational Commission's Subcommittee on Libraries. The Commission's recommendations included a request for an appropriation of $625,000 for libraries, based on a charge of 25 cents per person in the state, with an anticipated increase to fifty cents per person. Another one of the Commission's recommendations in 1935 was to place public libraries under the Department of Education. Anticipating criticism of such an organizational scheme, Rothrock wrote "if the public libraries cannot demonstrate the essential importance of their peculiar contribution to general education, they may as well be gobbled up now…"[70] In retrospect, the Tennessee plan seems a harbinger of ALA's proposal for a library agency in the Office of Education.

Struggles for State Aid

Some librarians wished for greater state aid but had a more difficult time securing it. In May of 1935 the president of the South Dakota Federation of Women's Clubs, Lois Severin, described conditions in South Dakota as being similar to that of rural areas generally, with seventy percent of South Dakota's rural population being without access to a public library.

[68] Elizabeth Robinson, "Federal Aid Comes to Mississippi, *Library Journal*, February 1, 1935, 96.
[69] "Arkansas Library Commission," *Library Journal*, March 15, 1938, 241.
[70] Mary U. Rothrock, "The Tennessee Library Plan," *Library Journal*, May 1, 1935, 374.

The State Library Commission was cooperating with the State Planning Board to allocate resources for libraries.[71] Yet by July 1936 it seems that although many residents may have desired library extension, the funds were not made available. South Dakota librarian and State Library Commission member Lora Crouch wrote that her experience had convinced her that "the population is too thin in most of the counties in this state to ever develop the best kind of library service with purely local support." Crouch felt that due to the state's overall poor financial situation, libraries were not likely to see any increased appropriations, writing that "the present outlook for state aid is very dark and becoming rapidly darker… It seems that our only hope in the near future is in the development of Federal Aid."[72] The positive results of state aid for libraries were promoted as evidence of the need for permanent federal support for libraries, as was the problem of unequal distribution. State aid had been secured in some but not all libraries that needed it. ALA, like Lora Crouch, believed that the only way to guarantee sufficient funding for libraries was through federal aid. This campaign to swing policy decisively toward federal aid was introduced as the National Plan for Libraries.

National Plan for Libraries and Federal Aid

The National Plan for Libraries was a campaign initiated by the American Library Association in 1934 to establish permanent federal funding for libraries. The campaign dovetailed with concurrent New Deal projects that supported the creation of new libraries and library services as well as expansion of existing programs. The National Plan for Libraries

[71] Lois Spencer Severin, "Library Planning in South Dakota," *Library Journal*, May 1, 1935, 384-85.
[72] Letter from Lora Crouch to Forrest B. Spaulding, July 5, 1936, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

capitalized on this support by highlighting the gap in library services for the United States population. The genesis of the National Plan for Libraries deserves closer attention for two reasons. First, it was ALA's first serious mobilization for a federal library policy. Second, ALA attempted this during the worst economic crisis seen before or since.

Two ALA endorsements, passed at conventions in 1919 and 1921 respectively, are the earliest recorded efforts in support of federal aid for libraries. In 1919, ALA Council unanimously endorsed support "for the creation of a Federal Department of Education, which would have included a bureau of libraries."[73] In 1921 council members "urged members of Congress" to create "a governmental division devoted to stimulation of library activities in the United States."[74]

Then, in 1929 the Committee on Library Extension passed a resolution in support of federal aid for county library service.[75] Kathleen Molz writes that "with the advent of the economic depression of the 1930s, leaders of the ALA became increasingly preoccupied with the question of federal aid to libraries" and that the efforts of the 1930s were a more forceful outgrowth of the previous attempts to establish federal aid.[76] The campaign for federal support made gains in the 1930s, the most significant being the creation of a library agency in the Office of Education in 1937. Although what Joeckel and others actually wanted was a national headquarters for library affairs with its own funding and staffing and the appropriate status of a federal agency, the formal establishment of any sort of library agency, particularly during a

[73] Virgil L.P. Blake, "A Brief Encounter: Part One—Becoming," *Public Library Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (1997): 4.
[74] Carl Vitz, *A Federal Library Agency and Federal Aid* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1935), 32.
[75] Edward A. Chapman, "Outline of Federal Relations to Libraries," *Library Journal*, February 1, 1938, 100-03.
[76] Molz, *National Planning for Library Service, 1935-1975*, 79.

depression decade, was a major victory for the American Library Association and library supporters.

The Need for Federal Aid

The central argument for federal library aid was that the traditional funding structure of the local tax base could not and would not ensure adequate and comprehensive library services, especially for advancing cooperative projects and initiatives like those described herein. This was doubly true for rural areas which had neither the funding base nor the municipal structure for establishing and maintaining library services. Although ALA's national plan was not just for rural libraries, leadership repeatedly made reference to the statistic of 45 million people lacking library services, predominantly located in rural areas. Statistical evidence became increasingly important to ALA in the 1930s. The interest in evidence-based research in support of library extension is reflected in the publications produced by the University of Chicago's Graduate Library School, such as those by Carleton Joeckel, Leon Carnovsky, and Louis Round Wilson.

What drove the National Plan for Libraries? As Molz has stated, there was the very idea of planning itself, of using scientific approaches to inform the development of library services. This perspective is made clear when looking at ALA committee minutes from the era. Carl Milam distributed "Notes for a National Plan for Libraries" at a meeting of the ALA Planning Committee and Executive Board on April 2, 1934. The National Plan was to be about more than securing additional funding for libraries. Also encompassed was to be a reconceptualized purpose and structure. He wrote in his notes that "to meet America's needs there must be a new conception of the organization, functions and activities of the agencies which contribute to educational, social, cultural and recreational interests. It is not enough that existing agencies

simply be provided with additional funds. They must be expanded, coordinated and adequately financed to provide for every person from childhood to old age the opportunity and continuous encouragement for the fullest possible development of personal ability, and social understanding."[77]

A "national plan for libraries" was based on the idea of lifelong access to knowledge: that a democratic citizenry required more comprehensive access to information. Milam describes in his notes the proper role of the federal government in extending library service: that "the Office of Education should be extended to include responsibility toward libraries comparable to that which it now has towards schools…"[78] The National Plan called for the organization of a library agency in each state, mandating that those agencies should receive "increased appropriations" and "more trained library personnel."[79] The document also emphasized the importance of cooperation and coordination amongst and between libraries. This included different library types. The national plan wished to encourage greater cooperation between, for example, a college library, a school library, and a public library should all of those types of libraries be located in the same community. In cooperating these libraries could share resources, thereby promoting economic efficiency, but also extending improved library services to a greater number of people in that community.

The National Plan also called for "a national study of the personnel needs of the library profession with a view to determining as accurately as may be the aptitudes, traits, education and special training needed for service in all kinds of libraries."[80] Perhaps this anticipated the

[77] Carl Milam, "Notes for a National Plan for Libraries," April 2, 1934, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1.
[78] Ibid., 4.
[79] Ibid., 5.
[80] Ibid., 8.

research questions that would inform the Public Library Inquiry. In any case, again it demonstrates the importance of scholarly production of evidence-based research in order to better advocate for libraries. This advocacy angle was foregrounded in the national plan as "publicity" for the library. Although this was not spelled out extensively, there is the suggestion that a library should heighten public awareness of the resources it offered by "continuing publicity for its books and services, through newspapers, radio, moving pictures, distribution of reading lists and reading courses, through book discussion groups, lectures and other meetings in the library."[81] In the twenty-first century this kind of advocacy is often inappropriately called "marketing" and libraries have been charged with not realizing its potential.[82] As emphasized in the National Plan, however, successful publicity is about more than getting people to use the library. Statistics have shown time and again that they do.[83] Library publicity is about turning library users themselves into advocates for a policy of democratized institutional support and access.

ALA sought input on the National Plan from library leaders throughout the country. The Librarian of Congress, Herbert Putnam, shared his perspective in a letter to Milam in January, 1935. Milam had asked Putnam to weigh in on whether the responsibility for library planning should rest with the Office of Education or become an added responsibility for the Library of Congress. Putnam felt that Education was a better fit, as the proper role of the Library of Congress was to focus on its existing programming.[84]

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[81] Ibid., 9.
[82] John Buschman, *Libraries, Classrooms, and the Interests of Democracy: Marking the Limits of Neoliberalism* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2012).
[83] For current library use statistics see Tonya Badillo et al, *2014 State of America's Libraries: A Report from the American Library Association* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2014); Institute of Museum and Library Services, "Public Libraries in the United States Survey," accessed on December 24, 2014, http://www.imls.gov/research/pls_publications.aspx.
[84] Letter from Herbert Putnam to Carl Milam, January 21, 1935, Archives of the American Library Association, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Instances of Opposition to Federal Aid

There was some vocal opposition to the National Plan, which had echoes of broader opposition to the expansion of the state into economic and cultural life that some disliked about the New Deal. Versions of this opposition also appeared in some Southern libraries, where critics feared federal aid would encroach on states' rights.[85] The publication of the National Plan in the pages of the main library periodicals in turn inspired a critical response. Joeckel's "Federal Relations to Libraries," a reprint of a statement made before Council at the Midwinter meeting of December, 1934, appeared in the same issue of *Library Journal* with a skeptical letter from librarian C. Seymour Thompson at the elite University of Pennsylvania. Titled "Do Others Share These Views?" Thompson wondered "With millions of Americans facing starvation, and with the federal government--and hence the American people--struggling under the tremendous burden which the emergency has forced it to assume, how, in the name of American citizenship, can librarians ask the government to appropriate from fifty to one hundred millions annually for library service?"[86]

Instead of seeing federal aid for libraries as a necessity in the midst of economic crisis, critics saw it as wasteful spending that would exacerbate the crisis. Thompson elaborated further in a full-length article published in the May 1, 1935 issue of *Library Journal*. Thompson bluntly stated "I maintain that it will be better for the American people to do without the desired extension of library service than to incur the evils which will come with federal aid. If the national government begins to pour millions into the states for library service it will expose our libraries to inevitable political influence, far worse than any which the most unfortunate cities or

[85] Wayne A. Wiegand, *Main Street Public Library: Community Places and Reading Spaces in the Rural Heartland*, 1876-1956 (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 2011).
[86] Carleton B. Joeckel, "Federal Relations to Libraries," *Library Journal*, February 1, 1935, 99-101; C. Seymour Thompson, "Do Others Share These Views?" *Library Journal*, February 1, 1935, 112.

states have ever experienced."[87] Thompson also misleadingly likened federal aid to libraries as likely to repeat the effect of quickened financial speculation of the previous decade: "Why should we want it to be rapid, when excessive rapidity has been one of the major causes of our present distress?"[88]

Some libraries and library associations passed resolutions against federal aid, and individual librarians made their disapproval known, with numerous resolutions of opposition read at the 1935 Annual Conference held in Denver.[89] This was a struggle waged on both sides, however. Greta Brown, the librarian of Connecticut's New Britain Institute, wrote to Carleton B. Joeckel in May, 1935 after the Connecticut Library Association passed a resolution stating their opposition to federal aid for libraries. Brown had not been present at the meeting where the resolution was passed, and believed that the CLA's claim that a "unanimous" vote for the resolution was dishonest. The issue of federal aid had not been thoroughly discussed before taking the vote, she charged. She argued that Connecticut was no exception when it came to uneven library service: "Connecticut is dotted with more or less expensive buildings, served by untrained librarians and inadequately equipped. We certainly need better library service for most of our communities."[90] While Connecticut did not have the same issues as more remote areas of the United States with large swaths of rural populations, the New England state still had underserved rural areas. A 1939 WPA press release announced the start of traveling library services in Connecticut to serve "rural sections where libraries are inaccessible."[91]

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[87] C. Seymour Thompson, "The Abdication of the A. L. A." *Library Journal*, May 1, 1935, 368.
[88] Ibid., 371.
[89] "Denver Conference," *Library Journal*, September 15, 1935, 706-10.
[90] Letter from Greta E. Brown to Carleton B. Joeckel, May 4, 1935, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
[91] A.N. Johnson, Untitled press release, September 29, 1939, WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

Joeckel responded to Brown's letter at the end of May. Joeckel observed that the registered opposition to federal aid was largely concentrated in the northeastern United States, with its great concentration of densely populated areas; meanwhile he observed "there are no protests from the Middle West and South and very few from the Far West, all of these being regions in which federal aid seems almost essential to complete library service."[92] Yale librarian C.L. Cannon had anticipated such a reaction in the northeast. He wrote Joeckel in December, 1934 that "there seems to be considerable opposition in this part of the country to Federal interference, as it would be designated here."[93] Speaking for himself, Cannon noted that he supported federal aid for libraries.

Writing about opposition in 1934, Louisiana Library Commissioner J.O. Modisette seemed unintimidated, even galvanized by the opposition. He wrote: "They stimulate. Opposition always does when properly directed. Progress results from the matching of opposing forces."[94] Modisette agreed with Herbert Putnam that the Office of Education would make a better fit for a federal library agency than the Library of Congress. He also referred to the Library Extension Board meeting in Knoxville from April of 1934, and articulated his takeaway from that meeting: "if you take advantage of every situation that seems to offer a chance to worm your way into the federal picture, no matter how small nor how unpromising it looks, you may get results from a quarter from which you would logically least expect… I don't think any chance to get into the federal picture, whether through relief set-up or otherwise, should be passed up."[95]

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[92] Letter from Carleton B. Joeckel to Greta E. Brown, May 23, 1935, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
[93] Letter from C.L. Cannon to Carleton B. Joeckel, December 19, 1934, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
[94] Letter from J.O. Modisette to Carleton B. Joeckel and Julia Wright Merrill, December 14, 1934, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
[95] Ibid.

Some dissent was not directed at the notion of federal library aid itself, but at the organization of the proposed federal library agency. Milton Ferguson of the Brooklyn Public Library wrote Joeckel in 1938 to voice his concern about the consequences of placing a federal library agency in the Office of Education, because he believed such an agency needed to be overseen by librarians. Ferguson stated "you have no reason for feeling that I am opposed to federal aid. You can say, however, without any hesitancy that I am opposed to surrendering the library program to the schoolmen of the country."[96]

Organizing Support for Federal Library Aid

ALA leaders who advocated for federal aid worked through existing committees such as the Library Extension Board, while the National Library Planning Committee and the Special Committee on Federal Relations to Libraries were created in 1934 specifically to advance the goals of the National Plan. Committee members organized sessions at conferences and published frequently in library periodicals in order to mobilize the membership in support of federal aid. ALA's efforts engendered some significant results. In 1936, Congressional appropriations for education included a provision for the establishment of a library services division within the Office of Education, then part of the Department of the Interior. While ALA wished for a greater sum of money, the division's creation was seen as a major step in the right direction. Otherwise headquartered in Chicago, the federal library appropriations for 1938 also marked the beginning of ALA's maintaining a Washington office. The subsequent entry of the United States into

[96] Letter from Milton J. Ferguson to Carleton B. Joeckel, July 12, 1938, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

World War Two temporarily refocused the scope of library policy, however, as library services nationwide were diverted to the war effort.[97]

Joeckel and other researchers at the University of Chicago continued producing studies in service of the National Plan. President Roosevelt had appointed the Advisory Committee on Education in September, 1936. In a follow-up directive issued in April, 1937, Roosevelt asked the Committee to "give more extended consideration to the whole subject of Federal relationship to State and local conduct of education, and to prepare a report."[98] Staff specialists produced several related reports pertaining to education, public administration, and economics. Joeckel was invited to write one of these studies as a specialist in library science. The resulting volume, *Library Service*, is an important publication in that it was a federally commissioned document on the state of American library services. Joeckel's study is a meticulous description of how library services are financially sanctioned and sustained, with special attention to where library service falls short. The study echoes findings in other publications by University of Chicago's Graduate Library School from that period—including Louis Round Wilson's *Geography of Reading*, from which Joeckel drew extensively - in that it ultimately argues for the necessity of federal aid for libraries. This study became known as the Reeves Report, in reference to Advisory Committee on Education Chair Floyd W. Reeves. The Reeves Report situated libraries in the context of federal emergency relief of the 1930s, and declared that government assistance could be and should be extended on a permanent basis.[99]

Preparing reports like *Library Service* required the marshalling of large amounts of data about the full coverage or lack thereof of library services in the United States. Joeckel drew from

[97] Molz, *National Planning for Library Service 1935-1975*.
[98] Advisory Committee on Education, foreword to *Library Service* by Carleton B. Joeckel (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1938), iii.
[99] Advisory Committee on Education, *Library Service* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1938).

research previously published by Louis Round Wilson. He also drew from statistical information provided by the Office of Education. In an August, 1937 letter, Emery Foster of the Office of Education's Chief of Division of Statistics reminded Joeckel that "these figures are for use in the report to the Advisory Committee only and note for general publication. I think they will, however, serve your purpose for the report."[100] Foster sent six pages of statistics about school libraries with the letter. This demonstrates the level of extensive detail that went into producing *Library Service*, a crucial tool in ALA's campaign for a permanent federal library agency.

Prior to the Richmond conference in 1936, California State Librarian Mabel Gillis wrote Joeckel to convey her "formal approval" of the report produced by the Committee on Federal Relations.[101] The New York Public Library's Harry Lydenberg also shared feedback with Joeckel on the proposed national plan. Lydenberg advised Joeckel to stress as clearly and strongly as possible the importance of local support for library services—that federal aid should be a supplement and not a replacement for local support.[102]

ALA members who supported federal aid were involved in committee work to draft statements and literature. Some committee members, notably the chair, were faculty at Chicago's Graduate Library School. ALA federal aid proponents also sought support at conferences, such as when Charles Compton of the St. Louis Public Library reached out to Joseph Lippincott and his publishing company. Compton spoke with Lippincott at the ALA Annual Conference held in Montreal in 1934. That summer Lippincott wrote that he had been in touch with fellow publishers "who had important connections in Washington political circles" and had identified

[100] Letter from Emery M. Foster to Carleton B. Joeckel, August 16, 1937, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
[101] Letter from Mabel R. Gillis to Carleton B. Joeckel, March 5, 1936, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
[102] Letter from Harry W. Lydenberg to Carleton B. Joeckel, July 7, 1937, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

one "who thinks he can secure for you a reasonably definite audience with Mrs. Roosevelt on the subject of the American libraries' budget crisis." Lippincott thought an audience with the First Lady would be useful, as he found her "sympathetic towards literature and education."[103] In a follow-up letter ten days later, Lippincott emphasized his personal support and his belief that publishers more generally were supportive of federal aid for libraries. He wrote "it is not a thing that concerns the libraries alone. Authors, publishers, book manufacturers, paper makers and all their employees and stock holders are concerned on one hand, while on the other, come the general public, from learned professors down to the plainest laboring man."[104] Lippincott saw government money for libraries as a means of boosting a segment of the economy. This broad-based support for ALA—and shades of the Cultural Front—are evident in the endorsements from the American Association of University Women, the American Federation of Labor, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.[105]

By the close of the 1930s, though librarianship had gained a modest institutional place in the federal government, the National Plan for Libraries was dormant—but not dead. The momentum that started in the 1920s and then accelerated in the depression decade made library policy an enduring part of the American Library Association's work. Efforts for a federal library agency were revived in the late 1940s under the banner of "postwar library planning". While ALA had previously limited the publishing of designs for a national plan to mainstream library periodicals, they published a proper monograph in 1948 entitled *A National Plan for Public*

[103] Letter from Joseph W. Lippincott to Charles H. Compton, July 15, 1934, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
[104] Letter from Joseph W. Lippincott to Charles H. Compton, July 25, 1934, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
[105] Virgil L.P. Blake, "A Brief Encounter: Part Two—Going in Congressional Circles," *Public Library Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (1997): 15.

Library Service: Prepared for the Committee on Postwar Planning of the American Library Association. The intended aims and goals of ALA for the National Plan in 1948 can be found in the first sentence, where Carl Milam wrote "This book can change the course of the Public Library Movement in North America."[106]

The aim of policy activities of the 1930s was transformation of library services in the United States. Like other ambitious activities of the decade, some of these projects realized their goals in whole, some in part, and some not at all. Yet as Denning reminds us, the 1930s were important not just for what was actualized but for what was dreamt. The dream of equal library service in the 1930s was embarked on in multiple ways—the dream of physical access being within reach of all people, and of a right to read with restraint or censorship. These were pursued as a matter of federal policy and internal organizational policy: library extension through government support and intellectual freedom as a matter of professional commitment. These were some of the most enduring and effective of contemporary library efforts in the policy sphere. They culminated in 1956 with the passage of the Library Services Act. Although the Act has been modified since then, it remains the model for federal library funding today under the Library Services and Technology Act of 1996. It likewise is the basis for the Institute of Museum and Library Services, today the primary federal funding source for libraries in the United States. The Library Bill of Rights is arguably the defining feature and core component of what constitutes modern American librarianship. The Library Bill of Rights is the foundation of what became articulated as intellectual freedom and the freedom to read. The evolution of intellectual

[106] Carl Milam, foreword to *A National Plan for Public Library Service: Prepared for the Committee on Postwar Planning of the American Library Association* by Carleton B. Joeckel and Amy Winslow (Chicago: American Library Association, 1948).

freedom in libraries is well-documented, what must be emphasized here again is the formative significance of the 1930s in this history.

Although federal aid was but one part of the National Plan, it was the most energetically pursued as well as the most contested. ALA wished to see the creation of a federal library agency with an annual appropriation of 50 to 100 million dollars. Funding would be distributed amongst the states—fifty percent on the basis of population and the other half on the basis of need. Proponents saw government involvement in everyday life as a reality that was only likely to grow, and felt that libraries should work within that emerging framework. Opponents argued that federal aid would corrupt the mission of the public library; that libraries would have to answer to federal authorities instead of local communities. As mentioned previously, this reflected discussions occurring simultaneously on the appropriate role of the federal government and the necessity of federal relief. Library debates over federal aid also reflected the broader interest in the relationship between quality of life, social change, and cultural production in the 1930s.

The National Plan proposed to make specific improvements to the existing public library system. Leaders like Carl Milam and Carleton Joeckel believed that the current system was useful but inadequate, and that the traditional scheme of having the local tax base fund library services meant that some communities would never gain access to a local library. A plan for permanent federal assistance was needed to truly equalize library services throughout the nation.

The National Plan for Libraries, and library expansion more generally, was seen as augmenting the existing public school system. The public library system was to be part of the necessary lifelong education required by the modern population. This is evident in how ALA saw libraries fitting into the existing government machinery, as they wished for a library agency to be located within the Office of Education. Global war, political unrest, and economic

depression led many to believe that the world was more complex than it used to be. This greater complexity necessitated better tools for understanding and navigating effectively. Likewise, many perceived the 1930s as a time of great potential for societal transformation, and saw the possibility of transformation via the cultural apparatus, its expansion and reconfiguring. In the depths of depression, people saw an opportunity to make the world anew. Library advocates drew on and contributed to this larger momentum.

The National Plan for Libraries spelled out the need for dedicated federal funding, strong state library organization, cooperation at local, state, and federal levels, continued research and scholarship on libraries and personnel, and greater publicity—all with the goal of facilitating continuing self-education, the cornerstone of an educated citizenry in a democratic society. It emphasized the library as a responsive, active institution as opposed to a passive, static one. If libraries were not going in such a direction before, for adherents, the 1930s made such change urgently imperative.

Other Legislative Efforts

ALA's campaigning made it a recognized political player with regard to library legislation and legislation related to book distribution. Springfield, Massachusetts librarian Hiller Wellman wrote to Carleton Joeckel, for example, asking if ALA had a stance on the Tydings-Miller bill, which would have limited or discontinued publishers' discounts for libraries.[107] It passed, though it is unclear whether or not ALA was involved in fighting it.[108] In 1937 Democratic Representative Ross A. Collins of Mississippi introduced H.R. 3699, which

[107] Letter from Hiller C. Wellman to Carleton B. Joeckel, April 14, 1937, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
[108] Miller-Tydings Act of 1937, H.R. 1611, 75th Cong. (1937).

proposed the creation of five regionally dispersed national libraries in New York, San Francisco, Denver, Memphis, and Chicago.[109] Employing rhetoric not dissimilar to that of ALA, Collins claimed "no matter what the immediate and future expenditures may be, the benefits to be derived from the proposed system of national libraries are well worth it."[110] Collins was a library advocate, and, while typical of the Southern United States with regard to rural poverty and scarce resources for libraries, Mississippi also stood out in some positive ways, as evidenced by Collins' and Ellen Woodward's roles. Collins' heart may have been in the right place, but ALA saw his proposal as a misstep in the quest for a federal library agency. Although J.O. Modisette had advised in 1934 that ALA should not turn down any opportunity for federal library support, it seems that by 1937 ALA was in a position to be more discriminating.[111]

With Collins' introduction of the bill, federal library agency supporters found themselves wondering how to proceed: would lending support to the Collins bill bolster or detract from their ultimate goal? University of Michigan librarian and library school director William Warner Bishop wrote Carl Milam in February 1937 to ask if Collins' bill had ALA support; he argued "that if anything is to be done in this matter it should be done by the A. L. A. as an organization."[112] Harriet Long of the Oregon State Library contacted Carleton Joeckel with a similar query about ALA's stance on what was by then being called the Collins-McKellar Regional Libraries Bill; Kenneth McKellar was a Democratic Senator from Tennessee and had introduced the bill in the Senate. McKellar was also the Senator who successfully introduced the

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[109] Jane Aiken Rosenberg, *The Nation's Great Library: Herbert Putnam and the Library of Congress, 1899-1939* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993).
[110] Representative Collins, speaking on H.R. 3699, on August 3, 1937, 75th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 81, pt. 7: 8152.
[111] Letter from J.O. Modisette to Carleton B. Joeckel and Julia Wright Merrill, December 14, 1934, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
[112] Letter from William Warner Bishop to Carl H. Milam, February 8, 1937, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

federal library agency bill. Joeckel's response to Long indicated a cautious approach, writing "the position of the Federal Relations Committee is that a careful study of the needs and objectives of a system of national regional libraries should be undertaken before the A.L.A. commits itself definitely to the support of the Collins bill."[113] The Collins-McKellar Bill was still stalled in 1938 when George Bowerman of the Washington, D.C. Public Library wrote Joeckel to say Collins seemed "almost bitter" about not having an endorsement from ALA. Bowerman pleaded "Why can't your committee work with Mr. Collins, build upon the bill he has introduced, and work out something that can have the endorsement of the A.L.A.?"[114]

In a letter to Princeton's Lawrence Heyl in 1939, Joeckel candidly admitted that ALA did more than just withhold an endorsement, it actively tried "to side-track the Collins' proposal…" Joeckel explained that ALA's Federal Relations Committee "felt that the whole plan was premature in its exact formulation" and perhaps more importantly they "felt that this bill would jeopardize our plans for more comprehensive legislation with respect to federal aid to libraries."[115] It appears Joeckel and others had at least two major concerns. One was that the proposal itself was too hastily put together and lacked the support of rigorous evidence-based research that ALA had come to rely on. Another concern was that the creation of five large libraries in major metropolitan areas would have the negative consequence of diverting resources away from creating more library services for rural areas. The Collins-McKellar Bill failed to pass.

[113] Letter from Carleton B. Joeckel to Harriet C. Long, May 6, 1937, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
[114] Letter from George F. Bowerman to Carleton B. Joeckel, March 18, 1938, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
[115] Letter from Carleton B. Joeckel to Lawrence Heyl, March 14, 1939, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

ALA lent support to other legislative endeavors besides federal aid. In 1939 the Federal Relations Committee endorsed H.R. 4010, which allowed for the "assembling, editing and publishing of original documents relating to the ratification of the Constitution of the United States and the first ten amendments."[116] ALA also was active throughout the 1930s in advocating for book and library postal rates. This advocacy paid off when President Roosevelt signed an Executive Order on November 1, 1938 establishing an experimental postal rate on books for 1 ½ cents per pound. Effective study of the utility of this postal rate led to an extension of the postal rate for another two years in 1939.[117] The movement to lower postal rates was argued on the grounds that books were unfairly priced compared to other printed matter. If ad-supported periodicals could be shipped at a special discounted rate, why not books? The lowering of book postal rates was hailed by Milton J. Ferguson of the Brooklyn Public Library as "another forward step by democracy." He also placed book postal rates in the context of intellectual freedom, stating "in America, freedom to read and to weigh the proposals, the ideas, the philosophies of all men has not been abridged. Rather, our government, in clear terms--and in dollars and cents--puts its stamp of approval on a freer dissemination of books as a means of maintaining government of the people."[118] Book rate is known today as Media Mail, and also allows for cheaper shipping of print and audiovisual media.[119]

[116] Letter from Julia Wright Merrill to the A.L.A. Federal Relations Committee, March 15, 1939, ALA Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
[117] Elizabeth G. Bowerman, "Book Postal Rates," *Library Journal*, October 1, 1939, 731-33.
[118] "Postal Rates on Books," *Library Journal*, November 15, 1938, 870.
[119] United States Postal Service, "Postal History," accessed December 24, 2014, http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-history/welcome.htm.

Conclusion

Perhaps paradoxically, as the country struggled to climb out of the Depression, appropriations for libraries steadily increased on local, state, and national levels. Rather than seeing the decade as poor timing, library advocates in the 1930s held that the severity of the economic crisis made library services all the more necessary.

How successful was the campaign for federal support? Works Progress Administration support for libraries both responded to and greatly accelerated the case for federal aid, and the success of WPA library projects served as a promotion for the WPA. One WPA press release from 1938 boasted that "residents of financially distressed municipalities and country folk in isolated communities today are enjoying good books, hitherto unavailable, as a result of WPA library projects in 45 states."[120] On the federal level, financial support for libraries increased through the 1930s thanks to government subsidies through the WPA. Support also increased in the form of larger state appropriations. Increased financial backing at the state and federal levels was a chief concern of the American Library Association in the 1930s, and on both fronts they were very successful.

Federal information policy predates the Great Depression, as demonstrated by the existence of information-dependent government agencies. What makes the 1930s significant in the history of information policy is the renewed and focused sense of importance it was given. New policies were developed to govern the creation and expansion of government information activities in response to economic crisis. Existing agencies such as the Bureau of the Census and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and new services such as the Social Security Administration and the Works Progress Administration, were organized with a consciousness around the importance

[120] "Federal Aid Extends to Libraries in 45 States (At the Same Time, 14,500 Needy Workers Get Useful Jobs)" 1938, WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 1.

of information policy. Increasingly, the library central to this growing support for information policy.

As public institutions with local standing, libraries helped to model and usher in acceptance of the increase of government involvement in everyday life. The ALA's National Plan for Libraries and campaign to secure federal funding for libraries drew on the momentum of this larger trend. This momentum was propelled by the creation and expansion of the welfare state. ALA argued that libraries were a key part of the social welfare system. Without federal funding, millions of people, mostly in rural areas, would lack access to library services. As institutions vital to the sustenance of public engagement, libraries should have guaranteed federal funding. All Americans benefited from library services, but not every community had the traditional local tax base to support the creation and maintenance of a library. Federal funding would ensure that library services became more widespread.

In the 1930s, many ALA members saw the Great Depression as an opportunity to emphasize the importance of libraries in economic crisis. Librarians were in agreement that library services could be helpful to patrons during difficult economic times. Where opinion diverged was on the question of library extension and federal aid, and to what extent members felt universal library service was a dream versus a practical goal. This divergence was due in part to differences of opinion regarding the federal government and financial responsibility. More conservative librarians balked at the idea of the federal government having any role, financial or otherwise, in the provision of library services, even if government involvement would expand and enhance services. They fundamentally opposed federal involvement in a local service, which they saw as the imposition of an inappropriate top-down structure. Proponents of federal aid saw permanent federal funding as a necessary supplement to, not replacement for, the locally-based

funding model. Were Americans to rely only on the traditional model, some communities would neither be able to create nor maintain library services. This debate played out nationally, for the first time, with the introduction of federal relief programs and the New Deal, and with ALA's lobbying for a federal library agency.

How do we measure the character and import of information policy in the 1930s? May we claim that transformed policy improved the quality of life in the community, enhanced political participation, or made the political process more democratic? Perhaps this is going too far. On the other hand, the 1930s brought in a new or refreshed attitude toward the importance of information in social life—in political, cultural, and economic affairs—and stimulated acceptance that government/public support for libraries and librarians should be central to the more encompassing system of information provision. The debate over the federal government's role in library services was a microcosm with implications for how we think about labor, economic crisis, relief, and social responsibility in the 1930s. Policy for enlarging and modernizing the larger system of information provision by strengthening public support for librarianship laid down principles and practices that would shape both this field and the larger system of information provision for decades to follow.

CHAPTER SIX:

CONCLUSION

Summary

"What will be the effects of the New Deal on library work, library income, and the relation of libraries to government?" asked Carl Milam in 1933. "Are libraries going back to their former status or on to something new? Will the powers and duties of governmental agencies continue to increase? Will the duties of libraries be expanded with the rest? Or will library services be restricted or dispensed with?"[1]

The 1929 stock market crash resulted in the most economically devastating period in American history. Its effects reverberated throughout the 1930s, most clearly in catastrophic unemployment rates. Mass unemployment meant that public institutions were pressed to serve a greater number of constituents using reduced resources. Under these circumstances, it would have been understandable, perhaps expected, that library services would have suffered and collapsed under the strain.

Instead, thanks to the New Deal, the United States underwent "a highly complex political, economic, and social transformation."[2] Though they have been overlooked, as this dissertation has shown, libraries were an important part of this transformation. Using broad, coalition-based support, the persistent efforts of US librarians transformed technology, access, and policy by the end of the 1930s. A period of grave economic crisis became an opportunity for American librarians and information workers to be unusually imaginative about the scope and purpose of library services. When we delve into the changes around technology, access, and policy, we get a

[1] Carl Milam, "Libraries and the New Deal," *Library Journal*, October 1, 1933, 765-67.
[2] Michael S. Blayney, "'Libraries for the Millions': Adult Public Library Services and the New Deal," *Journal of Library History* 12, no. 3 (1977): 235.

sense that a more profound and comprehensive transformation occurred. Acknowledging this, we also see that librarians and libraries were an important social force that formed part of the cultural apparatus of the 1930s as defined by Michael Denning. Librarians and information workers who spearheaded changes in technology, access, and policy did not necessarily identify as radicals. Nevertheless, the reformist impulses of the decade are clearly evident in libraries and in the wider system of information provision.

The American Library Association certainly sought to seize this momentum to their advantage, in arguing for permanent federal appropriations for libraries. The origins of modern librarianship in the nineteenth century were imbued with the belief that a democratic society needed unimpeded access to thoughts and ideas as they are instantiated in print media. What the ALA was doing and arguing for in the 1930s was not entirely new in terms of the established mission of the public library. Rather, ALA leaders latched on to the New Deal to reinforce the importance of the library in public library, and to argue for its expansion.

The 1930s endures as a topic of discussion in professional and scholarly library literature, and there is a general consensus that library services are acutely important during an economic crisis. In addition to the special issue of *Libraries and the Cultural Record*, recent articles such as Stephanie Henderson's "From the Great Depression to the Current Economic Crisis," Eric Novotny's "Hard Choices in Hard Times," and Nora Quinlen's "Desperate Times, Desperate Measures" indicate that librarians see the 1930s as a source of inspiration for how libraries my navigate the current economic downturn.[3]

[3] Stephanie Henderson, "From the Great Depression to the Current Economic Crisis: Three Generations of Kentucky Librarians," *Kentucky Libraries* 73, no. 4 (2009): 10-12; Eric Novotny, "Hard Choices in Hard Times: Lessons from the Great Depression," *Reference and User Services Quarterly* 49, no. 3 (2010): 222-224; Nora J. Quinlen, "Desperate Times, Desperate Measures: The Great Depression and Florida Libraries," *Florida Libraries* 51, no. 2 (2008): 4-8.

While the 1930s' US has been well-traversed by many scholars, no one has foregrounded the system of information provision as a pivotal area. I considered librarianship as a pivot of this larger system, using technology, access, and policy as the key vectors of evidence for my exploration. Histories of the system of information provision have typically explored these aspects in isolation from one another. Even more curiously, many histories of contemporary technology, access, or policy have sidestepped economic crisis.

This dissertation puts flesh on those bones. It makes clear that librarians and libraries were essential to the process of economic recovery. It challenges a narrative that librarians and libraries are slow to change and lack innovation. We can assert that, historically at least, this is not the case. Librarians have often been leading advocates for innovative approaches to information services; in Klaus Musmann's history of technology and libraries he characterizes librarians as "unusually fervent and filled with enthusiasm" for technological innovation.[4] It also challenges the narrative that the best course of action during economic crisis is to rely on the private sector and private sector practices to reinvigorate the economy. A public service ethic, informed by government economic planning, is something we must consider. This is particularly important with regard to access. A library must serve its users first and foremost. When private funding is a considerable source for library operating expenses, this creates a potential conflict: will libraries be accountable to their users or their private donors? A commitment to access is best upheld when library users and funders are intertwined. This still applies under the provision of federal library aid, as federal dollars are arguably available because of taxpayer contributions. Access, as we have seen, is never apolitical, and is subject to economic and political forces.

[4] Klaus Musmann, *Technological Innovations in Libraries, 1860-1960: An Anecdotal History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 211.

The events of the 1930s were a reflection of complicated political, economic, and social tendencies that have relevance for today's information providers. As this study shows, library decisions were political decisions. The dreams and accomplishment of 1930s' libraries reflected the ability of librarians and information workers to organize across institutions. Moreover, the 1930s renders problematic the assumption that cuts are the inevitable response to economic crisis.

As public libraries become increasingly reliant on private grant dollars and the largesse of for-profit donors, I contend that libraries can best serve their communities through expansion of public subsidies. If it was possible during the Great Depression, it is surely a possibility now. Library leaders must not be timid about voicing their support for comprehensive library funding. "Whether we are normal or depressed" wrote Judson T. Jennings in 1935, "I believe we should seek federal and state grants to stimulate library service. And by grants I do not mean a few hundred dollars for books. What we need, perhaps, may be 30 cents per capita from the federal government, 20 cents from the state, and 50 cents from the region that is to be served."[5]

Concerns over library funding are not new. Thus, while contemporary librarianship faces great political and economic challenges, they are not entirely unprecedented. Finally, it is worth noting that information policy of the 1930s treated information as a resource and not a commodity. Information was used as a resource in service of economic decision-making, and not in itself as a product to be bought and sold. There was little to no interest in monetizing library services and shifting economic costs to patrons, although the American Documentation Institute appeared to have hopes for commercializing the Bibliofilm Service—something that split other Bibliofilm Service members, and ultimately was a factor in its demise. We see some a move

[5] Judson T. Jennings, "Library Planning for the State of Washington," *Library Journal*, May 1, 1935, 376.

toward information commodification in the birth of University Microfilms, Incorporated, however these were not entirely librarian-led endeavors. Instead, librarians largely directed energy toward increasing subsidies for libraries in order to provide a greatest number of free services for a greatest number of patrons. Librarianship was, through the efforts of good policymakers and those of librarians and communities, reaffirmed as a core element of the wider system of information provision.

Future Research

This dissertation has gestured at a great number of events and accomplishments in libraries and information agencies of the 1930s. Synthesizing this information has revealed a number of possible avenues for future research. Here are a few:

There is still much to be said on the WPA's internal information provision: its own record-keeping practices, information services, and research centers. WPA arts and writing projects have been covered to some extent, with William McDonald and Jerre Mangione having done comprehensive treatments while George Blakey's *Creating a Hoosier Self-Portrait* covers the Federal Writers' Project on a state level (Indiana).[6] Nevertheless, we have a wealth of documents from the 1930s remaining to be canvassed and assessed: the Historical Records Survey and the Writers' Projects generated volumes' worth of unpublished material. Some of these records were boxed up and stowed away, sometimes organized and properly cataloged, more often not. In the case of Maine's Historical Records Survey, when the director was unable

[6] William F. McDonald, *Federal Relief Administration and the Arts: The Origins and Administrative History of the Arts Projects of the Works Progress Administration* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1969); Jerre Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal: The Federal Writers' Project, 1935-1943* (New York: Equinox Books, 1972); George T. Blakey, *Creating a Hoosier Self-Portrait: The Federal Writers' Project in Indiana, 1935-1942* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005).

"to find a Maine Library who would accept the HRS and Writers' Project materials they were dumped from a wharf into Casco Bay."[7] We have nothing near approaching a full description of what was generated by workers across the system of information provision during the Depression decade, and some of those materials can never be recovered.

On a more hopeful note, the National Archives and Records Administration maintains a wealth of records pertaining to the New Deal/Great Depression, encompassing fourteen record groups. As mentioned previously, the WPA holdings alone at the National Archives span 7,300 cubic feet. Library extension seems to be the most popular topic in secondary literature, and yet there is room for further exploration of library extension examples. There are also several other WPA library projects that have yet to receive a full treatment, such as union catalogs or indexing jobs.

As with the WPA's internal records, much remains to be said about the WPA's many research projects. William McDonald's book devotes a few pages to the Research and Records Project, but otherwise there is not much written on the topic. According to WPA statistics published for the month of June, 1936, there were 50,644 people employed under "Research and Statistical Surveys." Comparatively, there were 50,328 employed that same month under "Professional and Technical Projects," which included library workers.[8] What were the full range of duties and activities encompassed by the Research and Records Project? Why was it created? What did it produce and can we assess its legacy today? Similarly, volumes could be written about the Historical Records Survey and its numerous related projects such as the Survey of

[7] Leonard Rapport, "Dumped from a Wharf into Casco Bay: The Historical Records Survey Revisited," American Archivist 37 (1974): 210.
[8] Works Progress Administration, "Employment, Hours and Earnings on Professional and Service Projects in the United States Operated by the Works Progress Administration," June, 1936, WPA Papers, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

Federal Archives, the Survey of Church Records, and the American Imprints Inventory. We still lack a full account of what information was collected and what can be done with it.

Professional literature of the 1930s offers a wealth of historical data, most of which I could only skim for the purposes of this dissertation. *Library Journal* and the *Bulletin of the American Library Association* (and after 1938, the *ALA Bulletin*) can both be easily mined for qualitative and quantitative research, as between them they published more than 2,000 pages per year. One could take research topics from this dissertation and formulate more specific research questions such as: when was microfilm first mentioned? How frequently was it an article topic? These research questions would build on Michael Buckland's work on LIS publishing in the 1930s' United States.[9]

While there are good sources on the National Agricultural Library, there remains to be a full account of the Bibliofilm Service. With the exception of Irene Farkas-Conn's work, most secondary sources describe what the Bibliofilm Service was, but fail to discuss what became of it after the 1930s. This would also provide a closer examination of how documentalism/information science projects intersected with WPA projects, not to mention that the Bibliofilm Service is an excellent site for exploring cooperation and technological innovation in libraries in the pre-computer era. On a related note, Claribel Barnett would be a good biographical subject for reasons already mentioned: she remains the longest-serving director of the NAL, and she presided over the National Agricultural Library during a major expansion, which included the development of the Bibliofilm Service. Also of note is that Barnett occupied such a prestigious leadership position, as it is an oft-repeated statistic that the vast majority of

[9] Michael Buckland, "Documentation, Information Science, and Library Science in the U.S.A.," *Information Processing and Management* 32, no. 1 (1996): 63-76

librarian positions are held by women, except for when it comes to director positions, which are overwhelmingly held by men. Women's contributions in the areas of technology, access, and policy are notable and could form the basis of an important study. Another topic of potential interest for a social historian would be to indicate a possible influence on the Progressive Era on New Deal librarianship, as some of the more prominent library leaders and New Deal visionaries came of age during the Progressive Era.

There are several possibilities for state case studies of libraries and information provision in the 1930s. A number of states would be suitable candidates interesting case studies, either because of their campaigns for state aid, or their WPA library projects—or both. Ohio seems one of the most obvious places for an interesting and potentially revealing study. One, Ohio was very successful in its campaigns for state library aid. Two, Ohio was home to one of the major WPA newspaper indexing projects, with none other than Robert Binkley at the helm. Models for these case studies could be drawn from Edward Barrese Stanford's, Robert Scott Kramp's, or Daniel Ring's works.[10]

Robert Binkley would make for a compelling biographical subject. Binkley's career crossed numerous professional boundaries; he seemed to have a natural ability for bringing people together from different backgrounds and working towards common interests. He was simultaneously involved in efforts to enlarge and enhance technology, access, and policy across the system of information provision. An examination of Binkley's professional life could further

[10] Edward Barrett Stanford, *Library Extension Under the WPA: An Appraisal of an Experiment in Federal Aid* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944); Robert Scott Kramp, *The Great Depression: Its Impact on Forty-Six Large American Public Libraries: An Inquiry Based on a Content Analysis of Published Writings of Their Directors* (Duluth, MN: Library Juice Press, 2010); Daniel F. Ring, ed., *Studies in Creative Partnership: Federal Aid to Public Libraries During the New Deal* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1982).

illuminate how librarians, archivists, documentalists, and historians collaborated throughout a watershed decade.

Wayne Wiegand has charged library history research with being too preoccupied with the library in the life of the user as opposed to the user in the life of the library.[11] As I mentioned earlier in this dissertation, we do not need to choose between studying users or institutions. I do wish to emphasize that without institutions, there would not be users to study. Leaving library history aside for the moment, I wish to advocate for the importance of making the library, and particularly library management, a priority in contemporary research. One of the most obvious conclusions to emerge from my dissertation research, and one that is foregrounded in Kathleen Molz's work, is the importance of research devoted to library administration and management. Library research produced during the 1930s, especially from the University of Chicago's Graduate Library School, regularly prioritized questions of public administration, planning, and libraries.

I cannot help seeing the comparative lack of emphasis on training library leaders in graduate schools of library and information science in the twenty-first century as a grave error. It stands to reason that as more graduate programs drop the 'L' and emphasize the 'I', library-specific problems are even less likely to get the attention they deserve. Yet as library funding becomes more vulnerable to attack under neoliberalism, it is all the more crucial that we produce critically-minded library leaders. Strong library leadership was vital to the expansion of library services in the 1930s, and it is important to remember that this leadership was supported in great part by meticulous research produced by faculty and graduate students.

[11] Wayne Wiegand, Tunnel Vision and Blind Spots: What the Past Tells Us about the Present; Reflections on the Twentieth-Century History of American Librarianship," *Library Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (1999): 1-32; Wayne A. Wiegand, *Main Street Public Library: Community Places and Reading Spaces in the Rural Heartland*, 1876-1956 (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 2011).

The library of the twenty-first century differs from the library of the 1930s in certain ways, yet there are also ways that today's libraries are consistent with those of the past. This is abundantly clear when we consider the centrality of technology, access, and policy to the provision of library services. In both eras, the library confronted economic and political crisis. In the 1930s this was manifest in the Great Depression (economic) and the threat of totalitarianism (political). Today's library likewise confronts threats of economic crisis, yet the political crisis has less to do with fascism abroad and more to do with the growth of for-profit information provision and the commodification of information.

Library services are essential parts of community life, and they provide crucial information sources for people in economic crisis—regardless of the era. The continued survival and expansion of library technology, access, and policy would be well-served by research agendas that incorporate a political economy of librarianship.

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