ACKNOWLEDGING HISTORY IN ORDER TO DISRUPT IT: UNEARTHTING THE SEGREGATED HISTORY OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

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OUR TALK TODAY

• How I came to this topic
• A brief history of segregation in LIS
• An example of segregation's legacy: The Carnegie Scholars
• The challenges of doing this research
  • How digital humanities can help us tell more of these stories

Children looking at the window display in the Asheville Colored Public Library
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources via North Carolina Digital Heritage Center
ACKNOWLEDGING THE HISTORY IN ORDER TO DISRUPT IT


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• 1905 – the Brevard Street Library for Negroes opens in Charlotte as an independent institution. It is the first public library for blacks in NC.

• 1925-1939 – the Hampton Library Institute Library School

• 1929 – ALA issued a survey to library school directors

• 1936 - ALA conference segregated according to Virginia laws
  • Creation of the Committee on Racial Discrimination

• 1960 - The Greenville (SC) Eight staged a sit-in to integrate the library
  • Sit-ins in Greensboro, NC and Petersburg, VA

• 1970 – enactment of Title II-B Fellowship of the Higher Education Act of 1965
HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Project 500 in 1967
(Copyright Illini Media/1973 Illio)

The Carnegies Scholars 1970-1972
(Photo courtesy of Jewel Player)
Faculty Rating of Student Performance

Name: [Redacted]  Course: L.S. 450J Advanced Studies in Librarianship

Please comment on qualities which characterized the student's performance in your class and/or qualities which might indicate his potential for a successful career in librarianship. A student's appearance, personality and general manner may be noted, as well as his creativity and effectiveness in speaking or writing.

Attractive & well groomed — outgoing young person with definite leadership ability. Very creative in activities related to work with young adults. Ticks off activities related to work with young adults. Needs to have definite deadlines set and then needs reminding. Has great future in the profession.

Date: 2-2-72

Signature: [Redacted]

Assoc. Professor
FACULTY RATING OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Name: ____________________________  Course: L.S. 450 Neighborhood Information Systems

Please comment on qualities which characterized the student's performance in your class and/or qualities which might indicate his potential for a successful career in librarianship. A student's appearance, personality and general manner may be noted, as well as his creativity and effectiveness in speaking or writing.

Keeps to own group:

Date  8/18/71  Signature: ____________________________
FACULTY RATING OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE  
Course: L.S. 406 Library Service to Children and Young Adults.

Name: [Redacted]

Please comment on qualities which characterized the student's performance in your class and/or qualities which might indicate his potential for a successful career in librarianship. A student's appearance, personality and general manner may be noted, as well as his creativity and effectiveness in speaking or writing.

Tall, average build, African hair. Black young woman in Carnegie library.

Was not a strong student in my course, lacks much background and experience in the school library field. Has taught in rural schools. Libraries and schools inadequate. 

Tught in rural schools. Libraries and schools inadequate. 

Tught in rural schools. Libraries and schools inadequate.

Tught in rural schools. Libraries and schools inadequate. 

Was receptive to suggestions, tried hard. Needs to understand supervision in his practice. Work first if possible. Does have interest in elementary school field.

Date: August 1971  
Signature: [Redacted]
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**Observations**

He is an indolent young man and he apparently was not interested in this course. His performance was far below his capacity.

**Date** 2-4-71

**Signature**
HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

1967

372 African American students in the incoming class

2014

356 African American students in the incoming class

Photo by: Rick Danzl/The News-Gazette
The Challenge of Unearthing Complicated Stories

- What information is valued, collected, processed, and promoted?
- Power and Gatekeeping
- Skilling of New Professionals

Archives at once protect and preserve records; legitimize and sanctify certain documents while negating and destroying others; and provide access to selected sources while controlling the researchers and conditions under which they may examine the archive record.

"There is always something more to be written... something that must be remembered, something that cannot be forgotten." - Dionne Brand

Lillian Lopez the first Puerto Rican to hold an administrative position at the New York Public Library

Dr. Robert Wedgeworth
UIUC University Librarian, 1993-1999
Dean of the Columbia SLS, 1985-1992
Executive Director of the ALA, 1972-1985
THANK YOU!

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