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Let Us Forget This Cherishing of Women in Library Work

WOMEN IN THE AMERICAN LIBRARY WAR SERVICE, 1918–1920

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ABSTRACT: When ALA established the War Service Committee in 1917, leading male librarians saw an opportunity to reconstruct the profession as masculine and refused to allow women to serve as librarians in the training camps. Women resisted this attempt to appropriate their profession. Seven notable female librarians submitted a letter to the War Service Committee at the 1918 annual conference, saying, "We are getting excessively weary of being protected, shielded from hard work. We are quite accustomed in our own spheres to doing hard work of all kinds, so let us forget this cherishing of women in library work." This article explores the interaction of gender, power, and professional identity in this failed attempt by ALA leadership to use the Library War Service to "masculinize" the profession, and the impact that the women's service in camp libraries had on their construction of their professional identity.

KEYWORDS: Librarianship, professionalization, library war service, camp libraries, library war service, hospital service, World War I

Introduction

Historians writing about the history of librarianship in the United States have all but ignored the American Library Association's Library War Service Committee. Arthur P. Young's *Books for Sammies*, based on his dissertation, is the only book-length work on the topic. Joanne Passet mentions it in passing, and then only from the perspective of the activities of Western female librarians. Steven Witt refers to it as background for his work on the Paris Library School, while Caroline Daniels explores the contributions of women through the lens of the library at Camp Zachary Taylor, in Louisville, Kentucky. Dee Garrison devotes about four pages to the topic, with a focus primarily on the

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ALA's "collaboration in the excessive wartime censorship of the period," while Wayne Wiegand includes it in his exploration of the larger role of the American public library as "an active instrument for propaganda," and John Burgess calls the support of censorship a "moral crisis, the resolution of which significantly influenced the identity of professional librarianship in the United States."[1]

Although Garrison, Burgess, and Young refer briefly to the 1918 protest against the ban on women working as camp librarians at that year's ALA annual conference, none explores the issue in any depth.[2] Strangely, although Daniels is writing about the contributions of women in the camp libraries, she does not refer to that pivotal incident. This study will attempt to fill this gap in the historical record by exploring the interaction of gender, power, and professional identity in this failed attempt by ALA leadership to use the Library War Service to "masculinize" the profession, female librarians' resistance to it, and the impact that the women's service in camp libraries had on their construction of their professional identity, on library service in the United States, and on the internationalization of librarianship.

Historical Context

The first two decades of the twentieth century were a period of intense social and political change in the United States. Due to the industrialization of the post–Civil War decades, the US economy rivaled that of the larger European nations, and the country had become a global superpower. Prince Edward ascended to the throne of England in 1901, ushering in a new era of leisure for the upper classes in both the United Kingdom and the United States, which emphasized the gulf between the rich and the poor that had developed during the Gilded Age. Civic reform movements begun in the previous decade expanded and consolidated into the Progressive Movement, which sought to combat poverty among immigrants in the crowded industrialized cities.[3]

Women engaged in civic reform movements in the Victorian era primarily through their membership and activities in voluntary social organizations, such as women's clubs and church groups, and, in the final decades, through teaching and librarianship. They justified such activities as "'municipal housekeeping,' an extension of their traditional role as caretakers of their homes and families, arbiters of culture, and guardians of social morality."[4] During the Progressive Era, these efforts led to the development and expansion of female-intensive service professions ("numerically dominated by women [and] controlled, to a large extent, by men"), including teaching, social work,

public health nursing, and public librarianship.[5] Concomitantly, the earlier New Woman movement expanded throughout the nation, as professional women extended their spheres of influence beyond their local communities. These newly independent women, precursors of today's feminists, also swelled the ranks of the suffragist and temperance movements, leading to both Prohibition and female suffrage in 1920. According to one scholar, "The rise of the American New Woman represents one of the most significant cultural shifts of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries," as "increasing numbers of women demanded a public voice and private fulfillment through work, education, and political engagement." For many of the women who entered the female-intensive professions, being a New Woman meant "realizing her distinctiveness from man by developing her inherent altruism" while at the same time, "demonstrating her similarity to man in her desire for meaningful work."[6]

Library War Service

Beginning with the founding of ALA in 1876, the white middle-class, college-educated male leadership of the ALA attempted to construct librarianship as a masculine profession. H. L. Elmendorf, director of the St. Joseph (Missouri) Public Library and Chalmers Hadley, director of the Denver (Colorado) Public Library, went so far as to recommend two separate education systems, ones that reflected the contemporary social doctrines of "separate spheres" and "municipal housekeeping." "Women's training would be limited to the routine, clerical, 'house-wifely' tasks while men would be educated in administration, policy, library science, and the scholarly field of bibliography."[7]

To this end, ALA established a form of education for librarianship that was the equivalent of education for the masculine professions such as law and medicine—that is, as formal university training based on the control of an organized body of knowledge and its application.[8] However, it did not have the desired effect of increasing the number of men in the profession.[9] Women constituted nearly 94 percent of library school graduates between 1888 and 1921, 79 percent of librarians by 1910, and at least 90 percent of public librarians by 1920.[10] Library directors, predominantly male, preferred to hire women because they would work for less than men and seldom left their positions in search of promotions.[11] They thus contributed to the creation of a female-intensive profession if only for economic reasons.[12]

When America entered into the First World War, ALA leaders jumped at what they saw as an opportunity to reconstruct librarianship as a masculine profession. On April 6, 1917, the ALA Executive Board established the preliminary Committee on Mobilization and War Services Plan, with Librarian of Congress and two-time ALA president Herbert H. Putnam as chairman. It was one of seven organizations (along with YMCA, War Camp Community Service, Knights of Columbus, Jewish Welfare Board, YWCA, and Salvation Army) that were part of the Commission on Training Camp Activities of the US War Department, charged with entertaining American troops in the training camps. Putnam proposed that ALA provide library service to soldiers in order to provide recreational reading to relieve tedium of camp life and overcome the "dangerous temptation" of drink and prostitution. He also recommended the establishment of a permanent War Service Committee to raise funds for books and recruit trained librarians.[13]

Appointed at the end of the conference, the committee consisted of James I. Wyer (New York State Library director; ALA president 1910–11) as head, Arthur E. Bostwick (St. Louis Public Library director; ALA president 1907–8), Matthew S. Dudgeon (Wisconsin Free Library Commission), and two women, Gratia A. Countryman (director of the Minneapolis Public Library) and Alice S. Tyler (director of the Western Reserve and University Library School), all members of the preliminary committee. New members to the permanent committee included Edwin H. Anderson (New York Public Library; ALA president 1905–6) and Frank P. Hill (Brooklyn [New York] Public Library). Putnam was appointed head of the Library War Service, the administrative arm of the committee By 1918 Electra C. Doren (Dayton [Ohio] Public Library) had replaced Tyler, maintaining the number of women at two, and William H. Brett (Cleveland Public Library; ALA president 1896–97) and Charles F. D. Beldon (Boston Public Library) had replaced Bostwick and Dudgeon, who had resigned. In August 1918 Richard R. Bowker, publisher of Bowker reference books and a member of the preliminary committee, replaced Brett , who had died in an automobile accident.[14]

In mid-1917, at Putnam's request, the Commission on Training Camp Activities invited ALA to assume responsibility for thirty-two camps. By March 1918 the number of camp libraries had increased to thirty-five.[15]

Ban on Women as Camp Librarians

The Library War Service itself declared that only men could be hired as camp librarians. Although some members claimed that the War Department

prohibited the employment of women in the camps, this was inaccurate.[16] The decision was left to the local camp commander and nearly all refused to employ women as camp librarians, a policy that ALA refused to challenge.

Objections from the Library War Service and the camp commanders to women being employed in the camp libraries were that there was a lack of suitable living arrangements near the camps; that "their presence would interfere with the freedom of the men in their camp life"[17]; and that the work was arduous and beyond the physical ability of women.

> Every person on the staff thus far has been a man who was willing and able not only to do library work, but also to handle 200-pound bags of magazines and large boxes of books, to shovel coal and to drive and care for an automobile. Most of these things women librarians could not do.[18]

Not only does this ignore the reality that many of these women shoveled coal daily in their own homes and that driving a car does not require physical strength, it is difficult to imagine that there were a great number of men who were capable of handling 200-pound bags of magazines by themselves or who were able to do all of their own automobile maintenance.

Not only did the ALA leadership actively recruit men for the position of camp librarian, saying that "the work calls for men of tried executive ability," it just as actively encouraged women to "remember there are others who may be able to fill these newer places. . . . But in each town there is but one librarian, and few who are willing or able to replace her."[19] Male librarians themselves declared it "an opportunity to demonstrate to the MEN of America . . . that library work is a profession."[20] Some argued explicitly against allowing women, saying that "we must appeal to red-blooded he-readers or close up shop. . . . Let us not spoil it all by hanging May baskets on door knobs" [and employing] "cute little tricks that hold the Swamp Hollow Ladies' Library Association breathless."[21]

Further evidence that the exclusion of women from camp libraries was an attempt to masculinize the profession was the fact that the ban did not extend to women as volunteers. Not only were women permitted to serve as volunteers under often untrained male leadership, doing the "arduous work" described above for no pay, they were sought after. The *Camp Library Handbook* suggested that volunteers could be recruited "by an appeal to the wives of officers, the Boy Scouts, women [*sic*] clubs, neighboring libraries

and . . . in the nearby communities."[22] And in some few cases "where the camp is adjacent to a town the supervision of the camp library has . . . been entrusted to the woman who is chief librarian of the local public library."[23] This was most likely a volunteer, not a paid, position, and the woman supervised the work of male assistants who were actually in the camps. In at least one camp library (Camp Zachary Taylor), women volunteers worked in the library itself doing the technical work of cataloging books, making up collections for the camp branch libraries, and compiling bibliographies, without significantly interfering with the freedom of the men in their camp life.[24]

In an era when women were making great strides politically and in the labor force, women librarians in camp libraries were restricted to volunteer work under the supervision of men, many of whom had no formal library training or experience, with the full knowledge, approval and even complicity of their own professional association.[25] In other areas of the labor force, women were making great strides. The federal government had established the Committee on Women's Defense within the Council of National Defense and a Women's Bureau in the Department of Labor, and the War Department and the Navy preferred women for clerical positions. In the civilian labor force, women were working in all manner of nontraditional employment, as draftsmen, chemists, "way bills inspectors, radio accountants, fingerprint classifiers . . . [and] sanitary bacteriologists."[26] The railroads were employing thousands of women in "accessory employments, including some departments of shopwork," and women were filling positions made vacant through enlistment and the draft on Wall Street and Main Street.[27] They were running department-store elevators, soda fountains, shoe-shining establishments, and even trolley lines, but the Library War Service banned them from serving as librarians in camp libraries.

In addition, all of the librarians employed in the camp hospital libraries were women who lived in the camps in the (also all-female) nurses' quarters and traveled about the camps safely without interfering with the men's freedom. As the head of the Library War Service Hospital Service, Caroline Webster, said,

> Any prejudice that existed in the minds of the military concerning women at camp libraries fell as the chaff before the wind when the hospital library was mentioned. Even the most prejudiced of the "old school" officers admit that it is women and not men who are adapted

> to minister to the sick. Women are employed as nurses in all the base hospitals, so difficulties of living which are well nigh insurmountable at some of the camp libraries are easily overcome at hospitals where living can be arranged for with the nurses.[28]

Women Librarians Protest

Women librarians did not accept the situation quietly, but publicly protested, in particular against the lack of public support from their professional association. In a letter to the editor of *Public Libraries* magazine, published in January 1918, "One of the Women" refers to "the eloquent silence of the Camp Libraries committee regarding the services to be rendered by women librarians" and to three friends who "were trained librarians, before their marriages, who have expressed a desire to render patriotic service . . . also a number of women now holding important library positions" who were looking for an opportunity "where their skilled library service would be of value." She argues that, just as it was "logical and accepted as a matter of course" for two "well-known and competent women librarians" to be appointed to the Library War Service committee, so it was only logical to "utilize this majority group of A. L. A. members for definite service in bringing the books to the soldiers," particularly as there was a shortage of available male librarians.[29]

Beatrice Winser, assistant to John Cotton Dana at the Newark (New Jersey) Public Library, wrote directly to Newton Baker, Secretary of War, on February 20, 1918, asking why women were permitted to work in camp hospitals and in YWCA hostess houses, but were not permitted to work as paid librarians in the camp libraries.[30] Baker forwarded the letter to Herbert Putnam who replied that it was due to the policy of the War Department. On March 28 Winser responded by accusing Putnam of deliberate deception and challenged him to produce documentary evidence of such a regulation, stating, "you chose to assume that women were not fitted as well for this service and . . . as chairman, you ruled women out."[31]

At almost the same time, ALA began encouraging camp librarians to hire female library assistants, not only because there were more trained women than men available, but also because men who were fit for military service were ineligible.[32] In a letter dated February 28, 1918, George Utley, executive secretary of the ALA as well as the Library War Service, asked librarians to provide the names of men and women "whom you feel reasonably certain would be good for this service." He noted that "library work is being developed in the base hospitals, and this is a work for which women are particularly

well fitted." He also held out the promise that "there are indications also that before long women can serve in the Camp libraries—in two Camps they are already serving," although he did not name the camps.[33]

Mary Elizabeth Downey, organizer of the Fort Douglas camp library in Salt Lake City, replied to Utley's letter on March 11, calling the refusal to consider women for camp library service "a blot on the scutcheon." She noted that she knew of a number of trained female librarians who had offered their services, only to be rejected, or worse, to be insulted by being asked to do "hack work." She concludes, "if the women of the library profession are soon to have the same recognition in the library war service work as have been given to the men, I shall be very happy to see it brought about. I have never known anything to quite so stir the elements since I have been in library work."[34]

In a response to such complaints, the Library War Service and War Service Committee maintained that women were serving in all of the traditional, supportive, anonymous womanly ways—"They are 'in it' in the aggregate far more than men. They were in it during the campaign for funds, they are in it in every library soliciting books, sifting them, preparing them, forwarding them," which suggests of just what the insulting "hack work" consisted. The committee condescendingly assured women that, once the military leadership of the camps had "become accustomed to seeing women in hostess houses, and women—mending clothes—in Y.M.C.A. huts, we believe the objection to women in the camp libraries will disappear. If they may serve tea in a hostess house, why should they not serve books in a library?"[35] This, of course, raised the question of why the YMCA and YWCA leadership were able to convince camp commanders to accept women while the ALA refused to even try and suggests, again, that the ALA leadership had an interest in using the War Service as an opportunity to promote librarianship to men as a masculine profession.

Consequently, a group of seven women—Beatrice Winser, Mary E. Downey, Tessa L. Kelso, May Massee, Theresa Elmendorf, Annie Carroll Moore, and Emma V. Baldwin—presented a letter to the War Service Committee at its meeting at the American Library Association Conference in Saratoga Springs, New York, on July 3, 1918. The letter was succinct and clear. "We ask the War Service Committee please announce to the Special General Session to be held Thursday, July 4, at 10:30 a.m., its future policy as to the employment of women in the work under its charge."[36]

Beatrice Winser, who organized the protest, was raised in Germany and spoke French and German as well as English. A graduate of Columbia College

library school in 1888, she was hired as cataloger of French and German by the newly established Newark Public Library in 1889. She was promoted to assistant to librarian Frank P. Hill in 1894, and was made acting director when he resigned in 1901. She was passed over as director by the board of trustees, who preferred a man for the job, in favor of John Cotton Dana. She was also appointed assistant director of the Newark Museum in 1915 and was a member of ALA's Council of Fifty from 1909 to 1912.[37]

For the War Service protest, she enlisted the assistance of Mary E. Downey, then State Library Organizer of Utah. A colleague of Mary Eileen Ahern and John Cotton Dana, Downey had been State Library Organizer of Ohio from 1908 to 1911, was director of the Chautauqua School for Librarians from 1906 to 1936 and was active in the League of Library Commissions, as well as ALA and state library associations.[38] She was also one of the women whose complaints about Dewey's sexual harassment on the post-ALA conference trip in 1905 led to his expulsion from ALA.[39]

Although Tessa L. Kelso had left librarianship to serve as head of the library department of Baker and Taylor books in 1898, she was recognized as the woman who, as head of the Los Angeles Public Library from 1889 to 1895, had "guided a small municipal library into . . . a fine example of progressive library administration."[40] May Massee had also left librarianship for the publishing world. A graduate of the Wisconsin Library School in Madison, she served as a children's librarian at the Buffalo (New York) Public Library until 1913 when she became the editor of ALA's *Booklist* magazine.[41]

The first woman to head a large public library in the United States, Theresa West Elmendorf, wife of H. L. Elmendorf, was also the first woman elected to the office of president of the American Library Association in 1911. Widowed in 1906, in 1918 she was assistant librarian of the Buffalo Public Library.[42] Anne Carroll Moore is arguably the most recognizable female librarian in the United States. As Superintendent of Work with Children at the New York Public Library from 1906 to 1941, she is credited with defining the field of children's librarianship in American public libraries and influencing the construction of the professional identity of children's librarians. She was elected chair of what would become the Children's Services Division of ALA, authored numerous professional articles, presented at professional conferences, and taught in the library schools at Pratt and University of California at Berkeley.[43] Emma V. Baldwin was secretary to Frank P. Hill when he was librarian of the Newark Public Library and moved with him to the Brooklyn Public Library in 1901.[44] At the time that the letter to the War Service Committee was written, she

was secretary of the Library War Finance Committee, serving under Frank P. Hill as chairman.[45] *Library Journal* called her "among the most respected and esteemed of the women leaders."[46]

James I. Wyer, head of the committee, responded that there were sixty-nine women serving in the Library War Service, eight on the headquarters staff, nine on the field staff, twelve in dispatch offices, and forty in camp libraries. He did not, however, distinguish between volunteers and those who were employed as librarians, and further comments make clear that, at best, the forty in camp libraries were assistants who were serving under the supervision of a male librarian. He quotes Putnam's report presented earlier at the conference, saying, "The time may come—at certain camps may come shortly– when women may be designated to the actual charge of the main library. . . . Many of them are already in charge of camp [branch] libraries, though none as yet in charge of the main camp library building."[47]

He also quoted a report by committee member Frank P. Hill, who listed objections to women serving as chief librarians at the camps:

1. Objection on the part of commanding officers.
2. Difficulty of establishing relations with camp headquarters.
3. The fact that it is a camp of men.
4. Inaccessibility of the camp library.
5. Necessity for leaving the grounds by 7 p.m.
6. Exceptional physical hardships imposed and required.[48]

Neither Hill nor Wyer explained what the difficulties were with establishing relations with camp headquarters, suggesting that this was merely a rephrasing of the first "objection"—opposition by commanding officers who would refuse to work with female librarians. They did not explain how an inaccessible library could be of use to anyone, male or female, librarian or service man, nor why it was "necessary" for female librarians to leave the grounds by 7 p.m. when it was usual for the libraries to be open until 10 p.m.[49] Even if there were a valid reason, the hours were determined by the camp commander, so they could be changed, and there was no requirement that the chief librarian be the last one out of the building. The "exceptional physical hardship" was riding six to twelve miles in an "uncomfortable jitney service" although as noted earlier, hospital librarians routinely traveled that distance. Despite this litany of objections, Hill concluded that "if they are willing to put up with the discomforts and inconveniences, we ought to accept their services and

place them in every camp as assistant librarians," reserving the higher-status position of camp librarian for the men they hoped to attract to the field.[50]

In response, Miss Winser stated, "It is not that we desire to be camp librarians necessarily, but it is that we are getting excessively weary of being protected, shielded from hard work. We are quite accustomed in our own spheres to doing hard work of all kinds, so let us forget this cherishing of women in library work."[51] The objection, then, was to this attempt to characterize female librarians as delicate and physically incapable of performing the work of librarianship in the camps. Whether she used "our own spheres" to refer to the gendered social hierarchy that assigned men and women different spheres of private responsibility or, as seems more likely considering the context and for whom she was speaking, to the gendered professional spheres of librarianship, she was declaring that women were capable of performing competently in all areas of librarianship.

A Miss McDonald, speaking for the female volunteers who were working anonymously behind the scenes, argued in favor of women being given the opportunity to earn recognition for their service. "It is all right to wash dishes; it is all right to raise money and to work overtime hour after hour and night after night . . . but it is all right to hand around in some way a little of that exultation that comes from direct war service."[52] Again, she was not challenging the concept of gendered work, but rather was calling for recognition of that work.

Anne Carroll Moore indicated that the ban on women in the camps was doing immediate damage to the profession. "We are losing right and left from our libraries promising young women who have given five, ten or more years to library work and have distinct contributions to make" to "other organized groups of war workers" or to government service. As evidence of this loss, she stated, "I have never attended so middle-aged a convention as this one."[53]

A Miss Malone of New York City called attention to that fact that, although the War Service Committee included two women, they lived in Ohio and Minnesota and were unable to travel to any of the meetings held in New York or Washington, D.C. The result was that the women only attended four of the thirteen meetings that were held, "and the outlining of the plans for the work the woman librarians have done in regard to the camp libraries was done principally at the nine meetings, at which there were no women present."[54]

Finally, Herbert Putnam was asked to respond. He assured the women that "this particular question you may, I think, feel assured that it will take care of itself, and especially that it will do so in proportion as the women feel about

it as they have indicated in the course of this discussion," putting the burden of rectifying the situation onto the women themselves, not the Library War Service. His final words, however, were a classic strawman argument in which he expressed his indignation at the "implied disparagement of the competent, finely spirited and able women who have actually *been* in our service" as volunteers. He proudly acknowledged that he had actively discouraged librarians from going into war service work because "we must not allow ourselves to disparage the essential war service that we are performing," but he appealed primarily to women, "Believe me, I cannot name a man in war time service in Washington who can do for the future of this country what the librarian of a children's department can do at this very moment."[55] His comments recall Elmendorf's and Hadley's construction of librarianship as a two-tier hierarchy, with women engaging in "municipal housekeeping," while the men carried on the business of administration and leadership.

Women Permitted to Serve

By 1918 it was clear that the efforts of the ALA's male leadership to use the Library War Service to create a gendered masculine profession had failed. Before the end of the year, the Library War Service would publish a pamphlet on its activities that casually noted that "the men live in the library building and the women are lodged with the nurses," suggesting that obstacle of where women would sleep had been overcome with no difficulty.[56] The same pamphlet included a few paragraphs about the hospital librarians, calling them "women of the highest possible qualifications," and explained that the librarian was "furnished with a kind of tea wagon vehicle on noiseless rubber wheels, and this she rolls into the wards, stopping at every bed, allowing the patient time to make a selection before moving on to the next bed," an allusion to the "hostesses" of the YWCA houses.[57]

Impact on the Women Librarians' Professional Identity

By May 1919 the Library War Service had established fifteen regional libraries in France and occupied Germany, as well as the ALA Headquarters library. Most were central libraries that sent books out to distant, smaller camp libraries. American public support after the Armistice was secured in large part by the work of Mary Eileen Ahern. In charge of fundraising for the Service in Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin during the war, she traveled to Paris from January to June 1919 as publicity coordinator for the Library War Service.

Her reports on the benefit of the library service to American servicemen still in France helped maintain public donations and support for the program.[58]

While the central libraries and the headquarters library were headed by male librarians, at least some of the camp libraries were presided over by women.[59] The library in Le Mans was headed by a woman, Esther Johnston, formerly librarian of the Seward Park Branch of the New York City Library, who wrote, "The daily round of a librarian in camp in France includes all activities from trying to supply the latest Imagist poetry to mending kit-bags," so that even in postwar Europe librarians were engaging in the feminine art of municipal housekeeping.[60]

Female American librarians also took advantage of the opportunity that camp libraries provided to visit Europe. Mary Josephine Booth, head of the library at Coblentz, wrote that "six or seven ALA women came over with Mrs. Griggs," who replaced Booth when she returned to the United States, as well as "Mrs. Priscilla Burd of Illinois Library School."[61]

An anonymous "Candidate for a Commission" in the camp at Saint Aignan described

> the joy that was brought to the candidates when one of their number discovered that the American Library Association had opened a hut. . . . Here was fulfilled a long-felt want, a clean, orderly, quiet place where one could think and read without the jarring present being constantly obtruded. It was presided over by two charming, intellectual American women. Their influence was felt the moment one opened the door. The entire environment reflected their presence. The men stepped quietly, spoke in lowered tones, innate politeness came to the surface, consideration of the feelings of others was manifest. The sympathetic attention of these two women was responsible for an entire change of atmosphere.[62]

In other words, these women had constructed the library as white, middle-class living room. A more female-gendered description of the profession would be difficult to find.

Following the end of the war, Chalmers Hadley, earlier supporter of administrative courses for men and courses that appealed "largely to the house-wifely instincts" of women, former organizer of the Mexican Border Service and soon-to-be president of ALA, asked what the profession had learned as a result of the Library War Service.[63] Among other lessons about library administration, collection development, and reading tastes, he included a new vision of

female librarians, one that would replace the "prudish, bespectacled spinsters" with "educated, well-bred, entirely capable women of the American Library Association, devoting their energies in hospital libraries, dispatch offices, navy yards and other activities." He concluded that no one who had observed the women in action would "ever again look upon a skirt as an impediment, either literally or figuratively speaking," not even himself.[64] Women had successfully resisted the attempt to wrest their profession from them and had replaced the male construction of their professional identity with one of their own making. They were no longer protected, shielded, and cherished, but were recognized and respected as professionals within a female-intensive profession that would proudly remain so.

Internationalization of Librarianship

In 1920, in one of the first instances of the internationalization of librarianship, ALA incorporated the ALA Headquarters library as the American Library in Paris. Intended to serve as a model free public library, it was "to provide an example of American library methods to the librarians of Europe."[65] In an effort to "train French citizens to carry on the libraries it had developed," the ALA opened the Paris Library School at the American Library in 1924, with librarian Mary Parsons of New Jersey as resident director.[66] Within a few years, the school was "a hub in the growing network of international librarianship," which would culminate in the creation of the International Federation of Library Associations.[67]

Conclusion

The evidence demonstrates that the male leadership of the ALA attempted to reconstruct the profession as masculine on two fronts. On the one hand, camp librarianship was presented as work that only men could do, which demanded both the "executive ability" which was believed unique to men, and superior physical strength. The camps were depicted as a solely masculine domain, in which women would be a distraction and a disturbance. On the other, they attacked the ability of female librarians to perform their professional duties within that domain. Their discourse is filled with references and allusions to traditional female stereotypes, including women as the physically weaker sex who are technologically and intellectually inferior to men, as temptresses and objects of men's sexual desire and at the same time as maternal and domestic,

with the constant references to serving tea, working with children, and as naturally suited to nurturing the sick. Mary Francis Isom reported that she was addressed as "Mother" by some of the patients in her care.[68]

In particular, the male leadership's construction of female librarians privileged the voluntary work of women above the work women did for pay as being more in keeping with the traditional view of women's noble, self-sacrificing nature, as well as the Victorian ideal of the middle-class wife whose husband provided for the family financially and who spent her time in philanthropic "good works."

The women who resisted this construction and its restrictions did so from within a larger social construction of librarianship as a service profession generally, and as a traditionally female-intensive service profession. They objected less to the prohibition on women in camp libraries than to the restrictive and limiting construction of female librarians given as the reason for the policy. They viewed their gender and gender-identity as a source of strength and as a factor that made them particularly suited to providing not only approved and appropriate reading materials, but doing so within the library as a surrogate home environment—that "clean, orderly, quiet place" presided over by "educated, well-bred entirely capable women." In this sense, they continued to view the profession as one of "municipal housekeeping," albeit one for which they were formally educated and paid a salary.

The seven women who led the protest were recognized as library leaders at the local and national level and had all made successful careers in either librarianship or in the book publishing business. They were among the most powerful women in American librarianship at the time, when power is defined as "the ability to take one's place in whatever discourse is essential to action and the right to have one's part matter" and they were women whose abilities and achievements were known to the men who were opposing them.[69] They rightly recognized the danger to women's power in librarianship in this prohibition against women taking their place in the discourse of the "library war service," and in being relegated to the activities that required only marginally professional abilities and skills.

At the same time, they avoided radically challenging the gender power hierarchy, accepting the male dominance of this female profession. They requested an explanation for the policy rather than demanded a change, and did not protest the use of volunteers to perform professional tasks and duties. They did not desire to reconstruct librarianship as a female-dominated profession, with women in all of the leading roles, but rather to strengthen and solidify

it as a female-intensive profession, one in which women were respected and recognized for their contributions and empowered to take their place in the discourse. That discourse, however, was a modern version of the traditional discourse of municipal housekeeping, with the librarian the educated, well-bred, capable woman in a skirt whose sympathetic influence created a clean, orderly public home environment in which white middle-class standards of behavior could flourish.

While they expanded the accepted field of endeavor from the small, local public library to libraries nationally and internationally, and they succeeded in changing at least one male leader's mind about their capabilities, they did not overturn the patriarchal power structure. Despite Beatrice Winser's 1920 campaign for Emma Baldwin as successor to George Utley, it would be nearly seventy years before ALA appointed a female executive secretary, and 75 of the first 100 presidents would be male.[70] "Before 1966, 83% (66 out of 80) of the people occupying the office of ALA president were male. . . a reverse reflection of the gender composition of an ALA membership which, for much of this century, has hovered around 80% female and 20% male."[71] Librarianship in the twenty-first century continues to be a female-intensive profession in which males represent 21 percent of public librarians, but constitute 35 percent of public library directors.[72]

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