ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: THE SOLE MEASURE OF SERVICE: A SOCIAL HISTORY OF BALTIMORE'S PUBLIC LIBRARIES DURING WORLD WAR II

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This thesis examines the history of public libraries in Baltimore and Maryland during World War II. Drawing from contemporary newspapers and institutional records, it argues that World War II expanded institutional opportunities for public libraries while exposing their limitations as agents of social change. Concentrating on how Baltimore's libraries successfully contributed to and enabled the war's information economy undercuts the narrative of libraries' impotency as information centers during this period by locating their validation among the communities they served, rather than their relationship with the state or their postwar status. However, even as the war enabled this transformation, it simultaneously exposed the limits of libraries' social ideology, destabilizing their position as institutions of social progressivism. Analyzing gender discrimination within librarianship and the experiences of African American Marylanders as users and library professionals demonstrates the limited

vision Baltimore's librarians held for enacting meaningful change within their institutions and communities.

THE SOLE MEASURE OF SERVICE: A SOCIAL HISTORY OF BALTIMORE'S PUBLIC LIBRARIES DURING WORLD WAR II

by

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For Jamie: Thanks for the coffee, comfort, and consistent support as I rambled on about dead people. You truly are the best.

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Introduction; or Libraries for the Defense

"Books, in moment of trial, may be more precious to the soldier than a donation of blood…There are soldiers and sailors for whom books, in lonely or depressed hours, may be as precious as the sight of a beloved friend."[1] Historian, Lewis Mumford, penned these words in 1942 to impress upon the American public the importance of supplying books for servicemen fighting in Europe and the Pacific during World War II. Book collections, like defense work or blood donation, represented one area of service in America's mass-scale mobilization for defense. Yet, Mumford's writing articulates something deeper at play in the role of books during the war than mere defense support. Exchanging books for blood and old friends, Mumford equated reading with the source of life for those unmoored from all things recognizable and in constant physical danger. Mumford's writing might be easily dismissed as hyperbolic if it did not echo throughout the articles, pamphlets, addresses, and books produced during World War II. Authors, industry leaders, even Franklin Roosevelt himself touted the value of books and information as an intellectual and emotional antidote to the chaos of war.[2] Knowledge, it was believed, could improve technical aspects of defense, assuage anxiety created by the war, uplift

[1] Lewis Mumford, "The Value of Books for the Service Man," *Between Librarians* vol. 11, no. 3 (September, 1944): 12, reprinted from *Wilson Library Bulletin*, vol. 16 (February 1942), Folder 6, Box 1, Series 9, Maryland Library Association archives, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

[2] President Roosevelt sent an address to the 1941 ALA Annual Conference confirming libraries' importance as supporters of democratic ideals and thanking librarians for their contribution to national defense. Patti Clayton Becker, *Books and Libraries in American Society During World War II: Weapons in the War of Ideas* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 61-62.

the individual from his or her drudgery, and create the mental space necessary to imagine a better world in the face of uncertainty and terror.

If books could liberate the individual to reach their full potential, public libraries were the institutions with the tools to enact such a movement on a mass-scale. Driven by the new premium placed on information and their own eagerness to meet their communities' changing needs, libraries whole-heartedly pursued a defense agenda aimed at maximizing industrial production, supplying reliable information about the state of the war, training citizens to understand their defense responsibilities, and providing wholesome recreation for users of all ages. Books played a significant role in structuring and communicating these messages but their presentation in public libraries elevated their messaging from a singular experience to a negotiated process under constant construction and reinforcement. Built on an ideal of accessibility, libraries structure their institutional space as an extension of the public sphere, heightening the visibility of communication and allowing a participatory element in designating institutional meaning and use. In this environment, reading becomes a social act whose meaning is fixed as much by context as the text itself. Thus, libraries provide the opportunity to read beyond words by situating books and information as part of a conversation rather than a voice in isolation.[3] Turning to public libraries as sources for the dispersal of war information

[3] For an overview of public libraries and the social construction of reading, see Christine Pawley, "Retrieving Readers: Library Experiences," *The Library Quarterly* vol. 76, no. 4 (2006): 379-387 www.jstor.org (accessed August 31, 2018); Thomas August, "Introduction," in *Institutions of Reading: The Social Life of Libraries in the United States*, ed. Thomas August & Kenneth Carpenter (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 1-23, https://muse.jhu.edu/ (accessed March 8, 2018); for more on libraries as public spaces, see Gloria J. Leckie & John E. Buschman, "Space, Place, and Libraries: An Introduction," in *The Library as Place: History, Community, and Culture*, ed. John E. Buschman and Gloria J. Leckie (Westport, Connecticut: Libraries Unlimited, 2007): 3-25.

during World War II not only tracks their institutional changes but uncovers individual experiences of the war as patrons encountered and reacted to the library in their everyday lives.

Books and reading might have been promoted as critical for all American citizens during World War II, but public libraries remind modern-day scholars that the terms and conditions of information accessibility and use were hardly universal. Though public libraries operated under the democratic principle that unhindered access to information stabilized society and encouraged social uplift, their operations throughout the twentieth century amplified the gap between their ideology and practices.[4] Libraries throughout the country embraced racial segregation in their institutions, both explicitly and tacitly, limiting minority communities' access to informational resources and forcing them into subpar facilities. At the same time, the culture of library professionalism reinforced gender stereotypes that limited women's participation and growth in librarianship. The onset of World War II forced a reckoning, however shallow, of libraries' social shortcomings as Nazism's atrocities laid bare America's own racial hierarchy and the demands of defense pushed women into the public sphere in unprecedented numbers. Yet the gap between institutional vision and operational reality persisted in many library systems throughout the war and beyond. Why did this moment of unity and purpose, so stark in libraries' full

[4] Library Grand Maester (copyright George R.R. Martin) and all-around creepy guy, Melvil Dewy, termed this phenomenon, "library faith." For more on its manifestations in late nineteenth and early twentieth century libraries, see Becker, 9-12. For more on Melvil Dewy's sexual harassment charges and anti-Semitic/racist beliefs, see Wayne A. Wiegand, *Irrepressible Reformer: A Biography of Melvil Dewey* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1996).

throttle embrace of defense services, fail to fully penetrate institutional culture? What can this moment tell us about how public libraries operate as social institutions?

This thesis attempts to unravel how the war and defense production reshaped libraries' missions, services, and activities as librarians embraced leading roles in the war effort. Building on libraries' changing institutional structure, it further seeks to analyze the contrast between expanding library services and the limited development the war had on professional inclusivity and service to minority communities. Rather than take a national approach, I concentrate on public libraries' institutional perspectives and user experiences in Baltimore and Maryland. A local perspective allows for a deeper contextualization of institutions while complicating a top-down narrative on libraries' actions and policies. While any city or region could serve as a useful case-study, mid-twentieth century Baltimore is especially well-suited. The advent of defense production reinvigorated Baltimore's economy and drew thousands of workers into the city, creating a rapidly diversifying community with multiple defense-related informational needs. Likewise, the city's status as an important port situated it as a center for naval activities, positioning Baltimore as the regional headquarters for auxiliary library associations dedicated to supplying books for sailors. The city also boasted a significant library system in the Enoch Pratt Free Library. Founded in 1886, the library was one of the largest in the nation by 1940, servicing over 800,000 people with 168,000 registered users at twenty-six branches.[5]

[5] "Public Library Statistics," *ALA Bulletin*, vol. 34, no. 4 (1940): 269 https://www.jstor.org/stable/25690437 (accessed February 15, 2019).

Though Baltimore is the primary focus in this thesis, library institutions throughout the state are considered in a supplementary status. Before 1945, Maryland lacked state-wide support for public libraries. The war's informational demand increased many Marylanders' exposure to public libraries while kindling an expanded interest in reading. This shift aided the passage of the Public Libraries Law in 1945, which earmarked state funds for county-based library systems.[6] Prior to the legislation, however, the state lacked consistent library coverage for populations throughout the region. This disparity allows for a broader consideration of libraries' institutional influence during the war while maintaining a shared sociocultural framework. Additionally, Maryland hosted several military camps, such as Fort Meade, with independent library collections. Like Baltimore's naval library associations, these army institutions present the opportunity to explore new modes libraries adopted in response to changing informational demands initiated by the war.

Using records and reports from the Enoch Pratt Free Library and newspaper and journal articles from around the state, I argue that World War II opened institutional opportunities for Maryland libraries while revealing their shortcomings as agents of social change. Internally, the war period initiated a sociocultural shift in informational priorities that restructured Maryland libraries' traditional patterns of service and modes of community outreach. Cultural premiums on accurate war

[6] Division of Library Extension Report, Department of Education, January 13, 1947, Folder 6, Box 63, Maryland World War II Records, Maryland Historical Society. For more on the state of public libraries pre-1946, see Maryland State Planning Commission, *The Free Public Library in Maryland* (Publication No. 42, Baltimore, 1944), Internet Archive. https://ia802704.us.archive.org/9/items/freepubliclibrar42mary/freepubliclibrar42mary.pdf. For a copy of the 1945 bill, see "The New Library Legislation: Senate Bill No. 543," *Between Librarians* vol. 12, no.1 (March 1945): 3-6, Folder 6, Box 1, Series 9, Maryland Library Association archives, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

information and commitment to the defense agenda elevated libraries' opportunities for tailored outreach while resource limitations forced institutions to invent new ways of connecting with their communities. This pattern was especially evident in Baltimore's public library system. The Enoch Pratt Library adopted changes in institutional mission and form, such as building station libraries and supplying a book wagon, to better integrate itself within its community and meet its self-imposed mission of supplying war information. Its success in navigating this transition forces a reconsideration of the library's impact as a war information center, indicating that it wielded a greater influence than previously recognized.

The Enoch Pratt Library's position as a significant informational source within its community forces a more critical evaluation of its social impact. Baltimore libraries made the most of the opportunity to exercise new models of outreach and demonstrate their public utility. However, the war exposed their limitations as agents of social change, initiating a doubling-down on the profession's traditional views on femininity while revealing libraries' hesitancy to enact any meaningful change in their service to minority communities. Reinserting this view into public libraries' development challenges a linear narrative of progressivism and forces a reckoning with libraries' institutional complacency in upholding social inequalities.[7]

[7] Public libraries' link to social progressivism is a product of two fields of thought. The first is the democratic tradition theory in library history. Because they nominally provided free access to information, many early library scholars linked the growth of the electorate with the spread of public libraries. It's an easy intellectual leap to see libraries' support of democracy as an indication of their own democratic nature, particularly when they do claim to be free and equally accessible. In addition, stylistically, many library histories do tend to be written as celebratory, institutional narratives, absent critical analysis of their social contexts. Over the past twenty-five years, an increasing number of library historians have pushed back against this tradition and called for an embrace of inter-disciplinary research in the field and the adoption of critical theory. Robert V. Williams, "The Public Library as the Dependent Variable: Historically Oriented Theories and Hypothesis of Public Library Development,"

By closely examining Baltimore and Maryland public libraries during World War II, this thesis fills a gap in the historiography that deemphasizes libraries' singularity as social and intellectual influencers within their communities while simultaneously thoroughly grounding libraries in their social contexts. Overall, historians have produced relatively little on the role of books and libraries during World War II. Existing literature can be categorized into three basic lenses. The first, represented by recent publications, such as Kathy Peiss' 2007 article, "Cultural Policy in a Time of War: The American Response to Endangered Books in World War II," and John B. Hench's 2010 book, *Books as Weapons: Propaganda, Publishing, and the Battle for Global Markets in the Era of World War II*, situate book distribution and preservation as an extension of American foreign policy. Both works consider domestic operations, such as American publishing firms, policy decisions, and attitudes towards cultural guardians (librarians among them) but focus more on how those components functioned in theaters of combat, particularly through America's relationship with Europe pre and post-World War II, and less on how they manifested in American communities.[8]

The Journal of Library History vol. 16, no. 2 (1981): 329-341 https://www.jstor.org/stable/25541199 (accessed August 30, 2018); Anne L. Buchanan and Jean-Pierre V.M. Herubel, "Subject and Historiographical Characteristics of Library History: Disciplinary Considerations and Scholarship," *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* vol. 42, no. 4 (2011): 514-533 https://muse.jhu.edu/article/443930/pdf (accessed August 31, 2018); Wayne A. Wiegand, "American Library History Literature, 1947-1997: Theoretical Perspectives?," *Libraries & Culture* vol. 35, no. 1 (2000): 4-34 https://www.jstor.org/stable/25548795 (accessed August 31, 2018).

[8] Kathy Peiss, "Cultural Policy in a Time of War: The American Response to Endangered Books in World War II," *Library Trends* vol. 55, no. 3 (2007): 370-386 https://muse.jhu.edu/ (accessed June 22, 2018); John B. Hench, *Books as Weapons: Propaganda, Publishing, and the Battle for Global Markets in the Era of World War II* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2010).

The second focus in World War II-era public library literature adopts a national perspective, concentrating on professional organizations like the American Library Association (ALA), surveys of major libraries' activities, and interactions between state officials and public library representatives. Richard W. Grefrath's 1974 article on public libraries as war information centers and Patti Clayton Becker's 2005 book on public libraries' institutional response to World War II represent this field.[9] Becker's work is the most thorough treatment of American public libraries' status during the war. Using government and ALA records, Becker's book takes a top-down approach in narrating public libraries' response to World War II as a social and informational turning point. Her focus on library leadership allows her to cover a lot of territory and capture a broad outline of public libraries' linear development from the early stages of defense preparation to post-war outcomes. However, her focus on official policy and action curtails a nuanced analysis of how changes in library systems impacted communities at the grassroots level. This lack of individual contextualization leads Becker to emphasize public libraries' failure to gain more recognition as public educational institutions in the postwar period rather than appreciate the significant role libraries played, and continue to play, in their respective communities.

The final historiographic lens compensates for this top-down approach by tracking changes in public library activities at the regional or institutional level. Tamara Shaw's 2007 article on the San Diego Public Library and Walter F. Bell and

[9] Richard W. Grefrath, "War Information Centres In the United States During World War II," *Library History Review* vol. 1, no. 3 (1974): 1-21; Becker.

Maurice G. Fortin's 1991 article on Texas libraries exemplify this approach. Both articles follow similar themes, emphasizing public libraries' focus on serving military personnel, their position as war information centers, and the challenges they faced from resource limitations. In doing so, Shaw and Bell and Fortin demonstrate that the war had visceral impacts on both public libraries and their communities that significantly changed how each related to the other, a perspective somewhat muted in national narratives. Yet, both pieces tend to chronicle these transformations rather than analyze their impact or contextualize their historical significance. Shaw's article, for example, concludes by noting San Diego librarians' continuing relationships with Japanese-American patrons in internment camps. She frames the episode as a warm demonstration of libraries' value but misses the opportunity to parse the library's role in the event and how it was perceived in both the Japanese-American community and the city at-large.[10] What might have been a compelling analysis of how Japanese-American internment was discussed in public institutions, especially one so rooted in community identity, instead feeds into a one-dimensional narrative of libraries' "progressive" history.

This thesis pulls elements from all three historiographical lenses. As mentioned earlier, concentrating on public libraries in Baltimore and Maryland grounds analysis in the relationship between libraries and their communities. This allows for a deeper exploration of what libraries' shifting services during World War II meant for their user groups and how it was reflected in the institutions themselves.

[10] Tamara Shaw, "Doing Their Part: The Services of the San Diego Public Library during World War II," *Library Trends* vol. 55, no. 3 (2007): 570-582 https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/ (accessed June 22, 2018); Walter F. Bell and Maurice G. Fortin, "Texas Libraries in World War II," *Texas Library Journal* vol. 67 (1991): 116-120.

However, public libraries cannot be disengaged from the war's national significance and the state's calculated effort to engage every aspect of American culture in defense production. These aims and ideals naturally trickled into Maryland libraries' stated mission and activities and are therefore included as a framework to gauge institutional changes and effects. Finally, American books travelled abroad during World War II and everyday librarians played a role in facilitating the global distribution of information. While not a focus for this thesis, these transnational networks are included to emphasize the scale and scope of Baltimore libraries' services.

Chapter one explores the Enoch Pratt Free Library's institutional transformation in the face of social and intellectual changes sparked by the uptick in defense production and the country's entrance into World War II. Facing new informational demands from community members and eager to support the war effort in any way possible, Baltimore's public library system responded by reorganizing their services around the dispersal of war information. Yet, the Enoch Pratt Library did more than just supply defense materials for the city; it shaped how people interacted with and understood the conflict and their part in it. Leveraging all their resources, Pratt librarians pushed a tailored system of propaganda that targeted library users and non-users alike while expanding their institutional reach to serve Americans fighting abroad. In doing so, the library positioned itself as an information mediator between the war front and the home front while further cementing their value to their communities as war information centers.

Chapter two examines the Enoch Pratt Library's efforts to sustain a productive and united home front by stabilizing the American family through increased access to

library materials in the form of station libraries in housing projects and the book wagon program. While Baltimore's public libraries fed the information current between the two fronts, domestic pressures in the form of resource shortages and a growing concern over the American home front's instability forced them to reinvent their institutional space to better connect with users in their own homes. Concerns over the growth of juvenile delinquency, the perceived breakdown of the nuclear family, and defense workers lack of commitment to their jobs, pushed the library to adopt new institutional forms to overcome access limitations and better integrate itself within specific communities the institution viewed as at risk in the war effort. Pratt librarians believed that bringing materials to the patrons, rather than the other way around, encouraged greater use and further spread books' uplifting powers to users they thought needed it most. While the programs reinforce the scope of the library's influence during the war, they also reveal its biases. The book wagon project targeted poor minority communities which librarians believed were at greater risk for delinquency despite evidence to the contrary. This demonstrates that even as the war opened opportunities for the Enoch Pratt Library to prove its value and further its reach, it simultaneously displayed the library's limitations as an agent of social change, undercutting an institutional narrative of progressivism.

The Enoch Pratt Library's social conservatism shapes the final two chapters. Chapter three analyzes the Pratt Library's retrenchment on traditional gender dynamics in librarianship during the World War II era. Prior to the war, the Enoch Pratt, like many public libraries, emphasized traditional femininity as the pillar of professional identity for women in librarianship. Like nursing or social work,

librarianship bore a striking resemblance to Victorian notions of "true womanhood," which enabled women's dominance in the profession but limited their career development and expressions of femininity. Though World War II marked a watershed in women's entrance into the professional sphere, little changed for female librarians in Baltimore. In fact, the war period produced a doubling-down on the figure of the "librarian-ess" as a cultural representation of the home front in the face of a growing masculine military presence. More importantly, World War II further revealed the lines of exclusion that had developed along class and race in librarianship, signaling some women as fit for the profession and others as not.

Chapter four extends the theme of institutional limitations by examining the Enoch Pratt and Maryland libraries' service to African American patrons. It argues that binary readings on integrated and segregated institutions mask a more complicated legacy on library accessibility that highlights the tension between libraries' democratic ideals and their sociocultural realities. Despite being nominally integrated, Baltimore's Jim Crow culture created a legacy of tacit segregation for minority library users. This reality persisted throughout World War II even as the war's advent shifted the tone on racial discussions within the city and witnessed the dismantling of the library's discriminatory hiring practices. A similar pattern echoed in library institutions throughout Maryland while professional leadership aimed to overhaul state legislation to increase funding for public libraries. Though they highlighted the need for better library service for African Americans, the adopted library bill contained no actionable steps for integrating libraries or even maintaining

segregated branches, reinforcing the gap between institutional ideology and everyday function.

World War II remains an important yet understudied area for American public library scholarship. The start of the war and America's participation in it initiated a visceral shift in public libraries' services and activities that laid bare the ideological framework driving the institution. Exploring this moment in library development not only deepens our understanding of institutional history, it reinforces public libraries' value as an area for historical study. Amidst the turmoil of war, communities in Baltimore and Maryland turned to their local libraries for sources of information and entertainment, leaving their own impressions on the institution and marking them as barometers for social and cultural change. Examining public libraries as part of the social life of their communities opens a new window to view how World War II shifted the sociocultural texture of American life through reading, education, and the exchange of information. Libraries were, and are, important in the life of many ordinary Americans, making their history, American history. Including their narratives enriches studies of the past and promises new insight into familiar topics.

Chapter 1: At the Crossroads Between Two Fronts: Public Libraries and Propaganda in World War II-Era Baltimore

Introduction

Imprints of World War II are not difficult to find in the annals of the Enoch Pratt Free Public Library. Recapitulating their activities from the better part of the war years, librarians in the Business and Economics Department recounted their most significant contributions in the 1945 Annual Report, listing, "…new tasks in the direction of aid of various "fronts," such as the "I Am an American" lists, the War Information Table, and more specialized aids in the field of management and industrial training..."[1] What is most notable about this program of activities isn't the projects themselves but rather the language the librarians used to describe them. Reflecting America's growing preoccupation with militarization, the Enoch Pratt justified its defense activities as interlocking actions meant to sustain and forward a front. In the military lexicon, the idea of the front represents a theater of operation, a place where opposing forces meet in a line of battle. During World War II, the notion took on additional layers, both as a designator for centers of military activity and as a shorthand for the defense efforts happening domestically. Together, the "war front" and the "home front" represented the twin pillars of American efforts to mobilize for victory against fascist forces in Europe and Asia.[2]

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[1] Maria C. Brace, "Business and Economics Department," *Four Year Report of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore's Public Library 1942-1945*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

[2] For a brief description of the deployment of the home front analogy, see James T. Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 72.

The use and spread of information, whether through books, films, pamphlets, or radio, linked these two fronts, shaping attitudes and opinions about the war and its meaning for civilians at home and servicemen abroad. With tension over World War I lingering in the national psyche, many Americans resisted entanglement in another international conflict and expressed uncertainty about what America's participation in the war meant for their own future and the nation's.[3] Bureaucrats and other government officials feared that a lack of proper education about the war, its causes, and why Americans should be invested in the conflict would undermine defense efforts on the home front and abroad. Agencies like the Office of Facts and Figures and later the Office of War Information (OWI) sought to clarify wartime objectives and keep the conflict front and center in the American imagination.[4] For example, the OWI openly collaborated with Hollywood producers to create movies which reinforced patriotism and upheld morale. By and large, film studios willingly followed government prescriptions, driven by personal commitment to the war effort and the promise of significant financial returns on their films. The resulting movies, oftentimes ludicrously overwrought, nevertheless promoted messages of security in American unity, championing commitment to the war effort and pride in the American way of life.[5] While American propaganda littered the home front, its reach

[3] Kenneth D. Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation: A Social History of Americans in World War II* (New York: Routledge, 2008): 61-63.
[4] Allan M. Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information 1942-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 8; 22-23; John Morton Blum, *V was for Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: New York, 1976); 14-15.
[5] Clayton R. Koppes, "Hollywood and the Politics of Representation: Women, Workers, and African Americans in World War II Movies," in *The Home-Front War: World War II and American Society*, ed. Kenneth Paul O'Brien and Lynn Hudson Parsons (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1995): 25-26; Lary May, "Making the American Consensus: The Narrative of Conversion and Subversion in World War II Films," in *The War in American Culture: Society and Consciousness*

soaked into the popular wartime culture for servicemen abroad. Reading entered new prominence as a pastime for American G.I.s. and a grateful nation supported this hobby by collecting and dispersing books meant to foster the intellectual growth and healthy recreation needed to keep fighting forces mentally fit for combat and morally committed to the war.[6] Whether home or abroad, the careful control of information created the imaginative space necessary for reinforcing a positive view of America's participation in the war and the net benefits the nation's certain victory would yield.

Information's centrality in shaping the interpretative contours of World War II enabled public libraries to link their services with a key facet of the war. Since the advent of the modern public library form in the mid-nineteenth century, libraries have exercised a certain amount of authority over the production and dispersal of knowledge. Libraries and librarians traditionally functioned as cultural gatekeepers by virtue of the access they provided through resources and specialized training. Unlike schools, public libraries are not tied to certain age demographics, enabling the institution to mediate a wider swath of the public's interactions with codified knowledge. Critically, the American public itself solidified the public library's authority over knowledge by recognizing and utilizing its services. As library historian, Wayne Wiegand, argued, part of the reason Americans have always been enamored with the idea of the "free library" is because of its ability to supply useful

During World War II, ed. Lewis A. Erenberg and Susan E. Hirsch (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996): 71-102; Rose, 163.

[6] Rose, 163; Patti Clayton Becker, *Books and Libraries in American Society During World War II: Weapons in the War of Ideas* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 104.

information to meet individual needs.[7] In other words, users themselves granted the public library legitimacy over knowledge by continuing to turn to them to meet informational needs. As World War II reshaped the informational landscape, American public libraries exercised their authority over information by situating themselves as a key center in war information management and dispersal.

Public libraries' participation in spreading war information was not a new phenomenon. During World War I, libraries actively engaged in propaganda campaigns, going so far as to censor German works or anything that smacked of disloyalty, such as pacifistic treatises or works that could be couched as "anti-American."[8] World War II-era librarians resisted the heavy-handedness of their predecessors but nonetheless committed themselves to promoting the war effort. The growth of fascist governments abroad that restricted public information pushed many librarians to take a harder stance on issues of censorship and neutrality, culminating in the American Library Association's passage of the Library Bill of Rights in 1939.[9] However, as the war reached American shores, library leaders, such as Librarian of Congress, Archibald MacLeish, urged public libraries to turn away from pure neutrality and take a stronger stance on combatting fascist propaganda on their shelves. Many librarians responded, advocating for their pro-democratic values as

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[7] Wayne A. Wiegand, *Part of Our Lives: A People's History of the American Public Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 3, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/umdcp/detail.action?docID=2146966.
[8] Wayne A. Wiegand, *"An Active Instrument for Propaganda": The American Public Library During World War I* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1989): 6.
[9] Paul T. Jaeger, Ursula Gorham, Lindsay C. Sarin, and John Carlo Bertot, "Libraries, Policy, and Politics in Democracy: Four Historical Epochs," *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* vol. 83, no. 2 (2013): 170, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/669559 (accessed March 18, 2019).

critical for the country to preserve against the threat of fascism.[10] Now largely aligned behind a pro-American stance, many library institutions across the country began crafting defense programs and activities with little prompting from outside sources.[11]

Despite the war's institutional significance, historians have often marginalized libraries' impact as information centers during World War II. Pointing to a lack of official legitimization from state authorities' as educational institutions and minimal change in libraries' status within the network of information exchange in the postwar era, library historians have concluded that public libraries' efforts during World War II wielded little impact in terms of meaningful transformation.[12] Though these historians couched this perspective in terms of a long-view, it is paradoxically short-sided. Their conclusions are largely constructed from high-level administrative resources, such as American Library Association records, which tend to privilege institutional perspective and goals over user experiences, isolating libraries from the soul of their identity: their context within a community. To truly gauge libraries' impact and meaning as war information centers, they must be analyzed relationally as social institutions in communication with their neighborhoods' unique circumstances and needs. Applying this view allows for a deeper examination of institutional activities that yields a more complex definition of usership and identification of libraries' support of the war effort, ultimately expanding the outlook of libraries' impact.

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[10] Becker, 8-12; David A. Lincove, "Propaganda and the American Public Library from the 1930s to the Eve of World War II," *RQ* vol. 33, no. 4 (1994): 510-523, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20862530 (accessed April 17, 2018).
[11] Richard W. Grefrath, "War Information Centres In the United States During World War II," *Library History Review* vol. 1, no. 3 (1974): 1-21.
[12] Becker, 203-204.

Surrounded by a vibrant and diversifying community in the heart of a major industrial production site, the Enoch Pratt Free Library provides an exemplary case study for understanding how the terms and conditions of World War II reshaped public libraries. Pursuing a war-time agenda profoundly reoriented the library's mission, programs, and activities. The Pratt Library evolved from the socioeconomic constraints of the Depression to servicing local defense production needs and fostering a commitment to national defense and victory in Europe and the Pacific. This shift was echoed in the demands community members placed on the library and the way institutional leaders described their activities. The new emphasis on war services indicated a profound reorganization of institutional priorities and the intellectual space in which the library operated.

The Enoch Pratt Library's adoption of a war-time agenda pushed the institution to undertake a key role in constructing the meaning of World War II for Maryland patrons both locally and abroad. Removed from the visceral devastation of combat, American civilians lacked a tangible connection to the front in their day-to-day lives. Using resources beyond books, the Pratt Library constructed a dense information network, targeting library users and non-users alike, that sought to mediate the war and its meaning for multiple audiences. The Enoch Pratt Library promoted pro-American propaganda within this network, but it shaped these messages in subtle and innovative ways, complicating a static view on propaganda production and dispersal during the war. While the library pushed a positive message of patriotism, commitment to defense, and the inevitability of American victory, its contact moved outside the boundaries of Baltimore to encapsulate a global network of

exchange with Americans serving abroad. The Pratt Library's interactions with servicemen through independent contacts and their relatives back home injects a new dimension into the institution's war-time agenda that complicates its unilateral messaging. These moments highlight that the library constructed its war information relationally, responding to individual needs in a manner that facilitated users to subvert their circumstances and enhance their control over their individual futures. From group messaging to individual interactions, the Enoch Pratt Library supported a broad war information campaign which shaped a legacy of meaningful use for the library, situating it as an important contributing member to the information industry in wartime Baltimore.

Entering the War: WWII's Effect on Public Library Services

World War II sparked a significant realignment in public libraries' services and activities across the nation. During the Depression, socioeconomic conditions set the tone for public libraries' services. Resource limitations challenged libraries' sustainability while increased circulation rates attested to the institution's growing relevancy as more and more unemployed people turned to their public library as a source of information, leisure, and even a place to escape the hardships of homelessness. Many libraries responded to these needs by pursuing an agenda of self-improvement and opportunity that aided the individual as well as the institution. Part of this came through the application of federal funds to library projects through the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and similar agencies. These programs not only offered employment to individuals but provided libraries with tools and resources to continue their work. Libraries also targeted individual needs by

emphasizing books' ability to ameliorate economic hardships. Librarians promoted stories of individual success, library users escaping poverty through the information they gained from the library, to represent their institutional mission to facilitate individual uplift against the backdrop of economic decline.[13]

The defense boom reshaped libraries' agenda of individual self-help by introducing a new rallying point for public libraries: supporting the defense industry and the war effort. While public libraries maintained their commitment to individual improvement, a growing emphasis on how the library could increase industrial production, support the armed forces, and invigorate commitment to the war on the home front overlaid that purpose. Like public libraries' actions during the previous decade, this institutional swing represented more than just an ideological realignment: it manifested in the tangible services, activities, and interactions offered by libraries throughout the country. War services similarly penetrated every aspect of the Enoch Pratt Library. Examining their influence on the library's departmental functions and cataloging services illustrates how the war reshaped the intellectual space in which the institution operated. Recognizing the boundaries of this shift demonstrates the

[13] For more on public libraries during the Great Depression, see Michael S. Blayney, "'Libraries for the Millions': Adult Public Library Services and the New Deal," *The Journal of Library History* vol. 12, no. 3 (1977): 235-249, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25540752 (accessed March 30, 2018); Robert M. Gorman, "Blazing the Way: The WPA Library Service Demonstration Project in South Carolina," *Libraries & Culture* vol. 32, no. 4 (1997): 427-455, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25548569 (accessed May 5, 2018); Eric Novotny, "'Bricks without Straw' Economic Hardship and Innovation in the Chicago Public Library during the Great Depression," *Libraries & the Cultural* Record vol. 46, no. 3 (2011): 258-275, http://muse.jhu.edu/article/448579 (accessed April 17, 2018); Martha Swain, "A New Deal in Libraries: Federal Relief Work and Library Services, 1933-43," *Libraries & Culture* vol. 30, no. 3 (1995): 265-283, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25542771 (accessed April 13, 2018); Wayne A. Wiegand, *Part of Our Lives: A People's History of the American Public Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 136-164, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/umdcp/detail.action?docID=2146966.

scope of the impact World War II had on the library and further contextualizes the degree of change the Enoch Pratt Library underwent as it evolved during the war years.

Mentions of war activities litter the Pratt Library's Annual Reports from 1942-1945.[14] For many departments in the library, extending defense-related services functioned as a natural supplement to their existing purpose. The Industry and Science Department, for example, was regularly called upon to supply technical materials for the growing defense business in Baltimore. Individual patrons, such as women entering production jobs for the first time, used the department to ascertain specialized information that would aid their job performance. The department also played a role in supplying books for company libraries for workers at the Bendix Corporation and Friez Company.[15]

Even those departments whose functions existed outside what one might consider an organic relationship with martial concerns experienced a significant realignment in their reference services and clientele. The Fine Arts Department's reports from the war years detail a shift in services that both reflect the department's changing nature and imply the library's intent to keep war services at the forefront of their activities. In their records from the Annual Report for 1944, fine arts librarians categorized their reference services in terms of war services and impacts. They recounted an anecdote in which a coast guard station reached out to them for help

[14] The library did not produce an annual report for 1941.
[15] See for example "Annual Report Industry and Science Department," *Annual Report, 1942*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives; "Industry and Science Department," *Four Year Report of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore's Public Library 1942-1945*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

restoring a ship's bells (recasting them, the librarians noted, would have been impossible given the scarcity of metal). The same passage also stated that, "Wartime shortages were reflected in inquiries about repairing musical instruments, the use of substitute materials in home decoration, the gilding and refinishing of picture frames, and the painting and restyling of old and worn furniture."[16] Even in a department as seemingly unrelated to wartime concerns as the fine arts, the surrounding climate reshaped how library patrons interacted with its services through the types of information for which they asked. The department's decision to highlight these moments in their Annual Report also indicates that the librarians considered them important reflections of their services. In doing so, they purposefully connected their work to support for the defense effort, further cementing wartime services as the contributing element in structuring their day-to-day work.

The Fine Arts Department also exhibited its wartime sensibilities through its support of military personnel. As the 1944 Annual Report again described, "A wide variety of requests come from servicemen on leave or stationed in or near Baltimore, and there is a perceptible demand from recently-discharged veterans for instruction books in arts and crafts. The therapeutic value of art and music is receiving widespread attention in print, and a number of these men have been sent in by physicians. The department has also furnished books on the crafts for a group working with hospitalized servicemen."[17] Military personnel represented a visible manifestation of the war on the home front and acted as figures for rallying support

[16] "Fine Arts Department, Report for the year 1944," *Annual Report, 1944*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.
[17] Ibid.

for the war effort. Linking the department's activities to support for servicemen, particularly those wounded in battle, cast the library as champions of the war effort and gave significant credence to the value of their services.

Changes in the Enoch Pratt Library's departmental services represented a melding of institutional drive and public interest sparked by a commitment to upholding the war effort and meeting specific users' needs. Yet, the war's impact on the library can also be measured by a more concrete indicator: the types of books added to its collections. Before the blessing of digital databases, the Pratt Library announced its newest acquisitions through yearly publications listing the books added to the institution by department. The publications from World War II are revealing of the library's allegiance to the defense effort and the ways the war reshaped the epistemological frameworks surrounding information classification. During the war years, the Pratt Library prefaced catalogs of their new books with a statement describing what types of volumes were added to the collection and how they related to community needs. A list of technical books added in 1942 contained a statement justifying their contribution to war production: "Many technical books indispensable to the war industries as well as to the general industrial development of Baltimore have been added in 1942. Because of the training program for national defense and the greatly increased demands of men engaged in trades, industry, building, applied chemistry, aviation and the various engineering fields, the need for these books greatly exceeds the supply."[18] Likewise, the catalog of *Books on Political Science and*

[18] Enoch Pratt Free Library, *Technical Books Added in 1942*, Folder 3, Box 69, Maryland World War II Records, Maryland Historical Society.

Law Added in 1943, similarly characterized its additions in terms of the war, stating, "During this second year of American participation, books relating to the war accounted for nearly half of the titles bought for the Department. Of primary interest were books on post-war planning with titles of financing the war next in demand. Public personnel problems and the relationship between planes of government were also prominent."[19] Both examples positioned books as a tangible measurement of commitment to the war effort by demonstrating purpose through institutional choice. War books, and those meant to illuminate defense-related issues, merited extra emphasis because of their significance to the current social climate. By following this line of argument, librarians at the Enoch Pratt revealed their institutional priorities, placing support for the war as the library's primary function.

The war's arrival also introduced new systems of classification into the library's cataloging system. A list of fiction books added in 1943 included World War II as a subheading, with sub-lists, "The Fighting Front," "Espionage," "Civilians Under Fire," and "U.S. Home Front," further delineating their topical scope.[20] Similarly, a catalog entitled, *Books on Religion Added in 1942*, contained the subheading, "Religious Aspects of War."[21] These taxonomic markers indicated the war's influence on popular reading. As inventories, library catalogs enabled individuals to identify potential sources of information or interest. Classifying items by their relevance to war-related subjects implies that library users were actively

[19] Enoch Pratt Free Library, *Books on Political Science and Law Added in 1943*, Folder 3, Box 69, Maryland World War II Records, Maryland Historical Society.
[20] Enoch Pratt Free Library, *New Fiction Added in 1943*, 11-13, Folder 3, Box 69, Maryland World War II Records, Maryland Historical Society.
[21] Enoch Pratt Free Library, *Books on Religion Added in 1942*, 1-2, Folder 3, Box 69, Maryland World War II Records, Maryland Historical Society.

seeking these types of books, thereby inducing catalogers to change their system to promote their findability. On a macro-level, this illustrate the war's effect on the reconceptualization of knowledge. Subjects related to the war merited new methods of classifying their topical relevance, indicating a shift in the ways these texts related to each other and to potential readers.

Mediating the War: A Visual Appeal

World War II undoubtedly shifted the dynamics within the Enoch Pratt Library by reprioritizing its activities and even its material organization to better align with war services. This internal shift created more than a change in institutional mission; it also transformed the library's relationship with the public by positioning the Enoch Pratt as a mediator between the war front and the home front. Conceptually, World War II was an intangible event for most Americans who only witnessed its effects through secondhand waves, the deprivation of luxuries, the brutal images of fighting abroad, the loss of a loved one. Keeping Americans invested in the war effort meant government leaders had to position the war in the forefront of citizens' minds through constant engagement.[22] Public libraries across the nation pursued this end by acting as information repositories for war-related materials, fulfilling an information loop of dispersal and consumption for those on the home front. Yet, it would be a mistake to characterize this dynamic as a tidy circle of books checked-out and returned; books were oftentimes only peripheral tools enabling the library's engagement with the community. Rather, the library operated across a spectrum of war-related activities that spoke to multiple groups with specific needs.

[22] Blum, 15-16.

This relational view, evident in the Enoch Pratt's window exhibits, children's programs, and reference services for Americans abroad, complicates its position in the flow of war information by deepening the library's purview of service, highlighting an institutional reach greater than previously imagined.

The Enoch Pratt Free Library's window exhibits represented a dispersed effort at community engagement that actively expanded the library's definition of "user." Unlike reference services or book borrowing, the Pratt Library's window exhibits could reach library users and non-users alike. Fixed in the library's windows on Cathedral Street and in other open spots throughout the city, the exhibits bridged the transition between the library's interior and exterior, both literally and metaphorically.[23] The windows allowed passersby glimpses into the library's physical space and teased its intellectual wares, advertising what the institution could offer to onlookers and enticing them to explore the library further. Even without further action from those admiring the exhibits, the displays' careful designs communicated specific messages to the people wandering by. The exhibits' ability to reach an audience outside of those who actively sought the institution forces a reconsideration of the breadth of the library's impact within the community. By aligning their exhibits with pro-war and defense information, the Enoch Pratt librarians distributed their resources, and perspectives, to onlookers throughout the city, creating an influence that did not rely upon active participation in the institution for it to be potentially effective.

[23] Katherine Scarborough, "Woman of the Library Windows," *The Baltimore Sun*, May 5, 1946, https://search.proquest.com/docview/542870483?accountid=14696 (accessed August 30, 2018).

During the war years, Pratt librarians used window exhibits to engage the home front with the war effort through promoting civilian war contributions, distributing war information, and building faith in the nation's ultimate victory. World War II strained the country's domestic output in a myriad of ways that necessitated civilian response to maintain industrial production. Scrap metal drives, rubber drives, Victory Gardens, and even blood donations campaigned on civic sacrifice and resourcefulness as crucial to the fulfillment of victory. The Enoch Pratt regularly promoted these efforts and facilitated community participation by supplying the necessary information for successful completion. During the spring of 1944, the library ran an exhibit entitled, "Gardens for Victory." The display featured informational pamphlets on gardening and a chart on pest control as well as pictures from local Victory Gardens and information about the Women's Civic League Annual Garden Contest.[24] These materials acted as information sources across multiple levels and towards multiple ends. On one level, the exhibit was meant to supply information about gardening. Within this purpose, it gratified immediate demands by displaying a chart with pest control information that, like a museum exhibit, could be perused by many people at once. Yet, the display also promoted information-seeking tools; its use of gardening pamphlets demonstrated to onlookers what the library could potentially supply to them.

On another level, the gardening display operated as an informational source for its temporal community. The exhibit offered news about a local club's contest

[24] "Gardens for Victory," Window 6 (Schaefer #61), April 17-May 7, 1944, *Photographs of Window Displays, Enoch Pratt Free Library*, Maryland Room, Enoch Pratt Free Library.

while highlighting pictures from community Victory Gardens. These images, combined with the textual information, were meant to elicit a specific reaction from the viewer, in this case, to entice them into participating in a Victory Garden themselves by removing knowledge barriers and demonstrating potential rewards. In this case, the exhibit not only provided information about how to complete an action, it helped the viewer navigate how that action would fit into the community. Aimed at women on the home front, the exhibit linked traditional gender roles (attention to the home and family) with actions that would supplement the war effort. With the war demanding full participation from every civilian, this formula worked to connect the success of the defense campaign to actions that would speak to specific groups of people.

The Enoch Pratt's window exhibits also worked to distribute technical information related to the war. In the early months of 1944, the library ran a display on fiberglass. More text-dense than other features the library promoted, the new exhibit contained several articles highlighting the development of fiberglass, its basic components and uses, along with several pictures from the manufacturing process and a small display of samples.[25] Similar to the Victory Gardens display, this exhibit positioned the Enoch Pratt Library as more than a static distributor of information but an active participant in shaping the contours of information dispersal and meaning. The carefully curated collection of articles and images produced immediate access to information that also functioned as an extension of the library's point-of-view. In the

[25] The title of the exhibit was "Fiberglas." I am unsure if this was an early spelling of the material or if the library made an error. "Fiberglas," Window 4 (Schaefer #30), Feb. 14-March 5, 1944, *Photographs of Window Displays, Enoch Pratt Free Library*, Maryland Room, Enoch Pratt Free Library.

Victory Gardens exhibit, this perspective was transparent yet here it moved more subtly. The display's subtitle, "This new basic material is making important contributions to the war," left no doubt that fiberglass was promoted in connection to the war effort. But its potential resonance with the community was less defined. There was no clear call to action (buy fiberglass, support the troops!); in fact, the exhibit feels almost passive in comparison to some of the more bombastic displays the library produced. However, by linking the war with scientific developments, the fiberglass exhibit implied that continued engagement with the war would lead to technical progress and, potentially, the betterment of humankind. This emphasis on technical developments subtly shifted the war's narrative by drawing out its productive contributions, marrying America's participation in it not only with victory, but advancements for the postwar order. Furthermore, the topic had special significance for Baltimore as an important industrial city. With large portions of its population engaged in the defense industry, this exhibit helped give context to why defense workers' labor mattered to the war effort and what their continued dedication to their work would spell for the future of the war and the country.

Morale-building campaigns constituted a third significant objective of the Pratt Library's window exhibits. Like other types of propaganda, these exhibits worked to create emotional investment in the war effort. For example, a display that ran from February to March 1944 emphasized continued dedication to the fight as a legacy of America's commitment to freedom. Centered on two posters, one showing American soldiers from 1778 and 1943 and another a defiant soldier aiding his comrade, and ringed with several books on American democracy and brotherhood,

this exhibit sought to manufacture unity by appealing to mythos of American liberty.[26] Similar to the display on fiberglass, there was no clear call to action apparent in this exhibit. Rather, the images work to create a groundswell of patriotic feeling, pride in national identity, and commitment to further sacrifice that combined to form the emotional investment necessary to sustain the war effort.

All three types of war-related window exhibits mediated those messages at a group level. Though some displays may have carried more weight to certain groups than others, they operated indiscriminately, allowing individuals to make what they would out of a broad message conceived by the library's staff. These examples help illustrate the net effect the Enoch Pratt's commitment to war services had on the community and provide compelling evidence that the library was perhaps catching more fish with its activities than it realized. Examining specific groups the library targeted as part of the war effort takes this one-dimensional relationship and complicates it, drawing out the subtleties involved in how the Enoch Pratt approached interpreting the war, and its meaning, for different community members.

Playing at War: Mediating WWII for Child Patrons

No demographic group better represents the Enoch Pratt Library's determination to position itself as source and interpreter for information related to the war than its relationship with children. As patrons and war spectators, children elicited unique cultural responses from librarians. Though once overlooked as a user-group, by the early twentieth century more and more librarians recognized the

[26] "We've Done It Before…We'll Do It Again!," Window 12 (Schaefer #35), Feb. 14-March 5, 1944, *Photographs of Window Displays, Enoch Pratt Free Library*, Maryland Room, Enoch Pratt Free Library.

importance of extending specialized services to children. By the mid-twentieth century, children's librarianship had largely merged with mainstream professional ideals, fully encapsulating youths as valued library patrons.[27] The Pratt Library followed suit, supplying a separate Children's Department and offering numerous programs for their youngest patrons.[28]

Children's participation in the war effort inspired admiration, encouragement, and fear from contemporary observers. Like all good American citizens, youths were primed to contribute to the defense effort through educational efforts that emphasized the need for total commitment to defense as an expression of patriotic loyalty. Many American children responded enthusiastically to this charge, leading scrap drives, planting Victory Gardens, and spearheading paper salvages.[29] At the same time, adults worried about the impact the war was having on children, particularly in the popularity of war games that mimicked military life and battles. Experts consoled concerned parents, explaining that children's "playing at war" helped them process their emotions over the crisis. Adults, they advised, should encourage and guide youths to explore these feelings in proper and healthy ways.[30]

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[27] Melanie A. Kimball, "'A Home-like Atmosphere': The Advent of Children's Rooms at St. Louis Public Library, 1906-1912," *Library Trends* vol. 62, no. 3 (2014): 489-503, https://muse.jhu.edu/ (accessed January 29, 2019); Jennifer Burek Pierce, "The Reign of Children: The Role of Games and Toys in American Public Libraries, 1876-1925," *Information & Culture: A Journal of History* vol. 51, no. 3 (2016): 373-398, https://muse.jhu.edu/ (accessed September 22, 2018).

[28] Children's programs seem to have been a key component of the Pratt Library from its founding. Statistics from the late 1890s highlight juvenile fiction as one of the most frequently circulated genres in the library. Philip Arthur Kalisch, *The Enoch Pratt Free Library: A Social History* (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1969), 54. Similarly, the library began offering teen services as a separate division in 1932, indicating that children's services were likely already a primary function of the library. Deborah Taylor, "Teen Services at Baltimore's Pratt Library: A Long History and Sustained Emphasis," *Public Library Quarterly* vol. 28, no. 4 (2009): 326-335, https://doi.org/10.1080/01616840903343880 (accessed September 22, 2018).

[29] Lisa L. Ossian, *The Forgotten Generation: American Children and World War II* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2011), see chapters 3 and 4.

[30] Ibid., 59-61.

Like children's broader participation in the war effort, librarians approached mediating the war with equal parts enthusiasm and trepidation. The most visceral example of the war's impact on children's services was found in the theme of the summer reading programs. In 1943 and 1944, the Enoch Pratt sponsored library games that mimicked army and navy life. As part of the program, participating children read a certain number of books to gain promotion up the military ranks. In the navy game, for instance, all children started at the rank of apprentice seaman, reading one book progressed a candidate to the rank of Seaman 2nd Class, reading two, Seaman 1st Class, all the way up to the max amount, twenty-six, for a rank of Admiral.[31] Not only did this game foster competition, thereby encouraging reading, amongst the children themselves, it changed the way participants related to defense culture. One newspaper article described how the library's army summer reading program impacted a girl's relationship with her uncles, both of whom served in the military: "…she is a "major," while they are only corporals…she makes them salute her when they meet."[32] The reading games created a sense of common ground between servicemen and children, which manifested in a new-found intimacy in their interactions. However indulgent this girl's uncles were in honoring her request, the reading program nevertheless enabled her to feel a part of the broader military culture, deepening a sense of patriotism and community belonging.

[31] "Boys! Girls! Join the Pratt Library's Summer Reading Game," Window 5 (Schaefer #97), July 10-July 30, 1944, *Photographs of Window Displays, Enoch Pratt Free Library*, Maryland Room, Enoch Pratt Free Library.
[32] "Pratt Library's USR Club Members Advance In Rank," *Baltimore Sun*, July 26, 1943, Folder 3, Box 70, Maryland World War II Records, Maryland Historical Society.

The reading programs' structure also produced a romanticized image of military life that fed into a broader democratic vision of the war and its meaning. The mode of advancement in the game, completing a task corresponding with an equal reward, conveyed the idea that the military was a meritocracy. This view masked the deliberate inequalities bred in military life that served to deconstruct individuality to foster loyalty to comrades and unquestioning obedience to authority.[33] Similarly, the reading game version of military life treated each "soldier" as an equal member, with girls participating alongside boys and African American children reading with white children.[34] In reality, women volunteers were often met with suspicion and regularly stereotyped by the military and the public alike as sexually promiscuous and unnaturally masculine.[35] Meanwhile, the armed forces remained formally segregated until after World War II ended. Ignoring these real disparities helped the programs' developers present the war as a meritocratic action, one calling on all members of society to serve in with equal and respective rewards for all.

Martial-themed reading activities further helped the library to engage children with the war in a safe and controlled environment. Although the Enoch Pratt Library's reading programs were rather tame in their intent, other library games

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[33] John Bodnar, *The "Good War" in American Memory* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 27-29.

[34] Integration between black and white children in the reading program was not entirely straight-forward. The Enoch Pratt was an integrated institution from its founding so African American patrons had nominal access to every facility. However, library administration encouraged a de facto segregationist approach based on branch service, around which the summer reading program was also organized. Thus, how closely children from both races actually played together through the game is a subject for debate. The nominal status of integration, however, does lend credence to the idea of a democratic military service, which the library was attempting to portray. Issues of integration and segregation will be explored at length in chapter four.

[35] D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984), 36-37.

presented more explicit representations of war and violence. In 1943, the Bryant Public Library of Sauk Centre, Minnesota devised a summer reading program called "Bomb Tokyo." The game play tallied books completed by participants as proxies for military advancement against the Japanese. Like the Enoch Pratt games, children advanced in rank for books read, but the Bryant reading program also tied those advancements to military strikes. Older children "repeatedly bomb(ed)" Tokyo through their advancement while "…younger children back(ed) the attack by building battleships."[36] To the modern ear and eye, the thought of allowing children to participate in such violence, even through fantasy, feels justifiably grating. Yet, the example demonstrates the war's appeal as a template for imaginative play for children and libraries' determination to provide a structured and safe avenue for engaging children with its violence. With ample concern existing over the effect the war was having on children and their experiences of it, these reading games offered a stable avenue for indulging in military fantasy by maintaining adult supervision over the parameters of the "game" and combining it with a productive activity in reading.

While reading programs displayed a more playful engagement with military culture, the Enoch Pratt Library also sponsored studious war-related activities for children meant to foster collective interest in and commitment to the defense effort. In February of 1943, the *Baltimore Sun* ran a newspaper article describing a recent nation-wide writing competition for students meant to promote school engagement with the war effort. The Enoch Pratt Library proudly exhibited the winners from the

[36] Bryant Library Board Minutes, May 18, 1944, Bryant Library Archives, Sauk Centre, Minnesota, quoted in Wayne A. Wiegand, *Main Street Public Library: Community Places and Reading Spaces in the Rural Heartland, 1876-1956* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2011), 38.

Baltimore-area with the article reporting some of the more memorable contributions. One piece, submitted by a third-grader, parodied a counting rhyme to reflect the United States' war in the Pacific:

> Eeny, meeny, miney mo
> Catch a Jap by his toe
> If he hollers make him say,
> I surrender, U.S.A.[37]

Like the reading games, the writing competition represented the creation of a separate war culture for children that simultaneously provided for their participation in the broader defense culture while sterilizing it. Instead of playacting as soldiers, parody transformed the language of children into the language of war. The sample rhyme inverted a common childish game into something grizzly and martial (and more than a little racist), meant to invoke patriotic pride, military strength, and belief in the United States' ultimate victory. Though the Enoch Pratt Library did not oversee this competition, the library actively participated in the event process, providing space for the winners to be displayed in a community setting. In doing so, the library mediated children's expressions of war culture by earnestly supporting their participation in it and enabling their work to be communicated with a wider audience.

The Pratt Library used the apparatuses of the summer reading programs and writing competition to structure the war on safe, entertaining grounds that enabled children to explore the ramifications of military life and deepen a sense of patriotism and commitment to the war effort through imaginative play and creative writing. While Baltimore librarians delighted in providing these interpretive models to youths,

[37] "Mother Goose Made Martial," *Baltimore Sun*, February 23, 1943, Folder 2, Box 70, Maryland World War II Records, Maryland Historical Society.

many simultaneously expressed relief that the war had not significantly impacted children's interests. Writing in the Enoch Pratt's 1943 Annual Report for the Children's Room, librarian, Isabelle Jinnette, revealed that, "The most wholesome and gratifying effect is that the children of this war period want to read the same good books that children previously read. Requests for war books as such have been few. There has been great demand for books about ships and airplanes from the boys, but the interest is in the subject matter rather than the war."[38] Despite appealing to children's curiosity in war games and mock battles, despite encouraging youths to actively participate in the war culture, many librarians wanted children's lives to continue relatively uninterrupted by concerns over the war. Part of this can be attributed to the desperate hope that the conflict would have no lasting negative consequences for the American people. If children, the representational figures of the nation's future, could still be fully occupied by the innocent pursuits of the past, perhaps their future could remain similarly undisrupted.

Attempting to reconcile this seeming contradiction in the Enoch Pratt's defense programs for children reinforces the fact that the library was actively mediating the war and shaping its meaning based on the audience with which it was engaging. The activities and programs designed for children presented the war as a game or competition, something meant to stimulate patriotic feeling and the desire to contribute but ultimately not taint the experience of childhood with obsessive concern or even deep interest. Librarians most certainly did not repeat such sentiments for

[38] Isabelle Jinette, "Children's Room," *Annual Report, 1943,* Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

adult patrons, for whom they pushed war information as a field of constant engagement. The library's ability to switch gears between patron groups demonstrates their capacity to read and react to cultural concerns over different groups' statuses in the defense effort and to respond effectively as information centers. If the window exhibits highlight the Pratt Library's expansive scope of the influence, the children's programs illustrate its resourcefulness in staging a meaningful interpretation of the war for a specific audience. Libraries' influence within their community can be located and described in a variety of ways, but this institutional reach was not limited to their immediate geographic area. Through reference services and personal contacts, the Enoch Pratt Library created a dense network of information exchange that spanned the globe. Rooted in a relational exchange of information, this network did more than supply an informational need, it helped men and women on both sides of the front make sense of their circumstances, connect with each other, and plan for a postwar future.

Books as Bridges: Closing the Gap Between the Home Front and the War Front

The war front and home front designators operate as useful metaphors for delineating the separation of activities occurring in the combat and domestic theaters. Yet, they also represented a physical, intellectual, and emotional gap between those who experienced the war firsthand and those who had their meaning shaped vicariously. Though physically rooted in American communities, public libraries enhanced contact between the war front and home front by acting as personalized outlets for information for those stateside and abroad. During the war, the Enoch Pratt Library grew a significant service helping individuals at home "decode" letters from

their friends and family serving in war zones. Redacted locations and confusion over military language limited servicemen and women's ability to describe their circumstances for their loved ones. Reference librarians filled this informational gap by taking the clues present in the received letters and using them to deduce the writer's location. A note about "blood oranges growing outside a tent" allowed one Baltimore librarian to inform a worried mother that her son was likely stationed in the Mediterranean.[39] When another patron asked where "sansorigin" was, a librarian was able to tell them it was, "the official army term (of address) for many soldiers oversees."[40] Librarians' unique skillsets as researchers and their detailed knowledge of their collections enabled them to accurately fill these information needs, positioning the library as a significant source of war-information for the community.

More importantly, these examples demonstrate how libraries were able to build imagined bridges between the war front and home front by supplying the information needed to create those mental links. In the tumultuous context of World War II, those mental connections relieved emotional burdens created by uncertainty and fostered common ground between those serving in the war and those on the home front. For relatives back home, the lack of locational information took existing fears over soldiers' safety and magnified them; without the knowledge needed to quickly parse incoming reports from the war front, who was to say what an invasion in France or a shift in the Italian front meant to the relative security of one soldier, location unknown? Providing that information, even in vague guesses, granted emotional

[39] "Library Staff Deciphers Servicemen's Addresses," *Baltimore Evening Sun*, June 12, 1943, Folder 2, Box 70, Maryland World War II Records, Maryland Historical Society.
[40] "Readers Keeping Up With Troops," *Baltimore Sun*, June 26, 1943, Folder 2, Box 70, Maryland World War II Records, Maryland Historical Society.

assurance to friends and family by giving them concrete information against which to gauge the supply of reports and actions coming in from Europe and the Pacific.

Additionally, helping civilians better place their relatives' abroad allowed library users to create an imaginative bond through information resources. Echoing Benedict Anderson's formation of national identity, library patrons used print, maps, and photos to mentally travel with their friends and relatives overseas, creating their own "imagined communities" that followed individuals through war zones.[41] One father, a *Baltimore Sun* article reported, visited the Enoch Pratt every time his son transferred to a new station to read up on his new location.[42] Tracking soldiers through information resources maintained an emotional and mental link between loved ones by bridging physical separation through shared knowledge. The act of reading about the cultures of Northern Africa or looking at photographs of the Pacific Islands produced mental images of servicemen's circumstances that helped those at home empathize with their experiences by giving context to those abroad. Public librarians possessed the research skills and resource stock necessary to locate and build those mental connections that sustained families and friends torn apart by the war.

The Enoch Pratt's Sherlockian services also force a reconsideration of public libraries' relationship to the apparatuses of state. As their rampant promotion of the defense effort suggests, libraries, as an institutional force, pursued a hard line when it came to supporting the war effort. In fact, many leaders within the American Library

[41] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised Edition (London:Verso), 1991.
[42] "Readers Keeping Up With Troops."

Association viewed the war as an opportunity to increase public libraries' prestige by seeking alignments with government agencies and adjacent organizations as key war information providers.[43] However, the Pratt Library's willingness to circumvent official policies by helping individuals ascertain withheld information indicates that public libraries were pursuing legitimization from the grassroots as much as from the state. Despite the presence of state-produced propaganda and libraries' active pursuit of governmental recognition, public libraries largely continued to draw their strength and character from daily interactions with members of the community. Their wants and needs persisted as a significant factor in determining how public libraries mediated the dispersal of war information.

While community needs shaped the Enoch Pratt Library's role as a war information center, the conflict itself redefined the boundaries of the library's user group. Although public libraries resided on the "home front" side of the analogy, their influence was not limited to a unilateral flow of information; rather public libraries directed information from the home front to the war front through primary and secondary contact with those abroad. Public libraries already had a highly visible place in supplying books and other reading materials for servicemen through their participation in events like the Victory Books Campaign (VBC) and organizations like the Council on Use of Books in Wartime. These movements aimed to sustain morale for troops by providing books for entertainment and education. While their content varied widely, books were selected according to careful criteria.[44] In

[43] Becker, 42-44.
[44] For more on the Victory Books Campaign and libraries participation, see Patti Clayton Becker, *Books and Libraries in American Society During World War II: Weapons in the War of Ideas* (New

Maryland, the Citizens Committee for the Army and Navy structured book gathering and distribution for troops inside and outside of military camps. Richard Hart, an Enoch Pratt librarian, headed the committee and described their selection policy in an article for the state library association: "Everyone concerned in this work has made it clear that only up-to-date, sound, clean books and magazines are wanted. The needs comprise the widest variety, many copies of recent pictorial and news magazines, books on current events and the war, the best recent detictive (sp) stories, action, adventure fiction, best selling fiction and non-fiction of all types, and technical books."[45] The books librarians helped procure in these campaigns were carefully scrutinized and meant to fulfill a user need not defined by the troops themselves, but by government bureaucrats, industry gurus, and library leaders. Those guidelines emphasized books' moral applicability and their ability to strengthen, entertain, and educate men in socially appropriate ways, shaping reading as an extension of policy and social norms rather than individual choice.[46]

However, the VBC and related organizations represent only one area of contact librarians maintained with military personnel overseas. During the war, the Enoch Pratt Library serviced several reference requests submitted by former patrons

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York: Routledge, 2005): chapter 6; for American books abroad, see John B. Hench, *Books as Weapons: Propaganda, Publishing, and the Battle for Global Markets in the Era of World War II*; for Armed Service Editions and American G.I. reading habits, see Kenneth D. Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation: A Social History of Americans in World War II* (New York: Routledge, 2008): 179-182.

[45] "To Friends Of Our Army And Navy," *Between Librarians* vol. 8, no. 2 (October 1941), Folder 6, Box 1, Series 9, Maryland Library Association archives, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

[46] The gendered dimension of book selection for troops will be explored further in chapter 3.

serving abroad. The General Reference Department reported on these bibliographical questions in 1944, writing:

> Such inquiries involved all kinds of writings, the only trend noted being the fact that many emanated from friends and relatives, serving overseas, of Baltimore residents. Frequently a serviceman had run across some publication, or heard it discussed, and wanted his friends to read it or procure it for him. Many of these requests were vague and necessitated a considerable amount of bibliographic detective work.[47]

The library's commitment to serving military personnel's requests indicates their participation in an informal network of information exchange overlaying the war front and home front. As this example demonstrates, the Enoch Pratt Library actively engaged in locating and compiling information for servicemen overseas which addressed their specific needs rather than assumed desires as military men. This individualistic service circumvented social expectations in reading for servicemen and empowered them to pursue an agenda built on personal choice. The fact that secondary parties mediated these requests does not diminish the library's importance in structuring these exchanges. Instead, the repeated and oftentimes critical use of the library indicates that it offered a service not available elsewhere. More importantly, the convoluted route of information from serviceman to relative (or friend) to library and back again serves as a reminder that public libraries operate in spheres of influence not always immediately visible from their circulation numbers and user registration. Like the Enoch Pratt's window exhibits, this forces a reconsideration of libraries' institutional reach, and importance, in facilitating the spread and consumption of information.

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[47] "General Reference Department," *Annual Report, 1944*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

Deciphering servicemen's individual requests is difficult as the library often collected and described these reference interactions en masse. However, some departments did record notable reference interviews which indicate that servicemen looked to their public libraries as a source of opportunity for the postwar future. The Business and Economics Department reported one such case in their 1945 Annual Report. According to the librarians, a soldier in the South Pacific wrote to the department with multiple requests for information on industrial production, railway development, urban population statistics, and waterpower projects.[48] The librarians did not convey the purpose of the requests nor relate how the solider ultimately used them. However, either the soldier was a keen reader on all manner of human knowledge, or he intended to put the information to specific use likely as an initial report for a business venture or job opportunity. Removed from immediate access to a variety of information sources, this serviceman turned to his local library, though a world away, to advance his plan for his postwar future.

Soldiers also approached the Pratt Library with more concrete requests for how the institution could aid them in their life after the war. One enterprising soldier stationed in Australia contacted the library with a request for information on how his Australian-born wife could obtain a job at the library when they returned home.[49] Though the library's perceived value here was as an employer and not an information provider, the soldier's confidence in its ability to help similarly enabled him to use it

[48] Marcia C. Brace, "Business and Economics Department," *Four Year Report of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore's Public Library 1942-1945*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.
[49] "Soldier Seeks Job for Aussie Wife," *Baltimore Evening Sun*, August 22, 1944, Folder 2, Box 70, Maryland World War II Records, Maryland Historical Society.

as a tool to plan for the postwar period in a personal way. Just as the library facilitated mental links between civilians at home and their loved ones abroad, it allowed those oversees to remain connected to their lives back home by helping them imagine and then plan for their postwar futures.

Conclusion

While war reigned in Europe and Asia, the Enoch Pratt Free Library, like the rest of the country, remained consumed by defense initiatives and furthering the war effort. More than an intellectual exercise, war services restructured the library's mission and activities, casting war-related programs as the institution's priority and its measurement for outreach for the early 1940s. As the Pratt Library underwent this internal transformation, its relationship with the community changed to reflect the growing culture premium placed on war information. Harnessing all its resources, the library built a series of platforms able to transmit its message across a spectrum of users, from those disconnected from the library to those with specific cultural limitations on their exposure to the war to those turning to the library for information of deeply emotional consequence. In doing so, the Pratt Library demonstrated that propaganda could exist as more than an information exchange but as a lived experience, such as the children's reading games, and as a negotiated relationship, such as the library's reference services to the community. The library's institutional reach expanded to encompass Marylanders serving abroad, confirming the Enoch Pratt's position as a mediator for information not only on the home front, but on the war front as well. War might have displaced Baltimoreans across the globe but their reliance on the Enoch Pratt Library as a source of reliable information built imagined

communities of users that connected through the library, finding emotional and intellectual support in the institution.

Taking this grassroots perspective, there can be no doubt that the Pratt Library had a meaningful impact on its community as the war unfolded. The library's multi-faceted programming pushed institutional boundaries, speaking to a diverse range of community members in ways that redefined measurements of usership, integrated wartime concerns and attitudes into the community, and entertained an expanded view of the institution's life within its neighborhood. Inserting narratives of individual use into the Enoch Pratt's discourse further emphasizes this point by applying a human face to the library's purpose. Real, living, breathing people turned to the Enoch Pratt Library as a crucial source of information to help them navigate wartime circumstances, oftentimes in ways that ran against official policy or subverted sanctioned information channels.

Ultimately, concentrating on the Enoch Pratt Library's relationship with its community invests the community itself with the authority to judge the level of the institution's relevancy. As library historian, Patti Clayton Becker, wrote, "…to the extent that actual use of a profession's services indicates social acceptance of the profession and its services, then everyone who used libraries during World War II granted them basic legitimacy and recognized their authority for their individual purposes."[50] Maryland libraries seized every modicum of legitimacy granted to them during World War II to exercise a program designed to benefit their communities, and the nation, as the war progressed and the postwar world shone brighter on the

[50] Becker, 203-204.

horizon. Yet, even as the war front set the pace and tone of information consumption, the Enoch Pratt remained deeply concerned with its own community. Burgeoning internal threats such as the breakdown of the nuclear family and the rise of juvenile delinquency forced many libraries to turn inward only to discover the existence of another front looming from within.

Chapter 2: Crossing the Second Front: Public Libraries and the Domestic Sphere in World War II Baltimore

Introduction

Emma G. Mills of the Enoch Pratt Free Library's Ellwood Branch could never be charged with a lack of creativity. While most branch librarians submitted their annual reports in standardized fashion, Mills repeatedly found ways to provide those at the top with the hard facts of her library's performance while employing her own poetic flair, be it metaphor, acrostic or a sketch to literally illustrate her point. In her 1942 annual submission, titled "Keys of Control," Mills structured her whole report as an extended metaphor using a lock and key to represent where her branch stood in its activities, what it had "unlocked" that year, and what it wanted to achieve, or what "keys" it needed to shape in the future. Two of the keys Mills identified as wanting for her branch were the "Key to the Home" and the "Key to the Family Closet." These elusive keys would unlock Branch 4's ability to reach the home and the family, draw them into the library, and shape them as model library patrons.[1] This language of locks and keys in the context of home and family connected libraries intimately with the domestic sphere. The metaphor immediately conjured an image of permitted entry into a house; a homeowner unlocks a front door with a key and enters in with a sense of belonging. Attaching this metaphor to ideas of the home and the "family closet" drew the library into the deepest recesses of domestic sanctity, not as an invading force, but as a welcomed extension of the home.

[1] Emma G. Mills, "Branch 4-Ellwood Avenue, Canton," *Annual Report, 1942*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

By 1942, public libraries had long fostered an easy alignment with the domestic sphere built from the profession's feminization and its broadening user-base. Within the first decade of the twentieth century, seventy-five percent of librarians were women.[2] Their en masse entrance into the profession shifted libraries' character inside and out by introducing a strong cultural alignment with the home and family intended to mirror middle-class idealizations of the domestic sphere.[3] Changes in architecture reflected this directional shift as the hardened contours of the closed-shelf Victorian library softened under the influence of twentieth-century Carnegie designs. Carnegie plans channeled women's increasing presence in librarianship, officially sanctioning feminine sensibilities in library decoration to emphasize a "home-like" atmosphere intended to please patrons visually and mimic maternal warmth.[4] This domestic atmosphere also echoed in the way librarians conceived of their institutions' service to the public. As one Minnesotan library director commented in 1905, libraries, "should be managed in the broadest spirit of hospitality. The atmosphere should be as gracious, kindly, and sympathetic as one's own home."[5] Each of these qualifications echoed traditional feminine virtues, indicating librarianship's transformation towards a women-led professional value system. At the same time, they matched characteristics long-associated with the home

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[2] Dee Garrison, "Women in Librarianship," in *A Century of Service: Librarianship in the United States and Canada*, ed. Sidney L. Jackson, Eleanor B. Herling and E. J. Josey (Chicago: American Librarian Association, 1976), 147.
[3] Women's impact on the profession will be explored at length in chapter three. Dee Garrison, *Apostles of Culture: The Public Librarian and American Society, 1876-1920* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 178-179.
[4] Wayne A. Wiegand, *Part of Our Lives: A People's History of the American Public Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 95, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/umdcp/detail.action?docID=2146966.
[5] Gratia Countryman, "The Library as Social Centre," *Public Libraries* 11 (1906): 5, quoted in Wiegand, *Part of Our Lives*, 95.

and family, blurring the boundary between the library as a public institution and the library as an extension of the home.

Like schools, twentieth-century public libraries' attention to children also brought them into close alignment with the domestic sphere. The desire to reach children, particularly in lower-income neighborhoods, pushed libraries to adopt socially-centered activities that encouraged disadvantaged children to find refuge in the library. The flurry of activity centered on the multi-purpose utility of library space prompted many children to cultivate emotional ties with the library as a "second home," a place intended for their benefit and growth.[6] Similarly, libraries encouraged young visitors to adopt middle-class domestic values by structuring activities to reenact pictures of home-like tranquility. Story hours, for example, gathered children around a woman librarian in intimate, informal positions that, "…encouraged young readers…to perform a version of familial relations dear to middle-class hearts."[7] Public libraries, it seemed, were becoming an ever more visible embodiment of domestic ideals and familial stability as the early years of the twentieth century passed by.

When Emma Mills wrote her submission for the Enoch Pratt Free Library's 1942 Annual Report, cultivating a relationship between the public library and the domestic sphere seemed an especially difficult task. War and the demands of defense had transformed the home front into something almost unrecognizable for Baltimore's librarians. Gas and rubber rationing plus inadequate public transportation

[6] Ibid., 96.
[7] Abigail Van Slyck, "Managing Pleasure: Library Architecture and the Erotics of Reading," in *The Library as Place: History, Community, and Culture*, ed. John E. Buschman & Gloria J. Leckie (Westport: Conn., Libraries Unlimited, 2007): 230.

limited patrons' ability to visit public libraries while a burgeoning population increased areas underserved by the library. This resulted in a crisis in service for Pratt librarians who found themselves unprepared to match the demands of a dislocated, increasingly immobile user-group. Despite these limitations, Baltimore librarians felt the need for sustained outreach even more keenly. The perceived nationwide breakdown of the family unit and the rise of juvenile delinquency constituted a crisis in the family's moral center that worried and challenged librarians. With fathers drafted into military service and mothers increasingly pulled into defense jobs, experts worried that the rise in "latchkey kids" would lead unsupervised youth into a life of crime, threatening not only the war effort but the country's future as well.[8] Serving the home appeared more critical than ever but how could the library overcome the resource limitations the war had placed on the institution's reach?

In both these contexts, Baltimore librarians met their respective challenges by transforming their institution's physical spaces. Convinced that proximity would breed community interest and greater use, Pratt librarians mustered their resources to initiate programs that eliminated the physical distance between the library and its intended community. Station libraries in defense housing projects and the Pratt's inaugural book-wagon program redefined the boundaries between the library's institutional setting and the neighborhoods it served while targeting groups critical in the home front defense. Station libraries aimed to extend books to war workers, whom librarians viewed as needing technical knowledge to bolster their part in

[8] Lisa L. Ossian, *The Forgotten Generation: American Children and World War II* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2011): 103-104.

industrial production and wholesome entertainment to deal with the stress of war and its demands. These micro-libraries also worked to assimilate migrant war workers into the community by promoting civic interest and "community spirit," creating a body of readers committed to defense and to their neighborhoods' betterment.

Similarly, the book wagon targeted neighborhoods librarians recognized as at-risk for juvenile delinquency. In the absence of consistent authority figures, librarians believed books could teach moral responsibility and provide respectable role models on which children could pattern their own behavior, curbing and curing delinquency in the process. However, Pratt librarians conflated delinquency with poor minority neighborhoods in ways that not only worked against the reality of the situation, but actively served to disassociate those communities from the normative American family, further cementing the notion of "otherness" as threatening to American defense.

As demonstrated in chapter one, World War II transformed libraries' services and situated them as informational mediators between the war front and the home front. While combat remained on the other side of the globe, the Enoch Pratt Library's intense interest in the domestic sphere reminds us that there was a second front being fought on America's shores, one deemed equally important to the future of defense and the nation. Libraries' unique history with the domestic sphere enabled them to operate beyond the public/private barrier by creating direct lines to individual families. Their ability to mobilize individuals in response to their programs further demonstrates the deep influence they wielded in their communities, again forcing a broader consideration of their importance during the war period.

Wartime Challenges to Library Service

Baltimore's rapid influx of defense workers during World War II threw the relationship between the library and the home into doubt by destabilizing the character of the neighborhood library. A survey conducted of Pratt patrons in June of 1941 found that 11% of library users were out-of-town workers employed in the defense industry.[9] Drawn from rural Maryland and surrounding states, this small but steadily growing portion of their user-base represented a key area of outreach for the library.[10] For the Enoch Pratt, providing for defense workers' informational needs was a critical measure in aiding the war effort. As the same survey reported:

> The morale of the new population struggling to adjust itself to the new locality and to new conditions can be greatly strengthened through adequate reading materials. The great volume and speed in shipbuilding, manufacturing and training have necessitated a great deal of study by men who formerly thought that they had no need for further information; rapid changes in trades and in methods within the trades have resulted in increased demands for books on aircraft design, metal working, chemical processes, etc.[11]

To keep pace with adequate war production, defense workers needed specialized training to execute their work properly, oftentimes relying on local libraries to supply the materials needed to learn those skills. Newly hired defense workers in Baltimore, for example, turned to the Enoch Pratt Free Library for materials on reading aircraft blue prints.[12] On a deeper level, workers also needed constructive ways to deal with

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[9] Eugene D. Hart, *Library Service in the Baltimore Industrial Area During the National Defense Program*, June 1941, 9, Folder 2, Box 70, Maryland World War II Records, Maryland Historical Society.
[10] Amy Bentley, "Wages of War: The Shifting Landscape of Race and Gender in World War II Baltimore," *Maryland Historical Magazine* vol. 88, no. 4 (1993): 421, http://mdhs.msa.maryland.gov/pages/Viewer.aspx?speccol=5881&Series=1&Item=353 (accessed September 5, 2018).
[11] Eugene D. Hart, *Library Service in the Baltimore Industrial Area During the National Defense Program*, 9.
[12] Patti Clayton Becker, *Books and Libraries in American Society During World War II* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 63.

the psychological and emotional pressures created by the war and their own dislocation. Reading, as a flexible, relatively inexpensive, and socially appropriate activity could easily provide the hours of entertainment needed for war workers to unwind and escape from their situations. Public libraries viewed their services as key to helping workers navigate these challenges and were desperate to extend their institutions in that direction.[13]

Bringing war workers into the library fold proved to be a significant challenge. For one, the same dislocation that encouraged libraries to frame themselves as orienting spaces in a new community also made defense workers hesitant to join the institution and quick to shirk it. Librarians at Branch 23 in Brooklyn neighborhood vented their frustrations with this group, observing that, "These (are) a transient people, having no responsibility or community spirit. They are constantly turning in their library cards, that is, those of them who have them, because they are either going home or to some other city."[14] These Pratt employees identified a basic roadblock in the library's efforts to reach defense workers: these communities were not "home." A transient population made garnering a sustainable user-group from the neighborhood nigh impossible, which prevented any lasting loyalty being built between the institution and the patron. The charge of lack of "responsibility" and "community spirit" fortified a sense that these migrant workers had no emotional investment in the library and, by extension, the community. Early public library founders, such as those in Boston and New York, often framed their

[13] For more general information about public libraries and defense workers, see Becker, 39-41.
[14] "Branch 23," *Annual Report, 1943*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

contributions as a barometer for measuring their community's cultural attainment.[15] Librarians in twentieth-century Baltimore reflected this attitude and took war workers' disinterest in their institution as a sign of their lack of commitment to the neighborhood and its well-being.

Wartime restrictions paired with Baltimore's shifting demographics to further reshape the terms of library service for urban residents. Spatially, the Pratt Library found itself grappling with how to serve a patron group increasingly limited in its access to the library due to rationing and the library's location in the neighborhood. The rationing of gas and rubber for the war effort cut extraneous travel considerably during the war years. In 1942, 70% of American families had access to a car. By 1944 that number had dropped to 61%.[16] In addition, leisure travel, once encouraged as an economic stimulant during the Depression, was now seen as a wasteful expenditure of resources, one most families rationed at three gallons a week could not afford.[17]

Paradoxically, limited travel was both a boon and a deterrent to library use in Baltimore. Less travel, as one *Sun* article noted, meant that grounded residents turned to reading for entertainment. Increased circulation rates at branch sites demonstrate

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[15] This argument goes back to the earliest founding of public libraries in the United States when cities' competitiveness was cited as a factor for establishing an institution. Jesse Shera, *Foundations of the Public Library: The Origins of the Public Library Movement in New England 1629-1855* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949), 214-216; Sidney H. 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): 19-21.
[16] D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 178.
[17] Ibid., Perry Duis, "No time for Privacy: World War II and Chicago's Families," in *The War in American Culture: Society and Consciousness During World War II*, ed. Lewis A. Erenberg & Susan E. Hirsch (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996) 26-27.

that Baltimore libraries felt this new wave of demand throughout the city.[18] However, patrons who lived further away from library buildings found regular trips difficult to maintain. Librarians at Pratt Branch 25 in Roland Park noted that in their, "…thinly populated suburban neighborhood a larger percentage of borrowers ha(d) customarily come to the library in cars, and their visits ha(d) either ceased all together or become much less frequent."[19] Shortages in public transportation compounded this problem. Librarians working at Branch 26 in northeast Baltimore found that gas shortages coupled with the lack of cross-town transportation along Belair Road (where the branch site was located) meant that fewer visitors came to the library.[20] Challenges in transportation demonstrate the key role location played in enabling accessibility and library use. Lack of proximity to patrons' homes or a reliable means to get there meant that the flow of potential library visitors could be cut off at any time. Compelled by a desire to reach growing neighborhoods, particularly those hosting defense workers, the Enoch Pratt Library needed to redefine itself and its services to overcome these limitations in its operations.

Part of the Woodwork: Library Stations in Federal Housing

The Enoch Pratt Library invested in several alternatives to bolster their impact in the community. For example, as a simple solution to gas and rubber rationing,

[18] "Reading, Not Riding," *Baltimore Evening Sun*, August 24, 1942, Folder 3, Box 70, Maryland World War II Records, Maryland Historical Society.
[19] "Branch 25," *Annual Report, 1942*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.
[20] "Branch 26," *Annual Report, 1943*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

several branches varied how long patrons could check-out books.[21] A more creative response was the Pratt Library's establishment of station libraries in federal housing projects throughout the city. The library station was already a common form in urban communities. A condensed form of the public library building, a station library functioned as a miniaturized book-loan service for urban residents who lacked the time or ability to attend their local library. These stations were often located near places of work to ease accessibility and attracted members of the working class who frequently used them for entertainment purposes.[22] The Pratt Library already offered such a service, reaching out to shut-in patrons and those with disabilities.[23] During World War II, the Stations Division expanded the scope of their services to target the federal housing projects developed in the wake of the national housing crisis. As defense production revamped the American economy, it also drove millions of people to industrial cities in search of jobs, taxing existing infrastructure and filling residential spaces to capacity. Thousands of towns and cities across the country responded by initiating housing programs to meet the needs of their growing populations.[24]

Housing projects in Baltimore began in earnest during the last years of the Great Depression with the establishment of the Baltimore Housing Authority. This municipal department operated under the authority of the U.S. Housing Act, which

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[21] Best-sellers and new books could be on loan for seven days while older material had a check-out period of fourteen days. As one branch librarian noted, fourteen-day books increased in popularity as gas and rubber rationing cut down on the amount of travel patrons could afford during the week. "Librarians Decide Gasoline Rationing Affects Reading," *Baltimore Sun*, June 9, 1942, https://search.proquest.com/docview/539172959?accountid=14696 (accessed December 3, 2018).
[22] Wiegand, 83.
[23] These activities are described in the Stations Division Reports for 1942, 1943, and 1944. *Annual Reports*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.
[24] Campbell, 169.

allowed for the allocation of federal money towards local public housing construction and slum clearance projects. As defense measures ramped up across the country, securing housing in industrial areas grew increasingly elusive. Under the Lanham Act of 1940, federal authorities obtained greater control over local housing initiatives and redirected most funds to the construction of defense public housing units.[25]

In Maryland, the explosion of job opportunities in defense industries plus the lack of housing created chaos in towns that had grown beyond their capacities. Building defense housing became a measure not only to provide basic necessities to migrant war workers, but to implement order amongst rapidly growing communities. This meant that public services needed to be cultivated and extended to migrant workers as much as physical dwellings. In places like Elkton, Maryland, the presence of Triumph Industries, a fireworks-turned-munitions plant, and the Bainbridge Naval Station threw the local infrastructure into disarray. Basic utilities, like water and sewage, were untenable in hastily built defense housing while other public services, like the hospital and the police, struggled to supply adequate coverage to the boomtown. Local stores and institutions from restaurants to churches also found themselves overrun with newcomers and sometimes outright refused to admit entrance to recent arrivals. This created a significant problem for defense workers who now not only lacked basic supplies, but also had little way to pass the time other than wandering the streets. The situation grew more chaotic and in 1942 a local naval commander was forced to send in the military police to impose martial law on the

[25] Eric L. Holcomb, *The City as Suburb: A History of Northeast Baltimore Since 1660* (Chicago: The Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, 2008), 223.

town. In response to the crisis, the Elkton USO took over the administration of utilities, provisions, and entertainment for recently arrived war workers. Instead of aimlessly wandering the city, and presumably inspiring lawlessness and petty crime, defense workers now had channeled and supervised entertainment in USO-sponsored classes, dances, and other services.[26]

Baltimore found itself at the heart of a similar explosion over public housing. The most notable defense employer near the city was the Glenn L. Martin Aircraft Company, located in a northeast suburb at Middle River. The company employed roughly 3,500 people in 1940 and that number sky-rocketed to an estimated 53,000 by 1945.[27] In response to the influx of people, the already planned housing project, Armistead Gardens, added another 694 units to its plan to house the overflow of workers.[28] Segregation loomed large in the construction of these housing projects and created significant controversy amongst neighborhoods with plans for introducing a Blacks-only housing complex.[29]

As federal housing found its footing in defense-driven Baltimore, the Enoch Pratt Library mirrored its development by establishing station libraries in housing projects throughout the city. The Branch Adult Book Services division in tandem with local branch librarians and, in some cases the Housing Authority itself, oversaw the administration of these little libraries. On the surface, they were a practical response to a practical problem: bringing library services, limited by the constraints

[26] George H. Callcott, *Maryland & America 1940 to 1980* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 37-38.
[27] Ibid., 42.
[28] Holcomb, 225.
[29] Ibid., 226-227.

of the war, closer to potential patrons. Librarians at Branch 4 observed the physical barriers in place that limited service to the O'Donnell Heights housing project in their own jurisdiction: "It (the project) is about thirty-five city blocks from Branch 4 which is the nearest library. It is too far to walk to and a long round-about ride on the street car…it…covers 68 acres with 800 homes, 700 of which are occupied with war workers…A few of these people have [come to] the Branch in cars and have registered. They seen [sp] anxious to use the library."[30] With gas and rubber rationing exacerbating the inadequacy of public transportation, these housing projects' physical geography became even more of a detriment to the library reaching their residents. Creating library stations reduced this problem by bringing the books to the patron, rather than make the patron come to the institution.

Making this shift towards a nimbler presence of the public library meant that the Enoch Pratt had to reimagine its physical space in these housing developments. Librarians at Branch 2 near Hollins and Calhoun Street in West Baltimore provided a picture of how these station libraries operated. Branch 2 helped to serve the Poe Housing Area, a slum clearance project begun in 1934, which then functioned as a segregated development for African Americans. "Three hundred very attractive looking and carefully selected titles were invoiced by the Stations Department and made ready for circulation to those persons residing within the Poe Area," the Branch's Annual Report stated, "Two wood bookcases accommodate the books which are housed in the auditorium adjoining the office…The library is open on

[30] "Branch 4," *Annual Report, 1943*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

Tuesdays and Thursdays from two until four o'clock, and the circulation has been encouraging."[31] Collection scale and location redefined the Pratt Library's physical scope to place it not only on a more accessible terrain, but a more intimate one. In place of thousands of books in a dedicated building, the station library created a domestic air by approximating a private library with fewer books, in less bookcases, located in the residents' immediate area.

Defense housing libraries leveraged this sense of intimacy to provide recently dislocated workers with entertainment compatible with the needs of defense work. Returning to rambunctious Elkton, Maryland, Singerly Village, a women's dormitory created for newly arrived war workers, supplied a community book collection for their residents in each building's lounge.[32] Like the station library in the Poe Housing Project, this collection mirrored a private library in its approximation to individual residences, in this case the dormitories, which invited a casual perusal of the books and promoted access and a sense of belonging. However, housing project developers and library sponsors also valued these books collections for their ability to provide suitable entertainment compatible with shift work. As the director of the Maryland Public Library Advisory Committee described, "…with the girls working on three shifts with one-third at work, one-third at play, and one-third asleep, reasonable quiet is required in the dormitories at all times. Hence recreation must be of a type which will not be noisy enough to disturb those who are resting."[33] Only two years before,

[31] "Branch 2," *Annual Report, 1943,* Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.
[32] Adelene J. Pratt, "Library Service in Federal Housing Projects," *Between Librarians* vol. 11, no. 1 (March 1944), 6, Folder 6, Box 1, Series 9, Maryland Library Association archives, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.
[33] Ibid.

Elkton appeared as a wild town overrun with migrant defense workers. This picture of sustained, quiet activity represented the return of civil order enabled, in part, by the introduction of controlled social activities. Reading, with its connotations of domestic life, provided a perfect outlet to re-anchor dislocated workers to a sense of familial connection and stability.

The fact that many of the stations relied on volunteers for their operation further cemented this image of a "home-like" library. Since volunteers were residents pulled from the community, this helped the station acquire a more intimate image, replacing the institutional figurehead of the librarian with a neighbor. It also deepened the emotional ties between the library and the community. The head of the Adult Branch Services observed that library stations, "…would "pay" (i.e. be successful) if they were founded on the understanding that the community was responsible for manning them. But that constant, though not regular, supervision must be maintained by the library…above all in keeping the local "library committee" interested and encouraged."[34] Stimulating community investment in a public institution amongst a transient population fixed residential commitment to the library by reframing who had ownership over the book collection. Officially, Pratt librarians remained in charge, but they handed the day-to-day functions over to community members, increasing their buy-in with the institution and helping them establish a clearer path between the library and their homes.

[34] "Coordinator of Adult Branch Books Service," *Annual Report, 1944*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

The Enoch Pratt's efforts to reconnect the library to Baltimore homes through station library projects demarcated the "home front" as a second stage for defense activities. Wartime circumstances laid the groundwork for the material alterations forcing a change in library services, which pushed the Pratt Library to physically relocate closer to the home. Though rationing and worker migration helped induce this transition, Enoch Pratt librarians embraced it and labeled their station libraries as a wartime measure.[35] Connecting this move explicitly to a program of national defense indicated that the home was a crucial piece of ground in the war effort, one in which librarians could claim some expertise. Librarians clung to this mantle and leveraged it to wage their own war against domestic threats that could potential undue the nation's pathway to victory.

The Threat from Within: Juvenile Delinquency and Public Libraries

The Enoch Pratt Library's vision for its role as a stabilizer within the home front took on a new form as nationwide anxiety over juvenile delinquency gripped Baltimore during the waning years of World War II. Socially, the war years were a chaotic time for many American families. As fathers left for military service and mothers entered the workforce in unprecedented numbers, a growing number of social commentators expressed concern over the fate of children, now seemingly left to their own devices as parental supervision broke down under national demands. Teenagers also experienced their first taste of independence as many secured jobs in the defense industry. By putting money in youths' pockets and a handing them a

[35] See, for example "War Services of the Enoch Pratt Library," *Annual Report, 1943*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives. The activities listed here counted station projects as defense measures.

seeming license to do as they pleased, war employment upset the traditional authority figures of home and school, leading many adults to express concern over how teenagers were spending their time.[36]

Statistically, the nation did experience a surge in the rate of juvenile delinquency during the defense years, with samples from court records indicating a 56% rise in juvenile cases between 1940 and 1943.[37] However, the pressures of war magnified the rate's impact and linked it to the nation's success in the conflict and postwar order. Labeling them as wasteful, lazy, and self-absorbed, authorities painted the juvenile delinquent's actions as the selfish result of the individual pursuit of a good time. With the war effort galvanizing every facet of society, those who appeared not to be doing their part threatened to destabilize the totalizing effort needed to secure victory.[38]

Furthermore, experts connected juvenile delinquency with distinct gender and racial identities, revealing underlying fears of a destabilizing society as a significant factor in the perceived epidemic. For example, delinquency among girls skyrocketed by an enormous 94% by 1943. Most cases were sex offenses, specifically prostitution, which many authorities claimed had increased as teenage "Victory Girls" interacted with servicemen on leave.[39] For many girls, the uncertainty of wartime America cast a romantic pall over these sexual relationships, influencing them to see their liaisons not as a crime, but as an adventure and even a patriotic service. However, the spike in

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[36] Ossian, 103.
[37] Kenneth D. Rose, *Myth and the Greatest Generation: A Social History of Americans in World War II* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 112.
[38] Ossian, 103-105.
[39] Rose, 112-113.

unplanned pregnancies and venereal disease resulting from these interactions pushed propaganda campaigns to label Victory Girls as licentious, a threat to soldiers' physical and moral health, and a deterrent to America's ultimate victory in war.[40]

Similarly, authorities regularly linked the rise in juvenile delinquency to the activities of minority youths. In major cities like Los Angeles and New York, delinquency became increasingly associated with gang activity attributed to Mexican American and African American youths. Culminating in the infamous Zoot Suit Riots during the summer of 1943, animosity towards minority youth stemmed in part from their perceived inability to support the war effort. Regularly characterized as excessive and hypersexualized through their association with the infamous Zoot Suits, minority youths appeared as a threat to the sacrifice and dedication needed to secure victory in the war. As historian Luis Alvarez described it, "As the war unfolded, more Americans realized that the country's future lay in the hands of its youth, whether in defending its democratic principles on battlefields around the world or in contributing to the home-front production necessary for victory. Any youth behavior that did not serve these purposes was deemed a catastrophic drain on the war effort."[41] Because it did not fit the normative narrative of the ruddy-faced American youth, minority youths' behavior became increasingly characterized as antithetical to the nation's security.

Many World War II-era public librarians deeply believed that the uplifting power of books could mitigate the threat of juvenile delinquency in their communities

[40] Ossian, 111-113.
[41] Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance During World War II* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2008), 43.

and the Enoch Pratt was no exception. In May of 1943, Margaret Alexander, a youth librarian with the Pratt library, penned an article for the *Library Journal* outlining the impact the war was having on children. She argued for the responsibility libraries had in providing books to poorer neighborhoods to secure their communities' well-being. Alexander built her article on the premise that reading the right books could reshape an individual's moral character. Reading left a lasting impression on the mind, introducing worthy characters who, "…live in the hearts of young people who have read of them, helping to find right patterns of conduct."[42] By presenting heroes and heroines to admire, books could give children a model to aspire towards and the possibility that their own circumstances might change like the characters in their books.

If reading could mold character during peace time, its impact was doubly important during times of war. Alexander's article closed with a partial reprint of a report written by Lillian H. Smith of the Toronto Public Library entitled, "Books As Weapons." This excerpt cautioned librarians that children were not blind to the war and its impacts but were particularly susceptible to the worry and doubt caused by the chaotic circumstances. Books could provide a stabilizing influence in a young child's life, ensure their "spiritual security," and pave the way for a brighter and more certain future. Couching this effort in military language gave librarians' mission a sense of urgency. As Smith quoted near the end of her piece, "'On the children's battle front books are weapons.' Books can offset the confusion and strain."[43] Comparing books

[42] Margaret Alexander, "Wisdom Crying in the Streets," *Library Journal* vol. 68 (May 1, 1943): 348.
[43] Quoted portion from Dr. Helen Butler, Lillian H. Smith, *Toronto Public Library Annual Report, 1942*, quoted in Alexander, "Books as Weapons," 349.

to weapons raised the status of literature by placing it on equal footing with defense production across the nation. While guns and ships went to defend the country abroad, books could secure the nation from within by connecting those most at-risk with the tools they needed to form a strong character focused on the nation's needs.

While Alexander's article was a call-to-arms for public librarians nationwide, it also offered some practical suggestions for extending the library's reach. Her key idea was to shift the library's institutional focus from a physical location to a dispersed set of influences. Alexander advocated for a greater use of radio programming in libraries and reimagined the library's form by suggesting library stalls in open air markets and using bookmobiles and wagons.[44] Each of her ideas centered on bringing the library outside of its building to attract non-library users. Breaking through location barriers was meant as a way of meeting users where they were but it also indicated that libraries needed to change the dynamics of their relationship to the community. With transportation barriers and transient communities surrounding them, an insular viewpoint could not create the same connections with the neighborhood as it might have in the past. Add to this an express mission to minister to the community's wayward youth, who, it was decided, were obviously not using the library, and the result was a responsive vision of the library that was more attractive and accessible.

[44] Alexander, 348-349.

“Wisdom Crying in the Streets”: Building Families Through the Enoch Pratt Book Wagon

To Margaret Alexander’s credit, she was a believer in practicing as she preached. In 1943 she initiated her own efforts to combat juvenile delinquency in

Image 1.1 Enoch Pratt Free Library Book Wagon Visit to Dallas Street, Baltimore, Aug. 16, 1945, http://collections.digitalmaryland.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/mdaa/id/168/rec/1, Courtesy of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Maryland's State Library Resource Center

Baltimore in the shape of the Enoch Pratt Library book wagon program. For three summers, the wagon roved the streets of Baltimore carrying an array of library books for locals to borrow. Driven by Alexander herself (she was raised on a cotton farm in Texas) and pulled by a pinto mare affectionately named Berry (derived from li-brary),

the book wagon was a spectacle of sight and sound. Neighborhood children announced its presence on the street by plucking a toy xylophone and Berry donned a straw bonnet like a Disney cartoon. Undoubtedly, the pageantry was a calculated effort to attract public attention. As Alexander noted of the program a decade later, "…we wanted something eyecatching (sp), something spectacular to attract attention."[45] While the book wagon feasted on spectacle, it also worked on nostalgia. The horse and wagon's leisurely stroll conjured a bucolic vision of bookmen roaming the countryside, depositing their wares like a Wells Fargo Santa Claus, and having madcap adventures of their own. The sight was both comforting and idealistic in the cityscape of Baltimore, a throw-back to an imagined sense of "home" before war had destabilized the harmony of society.

Underneath the pageantry, however, the book wagon program represented a specific agenda that used its physical proximity and emotional ties to the home to secure the second front. Like the stations project, it was a practical response to changing circumstances meant to increase the library's presence in the community. Rationing, poor public transportation, a transient lifestyle, all these factors made sustaining regular visits to local library branches a chore for many would-be library patrons. Less concrete, the book wagon also responded to another looming limitation in library service: time. "Women," one newspaper article reported of the program, "who have no time to make the trip to the library are glad to leave their kitchens for a moment to pick up a book or two. Children who would resent time taken from their

[45] Margaret A. Edwards, "I Remember……The Library's Little Book Wagon," *Baltimore Sun* April 21, 1957, Enoch Pratt Free Library-Book Wagon Vertical File, Maryland Room, The Enoch Pratt Free Library.

play to get books are delighted to pick out books from the wagon's large selection."[46] The book wagon enabled convenient, remote access for library users by offering routine visits to select neighborhoods, framing the library more as a utility, like mail delivery, than a specialized errand requiring the sacrifice of some other activity.

Beyond its practical implications, reimagining the public library as a mobile entity strengthened the alliance between the home and the institution by blending the physical boundaries between the two entities. Early reports on the project regularly referenced the program's administrators' desire to bring books to the "doorsteps" of potential users.[47] Where physical distance once kept the library as a separate institution, Pratt librarians imagined that proximity, enabled by mobility, could create seamlessness between home and library in a way that targeted each house individually. Geographically, it did. Recalling one of her fondest memories from the book wagon years, Alexander recounted how a woman saw the book wagon coming up her street and leaned out of her window to ask the librarian if this week's selections contained any poetry books.[48] The boundaries between library and home completely disappeared in this episode as the woman, still physically present in her house, could simultaneously call upon the Enoch Pratt's services.

Mobilizing its institutional form helped the book wagon program foster a sense of community belonging by situating the library as an extension of the home and neighborhood. The photograph below, taken of a book wagon stop on Dallas

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[46] "Horse-Drawn 'Library' Has All Kinds Of Books," *Baltimore Evening Sun*, July 26, 1945, Enoch Pratt Free Library-Book Wagon Vertical File, Maryland Room, The Enoch Pratt Free Library.
[47] See for example, Edwards, "I Remember……The Library's Little Book Wagon."
[48] Theodore W. Hendricks, "Mrs. Margaret Edwards and a Rented Wagon First Brought the Pratt's Books to the People," *The Baltimore Sun*, January 21, 1974, Enoch Pratt Free Library-Book Wagon Vertical File, Maryland Room, The Enoch Pratt Free Library.

Street in 1945, indicates how the wagon might have interacted with its surrounding landscape. Though clearly staged, it is evident that the book wagon held a magentic

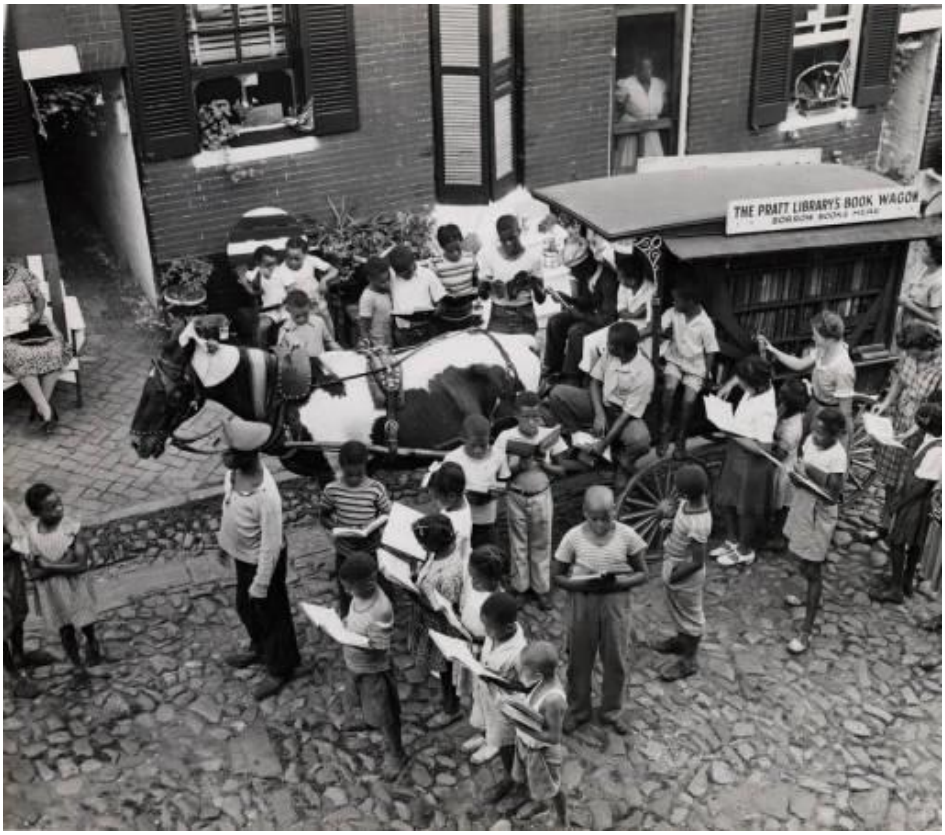

Image 1.2 "Enoch Pratt Free Library Book Wagon During Visit to Dallas Street, Baltimore," August 16, 1945, http://collections.digitalmaryland.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/mdaa/id/213/rec/2, Courtesy of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Maryland's State Library Resource Center.

draw for residents, particularly women and children, in the neighborhood. Circulation statistics support this belief. In 1944, the program circulated 4,081 books in a three month period and saw the registration of 725 new users. [49] Total circulation for the year at Branch 11, where the book wagon operated, was 48,541, making the book wagon circulation equivalent to 8% of the total. Likewise, the branch registered 1,661

[49] Margaret Alexander, "Work With Young People," *Annual Report, 1944,* Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

new users in 1944, with book wagon registers equalling 43% of the total.[50] Gathered around the wagon in search of new books, community members not only interacted with the library but with each other, creating a sense of neighborhood-in-action as the library helped feed and foster relationships. While the book wagon formed the center of action, the photograph's peripheries indicate that home was never far away. The top right corner of the image shows a woman in the doorway of her home, watching the scene unfold in front of her. Though away from the action, she remains equally part of the image and, with just a shout and a few steps outside, could also engage with the library and return to her home in mere seconds.

Framing the book wagon as a solution to juvenile delinquency married physical mobility with individual reform in a way that aligned the library with the soul of the domestic unit: the family. The Annual Report from 1943, the program's first summer, left no doubt as to its primary purpose, claiming that the wagon was established, "…hoping to make a contribution with books to the solution of the problem of juvenile delinquency."[51] As she displayed in her article for the *Library Journal*, Alexander fervently believed that reading was a critical exercise for youth to develop strong morals and good character. Reflecting decades later on her time as a Pratt librarian, Alexander claimed that, "Teen-agers have a lot to learn…how to deal with growing-up problems, authority and learning perhaps that all adults are basically lonely-all of that is in novels."[52] Alexander's statement implied that delinquency was

[50] "Central Avenue Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library (#11) Annual Report 1944," *Annual Report, 1944*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.
[51] "Work With Young People," *Annual Report, 1943*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.
[52] Hendricks, "Mrs. Margaret Edwards and a Rented Wagon First Brought the Pratt's Books to the People,"

as a response to not knowing how to properly negotiate the transition into adulthood. Read in the context of the social upheaval following mass mobilization for defense, this shortcoming could easily be seen as a failure of the family. With parents increasingly unavailable and youths steadily moving outside the home, the domestic bedrock of society appeared to be under threat from within. By addressing juvenile delinquency, the Enoch Pratt Library presented itself as the glue that would piece the family unit back together by setting youths on the right path through the "wisdom" (as Alexander referred to it) of books.

By the end of its run, the book wagon program moved fully beyond its target demographic to encompass the entire family. As a follow-up article in the *Library Journal* confessed, "The wagon-library started as an experiment in curbing juvenile delinquency, but soon became a family institution."[53] One look at the crowds surrounding the book wagon confirms this statement with varied family members engaging equally with the library. Perhaps this was an unintentional outcome of the program's nature, roaming neighborhoods and openly inviting residents to come and partake in the library's goods. More likely it was undergone with a critical intent. After all, the Enoch Pratt Library fully understood the ramifications of targeting children as potential library patrons. As Branch 23 reported in 1943, "A great many of these people (community members) have never been inside of a library. We are reaching many of these through the children."[54] Likewise in 1944, Branch 18 planned its course to engage with an apathetic community, noting they could, "maybe get

[53] Allen Will Harris, "And It Worked!," *Library Journal* vol. 68 (December 1, 1943): 1002.
[54] Clarice Bennett, "Annual Report, Branch 23, 1943," *Annual Report, 1943*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

parents through enthusiastic children."[55] Undergoing a campaign to connect the library to the family through children was a likely path towards expanding the institution's influence throughout the community. Riding the ripple effect, the Enoch Pratt could aid in the war effort by tightening its ties to the domestic sphere through a targeted crusade against juvenile delinquency, leveraging its influence amongst youth to stabilize the family unit holistically.

Calculating Risk: Neighborhood Selection in the Pratt Book Wagon Program

In its move from an institutional setting towards a dispersed location meant to more fully interact with the home, the book wagon program highlighted that domestic stability was a critical component not only in its own agenda, but to wartime aims as well. Yet, libraries did not view all homes as equally at risk. The Pratt Library's targeting of specific neighborhoods demonstrates that the institution viewed juvenile delinquency as a class phenomenon increasingly tied to racialized communities, a position built more on assumption than reality. Alexander's initial formulation on public libraries and juvenile delinquency implied that the problem had its roots in lower-class, underprivileged neighborhoods. In the first part of her article for the *Library Journal*, Alexander compared the library's services to other welfare agencies that engaged with nation's poor, arguing that public libraries had an equal responsibility to secure the "up-lift" of these communities. She wrote, "…to locate a library branch in a city slum is to establish there a cultural force of inestimable value."[56] Highlighting socioeconomically disadvantaged communities in the context

[55] "Annual Report, Branch 18, 1944," *Annual Report, 1944*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.
[56] Alexander, "Wisdom Crying in the Streets," 347.

of reforming juvenile delinquents implied that these were the geographic areas where such problems existed. Moreover, Alexander's argument painted lower-class youths as more likely to engage in criminal behavior without the library's guidance.

The Enoch Pratt acted on Alexander's, and many like her, assertions that delinquency was rooted in lower-class neighborhoods. During all three years the program ran, it covered neighborhoods that program directors considered economically disadvantaged. In its first summer, the wagon toured communities west of Camden Station and south of Washington Boulevard in South Baltimore. These neighborhoods were close to Branches 3 and 12 of the Enoch Pratt Library. Librarians at Branch 3 described their communities as a "…partly slum type public."[57] Likewise, employees at Branch 12 praised the fact that their library was filling a gap in the community that lacked the recreational outlets of more "prosperous" neighborhoods.[58] Regardless of the communities' actual economic standing, library officials clearly viewed their patrons as belonging to a certain class. Concentrating the book wagon's efforts in these areas manifested the library's internalized belief regarding what kinds of communities were most susceptible to the corrosive influence of crime and therefore which ones were the greatest threat to the home front's stability.

In reality, the library's conclusions were built more on projected fears than actual changes in youth criminality. As historian George H. Callcott argued in his

[57] "Branch 3 Reports, 1943," *Annual Report, 1943,* Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.
[58] Mary Backer, "Branch 12 – Mt. Clare Barre and Carroll Sts.," *Four Year Report of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore's Public Library 1942-1945,* Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

study on Maryland in the second half of the twentieth century, middle-class anxieties over social changes spurred interest in juvenile delinquency during the war years more than actual rise in crime. "The middle-class service clubs," he wrote, "not the police, discovered juvenile delinquency in Maryland."[59] World War II initiated a shift, however temporary and insubstantial, in the very fabric of domestic relations that appeared to threaten the middle-class values public libraries had long championed. Victory Girls' expressions of sexual license and Zoot Suiters' defiant declarations of identity represented departures from the reflections of nuclear stability libraries tried to shape through their buildings, services, and relationships with patrons. Constant pressure from the external threat of fighting in Europe and the Pacific created a doubling down on concentrated efforts to keep the nation strong and productive from within, pushing libraries to view any change in behavior or relations as the symptom of something deeper and more sinister.

Socioeconomic standing may have been the first factor the Enoch Pratt targeted in its campaign against juvenile delinquency, but in subsequent years the library's characterization of at-risk neighborhoods became increasingly racialized. In its first year, the book wagon served interracial communities but during its last two summers the program, in tandem with the city's Department of Public Welfare, concentrated on Black neighborhoods in East Baltimore.[60] The Pratt's narrowing focus on minority communities singled them out as highly prone towards criminal undertakings and played into a common narrative of Black criminality throughout the

[59] Callcott, 50.
[60] Margaret Alexander Edwards, "Work With Young People," *Four Year Report of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore's Public Library 1942-1945*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

country. By targeting African American communities in Baltimore, the Enoch Pratt Library indicated a line of thinking that perceived minority youths as inherently susceptible to delinquency, and consequently, a detraction from the war effort.

Like the Pratt's class assumptions about the source of juvenile delinquency, the racial beliefs tagged in Baltimore's supposed delinquency problem bore little root in reality. Contemporary studies on juvenile delinquency gathered during the early 1940s found that crime had increased at twice the rate among White girls as Black girls and three times as quickly among White boys as Black boys.[61] Why then did the library target economically disadvantaged, minority neighborhoods? Program directors meant the book wagon project to provide a preemptive measure as much as a curative one. The Pratt Library's concentration on these neighborhoods identified them as those most likely to succumb to vice and crime in the future. In doing so, the library fed into a process of alienation for minority communities that so often found themselves outside the boundaries of the normative American lifestyle increasingly being associated as the primary object of civilian defense. This is not to belittle the project or to deny its positive impact in bringing the library's resources to those who may not have been able to access it otherwise. It is, however, meant to highlight how the Enoch Pratt helped to cement assumptions regarding who posed a threat to America's prosperity and victory. By targeting African American communities, the Enoch Pratt Library implied that minority families were a weak spot in the domestic defense machine, one in need of extra vigilance and intervention on the library's behalf.

[61] Campbell, 203. See also Alvarez, 44.

Conclusion

In their Four-Year Report for the years 1942-1945, Pratt librarians at Branch 17 reported the purchase of, "many useful, readable books." Already cramped spatially, former head librarian, Joseph L. Wheeler, asked the enterprising librarians where they would put their new collection. They replied, "In the readers' homes."[62] Branch 17's pithy answer exemplifies Baltimore librarians' prevailing attitude during the World War II years. As institutional limitations, wartime rationing, and transient communities forced a reconsideration on the library's behalf of its own impact in its neighborhoods, the underlying relationship between the domestic sphere and the library emerged with greater prominence. Securing the home front, in a literal sense, became a critical war measure for the Enoch Pratt Free Library, one which it accomplished by reimagining its physical parameters. Slimmed down and more agile, projects like the station libraries in defense housing and the book wagon program met anxieties over domestic instability by increasing the library's proximity to the home. These projects displayed library officials' belief that convenience would breed use and the unwavering power of good books would transform people's minds and attitudes, committing them to work for the good of their neighborhoods and the country.

Tightening the bonds between the library and the home could pave the way for the institution to aid the war effort from within, but it also meant the expenditure of limited resources. The Enoch Pratt Library's selection of specific neighborhoods

[62] Eva L. Greenberg, "Branch 17 – Easterwood North Ave. near Smallwood St.," *Four Year Report of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore's Public Library 1942-1945*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

and groups of people in its community projects reveals the institution's proposed hierarchy of need as it related to supporting the war effort. Through the stations project, librarians sought to draw in defense workers by supplying technical knowledge to speed production and wholesome entertainment to assuage boredom and moral trepidation, ensuring that those responsible for the material production in war industries would remain sharp, content, and committed. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the library singled out minority and disadvantaged communities through its book wagon program. By concentrating on these groups in the context of curbing delinquency, the Pratt Library marked them as likely to undermine the war effort from within.

Moving from the "home front" to the home demonstrates the Enoch Pratt Library's, and public libraries more generally, ability to influence actual communities and individuals in its quest to help secure the second front. Its proximity to the domestic sphere helped single it out as a defense institution with a unique ability to penetrate and stabilize the fabric of American society. This indicates that its role in the war effort may be deeper and more complex than initially perceived based on its relationship to official channels and its postwar position. However, expanding the scope of public libraries' influence during World War II also means reckoning with their full social impact. While war programs such as the book wagon hinted at the institution's racialized assumptions, studying the Enoch Pratt and Maryland libraries' relationship to gender and race reveals a complicated legacy that undermines the public library's image as a progressive institution. The final two chapters explore the ramifications of World War II's social disruption on the feminization of librarianship

in Maryland libraries and African American's access to public libraries throughout the state.

Chapter 3: The Marian Librarian Effect: Gender and Librarianship During World War II

Introduction

> "Heaven help us if the library caught on fire
> And the Volunteer Hose Brigademen
> Had to whisper the news to Marian…Madam Librarian
>
> If I stumbled and I busted my what-you-may-call-it
> I could lie on your floor unnoticed
> 'Till my body had turned to carrion…Madam Librarian
>
> It's a long lost cause I can never win
> For the civilized world accepts as unforgivable sin
> Any talking out loud with any librarian.."[1]

There are few salient representations of librarianship available in the cultural vernacular but perhaps the most famous is Marian Paroo from Meredith Wilson's 1957 musical, *The Music Man*. Possessing mental acuity coupled with an unapproachability born from professionalism, "Marian, Madam Librarian" is River City, Iowa's token oddity. The town's gaggle of gossiping women talk-a-little (or a lot) about her supposedly sordid past to any who will listen, including roving conman, Harold Hill. Hill, enamored with the possibility of a "sadder, but wiser girl" pursues Marian as a lark and in an exchange laced with song and dance (literally and metaphorically) Hill concedes his overtures as a lost cause; Marian, Madam Librarian, could never veer from her professionalism to help an injured Hill, much less follow him on a date.

[1] Meredith Wilson, "Marian The Librarian," Robert Preston, Capital Records, 1958, https://open.spotify.com/track/0SsoCpGsSz32oyQjsvDZFu?si=azgisGi3QxSn4BOoZCWJ9g. The author would like to apologize for placing this ear worm in your head. Please feel free to wash it out with any other soundtrack from Broadway's Golden Age.

Though Hill's song is teasing and meant to irritate the exasperated Marian, his characterization of the uptight librarian provides an entry point for untangling the complex displays of femininity associated with librarians during the first half of the twentieth century. Hill's song attributes Marian's frostiness to a professional demeanor, a byproduct of the institution's propriety that valued rules and professionalism above romance and fun. Yet, Marian's place within the library is never questioned. In fact, the library is the natural default for many twentieth-century fictional women unlucky in love (think of Mary Bailey's fate when George is wished away in *It's a Wonderful Life*). While Mary Bailey and Marian Paroo are fictional creations, their characterizations point to a deeper contradiction in America's public library development. The early twentieth-century public library was at once a "woman's world," an institution dominated by and built on women's professional presence and gendered values, and an institution that took advantage of women's subservient place in society by limiting their professional development while reinforcing their adherence to traditional gender roles.

This tension in library history is evident in the development of the Enoch Pratt Free Public Library and libraries across Maryland. By 1915, ninety-five members of the Pratt Library's 123-person staff were women and most of the remaining men were employed in nonprofessional capacities as janitors or stock boys, except, of course, at the highest positions.[2] Women's dominance in the library continued to World War II by which point the Pratt's training course exclusively recruited women for library

[2] Philip Arthur Kalisch, *The Enoch Pratt Free Library: A Social History* (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1969), 107.

work. Throughout this period, librarianship's gendered tradition shaped the policies, actions, and descriptions of women librarians working in the Enoch Pratt Free Library, creating a system that relied on specific expressions of femininity to define a model of librarianship. Femininity was not only a prerequisite for librarianship, it was a tool to measure potential professional capacity and a method for drawing boundaries around the character of "the librarian."

The onset of World War II complicated gender models and meanings as the demands of arming the nation propelled men and women into new territory, but it did not fundamentally realign them. While women moved into the workforce in unprecedented numbers, the figure of the librarian remained a cultural touchstone of feminine virtue. Book drives and military libraries brought professional and volunteer librarians into regular contact with servicemen where both parties' genders accumulated new meaning in the context of the national struggle. The soldier emerged as a stand-in for the nation's strength and will to dominate in the battles ahead and the librarian his feminine counter who measured and fixed his identity. In this way, World War II represented not a break in the profession's feminization or a turning point in women's experiences as librarians, but an environment where their femininity was valued even more for how it could be read to bolster the soldier's status.

The Feminization of a Profession: A History

Women's rapid movement into librarianship during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a product of the profession's easy alignment with the domestic sphere. Early tenets of librarianship bore a striking similarity to Victorian

ideals of true womanhood, allowing women to leverage their social position to claim entrance into the new profession. Like other careers such as nursing, social work, and teaching, librarianship could be "…quickly adjusted to fit the narrowly circumscribed sphere of women's activities, for it appeared similar to the work of the home, functioned as cultural activity, required no great skill or physical strength, and brought little contact with the rougher portions of society."[3] These requisites enabled women to a find an acceptable outlet for their talents in a public institution, but they also created a professional standard based on middle-class idealizations of femininity. Women could pursue librarianship because of its ability to mimic already acceptable "women's work" such as promoting cultural attainment, caring for youth, and extending a "civilizing" influence on the lower class. Yet, women librarians also needed to manifest these values in themselves, skewing professional representation to favor the educated and middle-class.

Linking notions of middle-class womanhood to models of librarianship shaped the terms for what the profession would look like and how the public library would function during the first half of the twentieth century. As argued in chapter two, public libraries cultivated a strong relationship with the domestic sphere that encouraged patrons to identify the institution as adjacent to the home and family. Women's emerging dominance as the institution's professional face further encouraged the mental overlap between the home and library. According to library historian, Dee Garrison, "As women became dominant in library work, the

[3] Dee Garrison, *Apostles of Culture: The Public Librarian and American Society, 1876-1920* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 174.

professional literature began to reflect the concept that the ideal library would offer the warmth and hospitality of the home to its patrons…Like a visitor to a home, the reader was to be welcomed, to be given kind and individual attention, to be treated with tact and gentle manners."[4] One can see here the self-perpetuating mechanisms that propelled and sustained the dominance of women in the profession: many librarians were women thus libraries took on a home-like quality enabling the entrance of more women into the profession and so on and so forth.

While librarianship's domestic turn provided the cultural framework necessary to allow women into the public institution as professionals, many women were also attracted to the library's social mission and found their own sense of self-actualization while pursuing this work. Employment in public libraries allowed female Progressives to enact their values of social reform by directing the institution towards a program of individual uplift through education and "wholesome" entertainment.[5] In doing so, librarianship became a source of true opportunity for many middle-class women to advance their own social beliefs along a path that promised individual agency and fulfillment. Despite the chance for women to pursue the valued work of social reform and obtain economic independence, librarianship remained fully ensconced in existing social paradigms that viewed women as innately aligned towards cultivating the development of others and sustaining the creature comforts of home. The promise of self-actualization is not to be overlooked but it was

[4] Ibid., 178-179.
[5] Joanne E. Passet, *Cultural Crusaders: Women Librarians in the American West, 1900-1917* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994); Mary Niles Maack, "Gender, Culture, and the Transformation of American Librarianship, 1890-1920," *Libraries & Culture* vol. 33, no. 1 (1998): 51-61. https://www.jstor.org/ (accessed September 24, 2018).

deeply shaped by libraries' conditions, policies, and day-to-day activities. In the Enoch Pratt Free Library, those terms created a visible impact on women librarians from the institution's earliest days.

Women Librarians and the Enoch Pratt: The Early Years

From its founding, the Enoch Pratt Library employed women as professionals in considerable numbers and on a regular basis, but in circumscribed positions that sought to dictate the use and meaning of their gender as part of their professional identity. This dynamic was evident in the relationship between the library's executives and its employees. The Pratt Library was (and still is) managed by a Board of Trustees and a head librarian. When Enoch Pratt gifted the library building and a yearly sum of $50,000 for its maintenance, he entrusted the library's administration to a board of nine trustees who served lifetime appointments.[6] Pratt chose the first board members himself, appointing wealthy and prominent men from the city, including Charles Joseph Bonaparte, Theodore Roosevelt's future Attorney General, and James A. Gary, William McKinley's Postmaster General.[7] These men, along with Pratt himself and the first head librarian, Lewis Steiner, made all the initial staff decisions.[8] One can see the immediate imbalance in this hiring process. Not only were men in charge of hiring a mostly female staff, many of them had little to no experience in running a library. Lewis Steiner, for example, was a Republican political operative and editor for the *Frederick Examiner* before he joined the Pratt Library.[9]

[6] Kalisch, 54.
[7] Ibid., 69.
[8] Ibid., 64.
[9] Ibid., 69.

Placing men of power and privilege in charge of the hiring process and assignments of female library employees created a work dynamic that circumscribed the manifestations of their femininity, often relegating them to a secondary status to male employees and patrons. This process is vividly illustrated through the career of Pearl Fenwick Hopkins, an inaugural Pratt library assistant whose career in the institution spanned nearly fifty years. While describing her hiring process decades later, Hopkins told the *Baltimore Sun* that appearing before the Pratt's first Library Board was like viewing "the patriarchs." "They discussed me as though I were not there at all," she told the paper.[10] Hopkins impressions of the board members vested them with a supreme authority that manifested in their ability to literally dismiss her physical presence even as they debated hiring her. Her own perceived lack of representation, the ability to advocate for herself as a valuable addition to the library, emphasizes the circumscribed opportunity librarianship was for women. Though it presented a path for esteemed professional work, participation depended on men's assessment of women's capability in a process that depreciated women's evaluation of themselves and each other.

Despite some board members' reservations regarding her youth and inexperience, the Pratt Library hired Hopkins but the male library authorities' perceptions of her continued to confine her professional development. Hopkins, "…was supposedly so attractive that after she was hired Steiner found it expedient to put her to work back in the stacks where she would not provide such an inviting

[10] "Library Beauty of Nineties Recalls Carnegie and Pratt," *Baltimore Sun*, December 29, 1935 https://search.proquest.com/docview/539268901?accountid=14696 (accessed December 3, 2018).

distraction for the men."[11] This example cast the feminine form as a disruption to the library's functions. Steiner's actions worked off the assumption that the responsibility for orderliness rested with the librarian and not with distracted men themselves. In doing so, he gave preference to the men in the library, signaling their innate belonging in the institution despite the Hopkins' status as an employee. Moreover, by removing her from the public view, Steiner demonstrated that male library authorities had the power to order the physical bodies of female librarians within the institution. In this case, since the body was the offending instrument, it was removed from the public male gaze by another male authority.

The complex dynamics of librarianship's drift towards feminization also emerged in an early twentieth-century campaign to improve the library's clerks' living standards. In 1911, two letters were written to *The Baltimore Sun* describing the librarians' poor working conditions within the institution. These women, the letters claimed, were expected to work the first three months of their employment free as a "trial period" and then paid fifteen dollars a month afterwards, a wage that was not, "…enough to pay their board, clothe themselves and meet the necessary expenses of life."[12] To drive home the outrage, both authors compared the "library girls" unjust compensation to the board of trustees' employment of domestic workers. "One of the trustees" a letter argued, "will pay a negro woman $20 a month to go in his kitchen, and, of course, gives her her board, and yet, to the shame of the library be it said, they

[11] Ibid., 64.
[12] "The Starvation Salaries Paid the Girls in the Enoch Pratt Library," *The Baltimore Sun*, October 27, 1911, https://search.proquest.com/docview/535325720?accountid=14696 (accessed September 2, 2018).

require young girls of respectability and culture to work three months for nothing, pay them $15 a month salary and work until 8 and 9 o'clock at night, such hours that not one of the trustees would allow his own daughter to keep."[13] This letter reveals the underlying assumptions about the type of woman who would work in the library and what their employment in a public capacity meant. The library workers in this article are treated as a single unit, indicating a belief in a shared set of characteristics tied to their professional identity. Contrasting the employment of African American domestic workers with the library clerks, "girls of respectability and culture," put an immediate racial bent to the characterization of library workers that placed African American women outside the sphere of professional inclusion.[14] Similarly, associating library workers with ideals like respectability and culture tied them to middle-class notions of femininity, implying a shared social standing for these women. Elucidating these expectations in a public medium cemented a common understanding regarding the figure of the "librarian," one that drew circles of inclusion and exclusion regarding what sort of woman a librarian should be.

In addition, the author frames library clerks' employment in a familial narrative that emphasizes their dependent status. In a literal sense, these women were dependent on the library for an income to support them. However, by invoking a paternal analogy, the letter assumed that the institution's administration was meant to protect these library workers in a manner that invaded their personal lives. After all, if

[13] "Says the City Should Not Appropriate a Dollar to the Enoch Pratt Library Until It Investigates the Library's Disbursements," *The Baltimore Sun*, October 28, 1911, https://search.proquest.com/docview/535301754?accountid=14696 (accessed September 2, 2018).
[14] This was an unfortunately reality for the Enoch Pratt Library, which did not employ African Americans as professionals until the 1940s. This dynamic will be explored further in chapter four.

the Board of Trustees' respectable daughters should not be out to the outrageous hour of 8 o'clock, how could they presume to force equally cultured girls into such risky circumstances? The use of "library girls" reinforced this image of helpless, dependent beings reliant upon others to provide for and protect them by infantilizing them. Though most female librarians were young, calling them girls placed them in a subservient social position that equated youth with incapability.[15] These early examples demonstrate the inherent tension that awaited women who moved into the public sphere as library professionals. Despite the opportunity for autonomy enabled in many ways by virtue of their gender, the strictures of traditional femininity followed Pratt librarians as a limitation to their professional development and a measurement for how they should appear to the public.

A Course for the Future: Training Pratt Librarians in World War II

The Pratt Library's early models of librarianship and femininity continued to shape its female employees' experiences into World War II despite the growing socioeconomic opportunities for women in the city. The war marked the unprecedented entrance of thousands of women into the workplace. In Baltimore alone, the number of women working in manufacturing climbed from 26,100 in 1940 to 78,600 by 1945.[16] Engagement in a manufacturing job marked increased economic opportunity for women, particularly after the devastating Depression years. In fact, the Annual Reports for the Enoch Pratt during these years frequently noted the

[15] Exact ages for library clerks working in the Enoch Pratt Free Library during this time are unknown. However, Passet's work on western librarians from 1900-1917 found an age range from nineteen to fifty-six, with most institutional directors preferring applicants between eighteen and thirty. Passet, 25.
[16] Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women During World War II* (Westport, Connecticut: The Greenwood Press, 1981): 32.

departure of library employees for more gainful employment in the city's defense industry.[17] Some library historians have correlated women's expanded opportunities during the war years to the beginnings of a similar unraveling in librarianship's traditional gendered models.[18] Yet, a closer look at the Pratt Library during this time demonstrates a continued adherence to a specific model of femininity that emphasized women's traditional alignment with the home and their ornamental value.

This dynamic was particularly apparent in mid-century writings about the Enoch Pratt Library's training course. The training program was established in 1928 and acted as a feeder for the library's workforce, providing rigorous training in the art of librarianship and the promise of a spot at the library as an assistant after the student graduated. Though the course admitted both men and women, it attracted almost exclusively female applicants.[19] In the 1938-1939 Annual Report from the training course, director Marian S. Scandrett noted the paucity of male library assistants and encouraged the program administrators to be more proactive in encouraging men to apply for the training.[20] The gambit did not seem to yield much effect, however, as all the thirty-two graduates between 1942-1945 were women.[21] The absence of male

[17] See for example, "Work of the Catalog Department," and "Binding Department," *Annual Report, 1942*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.
[18] See for example, Garrison, 239.
[19] Fascinatingly, Pulitzer Prize winner and Poet Laureate, Karl Shapiro, was one of the few male graduates of the Enoch Pratt Training Course. Kalisch, 160.
[20] Marian S. Scandrett, "Report of the Training Class," *Annual Report, 1938-1939*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives. Scandrett had a particularly keen eye for noting the gender imbalances within the library. In the same report, she noted that, "By insisting that all men librarians should want to be primarily administrators if they are real men, the profession deprives itself of much potential strength…it also betrays an outmoded conception of the business relationships between men and women."
[21] Mary Elizabeth Miller, "The Training Class," *Four Year Report of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore's Public Library 1942-1945*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

applicants during the war years is unsurprising given the availability of higher paying jobs in the defense industry and the pressure on young men to join the armed services. However, the lack of male applicants for the training program prior to World War II is indicative of the cultural stereotypes that equated librarianship with "women's work." The Enoch Pratt Library tried hard to distance itself from these assumptions, consistently reiterating the skill and knowledge needed to be a librarian. As one early advertisement for the training program claimed, "Persons who are merely seeking a job, who think that 'library work is easy' or who look upon it as a 'sheltered and ladylike occupation' need not apply."[22] Despite attempts to appeal to a more balanced applicant pool, however, women continued to dominate the training course and the Enoch Pratt's employee ranks.

Requirements for admittance to the program followed a double-edged route that simultaneously encouraged would-be students to expand their horizons while holding them to traditional feminine models then nearly inseparable with the public library's emphasis on service. Academic requirements for admittance and the curriculum of study for the program reflected the library's desire to ensure that their employees represented a high level of scholastic and cultural attainment. An article in *The Baltimore Sun* listed the 1940 class's qualifications: of the eighteen applicants, sixteen were college graduates, one had a PhD, most could speak French, half knew German, and a quarter Latin. These already well-educated women were additionally required to read extensively during their course of study, with one graduate claiming

[22] *Baltimore Sun*, May 24, 1936, quoted in Kalisch, 160.

that she and her classmates read over one hundred books for their training while skimming many more.[23] Well-rounded reading ensured that graduates would be suitable reading guides and information providers for future Pratt patrons, but it also stimulated the students' personal growth. Library historian, Joanne Passet, claimed that early library school graduates' intensive reading helped cement their identity as Progressive, "new women." She wrote, "…the era's literature empowered female readers by presenting models of women who succeeded outside of the family context and in the larger public sphere."[24] While it is unknown how Pratt trainees internalized the materials they read, the emphasis on reading and study presented an opportunity to gain an expanded worldview, magnified by the students' already significant academic accomplishments.

Despite the training course's emphasis on intellectual growth, the library continued to insist that potential applicants display traditional feminine qualities well-associated with early models of librarianship. Resourcefulness, tact, kindness, patience, and discretion molded a framework that focused on pleasing patrons and positioned the librarian as a "hostess" within the institution.[25] Course directors also demanded this emphasis on agreeableness on a surface level. The Enoch Pratt Library refused to admit anyone over thirty-five into the training course and generally

[23] A.D. Charles, "Now Librarians Must Read The Books," *The Baltimore Sun*, June 2, 1940, https://search.proquest.com/docview/540175438?accountid=14696 (accessed September 2, 2018).
[24] Passet, 21.
[25] See for examples A.D. Charles, "Now Librarians Must Read The Books," and Beta K. Manakee, "Training New Librarians," *The Baltimore Sun*, June 1, 1941, https://search.proquest.com/docview/533384255?accountid=14696 (accessed September 2, 2018). For more on the "library hostess" see Garrison, especially chapter 11.

expected that applicants be attractive.[26] As one newspaper article reported in 1940, "One requisite (for the course) …is that a young woman librarian have a pleasing appearance."[27] The idealized female form was considered a valuable asset in early librarianship for how it could be harnessed to further institutional ends. Early in the century, library boards, particularly if they were the first in a community, placed a high premium on their hires' appearance to judge personality, capability, and as a way to entice patrons into the institution.[28] Agreeableness, personally and physically, cemented the illusion of domesticity within the library by recreating the sense of warmth and comfort idealized within the American nuclear family. The librarian, dispensing helpful guidance with patience and charm, mimicked a maternal figure that welcomed patrons into the sanctuary of the library and saw to their needs.

A "pleasing appearance" might have been a preference for library trainees but physical attractiveness threatened professional boundaries even as it was put to work advancing the institution. The story of librarian, Pearl Fenwick Hopkins, demonstrated one way the feminine form was perceived to imperil the library's internal stability. Marriage among the female staff members similarly cast overt femininity as a professional risk. The Annual Reports for the World War II years noted the departure of several staff members due to marriage and the head librarian, Dr. Joseph Wheeler, admitted in reaction to the dictate that library recruits have a "pleasing appearance," that, "…the selection of staff members with this qualification is so successful that he is constantly losing them through marriage."[29] In a flip of the

[26] Miller, "The Training Class"
[27] A.D. Charles, "Now Librarians Must Read The Books,"
[28] Passet, 30.
[29] A.D. Charles, "Now Librarians Must Read The Books."

script, the same qualification used to bolster the institution's image could be turned into its loss and even weaponized among the staff. The same newspaper article reported that, "…it is told around the library that members of the training class, in order to be assured of jobs upon graduation, frequently suggest dates for the regular staff members in the hopes of engineering a match."[30] Though traditional values posed marriage and family as the ultimate fulfilment for middle-class women, the same definition of femininity that enabled women's participation in the profession limited its full application. Good librarians should be attractive but successful librarians cast aside romance and family in favor of professional accomplishment.

Social conventions and library authorities constructed the standards of femininity would-be librarians needed to manifest in order to qualify as potential professionals but women librarians themselves enabled these paradigms' reproduction. Female librarians' willingness to meet these circumscribed gender requirements emerged from the intellectual prestige associated with the profession and the nature of the job itself. The training programs' competitiveness undoubtedly encouraged intellectually-inclined women to pursue the profession. As the participants' high-level of academic achievement demonstrates, the Enoch Pratt valued intellectual excellence in its candidates in a manner not readily available to women in other white-collar professions. In fact, many Pratt librarians turned to the profession after initial attempts in other areas of work, like teaching, proved unsatisfying.[31] The high standards for admittance into professional librarianship

[30] Ibid.
[31] For examples from the mid-twentieth century, see stories on Katharine Street, "And People Think All a Librarian Does is Sit There" *Baltimore Evening Sun*, June 1941, Folder 2, Box 70, Maryland

fostered a competitive atmosphere that encouraged participants to take every advantage for success possible, including falling in-line behind a discriminatory system.

Furthermore, the needs of the profession itself rewarded a feminized perspective of the work. Tact, patience, kindness, while attributes at once associated with the "cult of true womanhood" and the domestic sphere, are also characteristics integral to navigating publicly-facing positions in librarianship. As one Pratt Librarian put it, "The most important qualification for a librarian is an unfailing sense of tact…She meets so many different types of people in her work. Her job is to find what they want to read even if they themselves are undecided."[32] Librarianship's parallels to middle-class definitions of femininity opened the profession to women at the turn-of-the-century but those traits' importance to the profession existed independent of their gendered connotations. Women librarian's adherence to them was as much good librarianship as a manifestation of a particular kind of femininity. Unwittingly or not, female librarians who displayed these qualities helped to reproduce their gendered dynamics by embodying their stereotypical association with middle-class, white women.

Women librarians' attitudes towards career, marriage, and family also helped to reinforce the figure of "the librarian" as a perpetual spinster. Many librarians accepted that marriage was a significant threat to their professional status in part

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World War II Records, Maryland Historical Society.; and Margaret Edwards (ne Alexander), "Mrs. Margaret Edwards and a Rented Wagon First Brough the Pratt's Books to the People," *Baltimore Sun*, January 21, 1974, Enoch Pratt Free Library-Book Wagon Vertical File, Maryland Room, The Enoch Pratt Free Library.

[32] Sara Wilson, "The Woman's Angle on Books," *Baltimore Evening Sun*, September 13, 1938, Enoch Pratt Free Library-Envelope 6, Maryland Room, The Enoch Pratt Free Library.

because the two states were often posed as incompatible. Historically, library leaders and young women themselves viewed a woman's participation in librarianship as a professional dalliance before she moved onto her "true" calling as a wife and mother.[33] Even advocates who supported the employment of married women in libraries called for limitations in its full application. A few years before the outbreak of World War II, an article appeared in the *Wilson Bulletin for Librarians* responding to a previous entry that had questioned women's commitment to librarianship. The author, a woman, asserted that married women could be as commitment to their jobs as single women and men, but that they needed to approach their employment with a cool professionalism that prioritized the institution. Relating a personal example, the author described a woman librarian who had, "…continued to work so far into her period of pregnancy that her appearance caused comment. She should, of course, have made satisfactory arrangements much earlier and saved her employer the embarrassment of approaching her."[34] As this example highlights, women librarians themselves condoned the continuing standards of propriety and the controlled expressions of women's appearance in librarianship. In this case, the author's reaction to the pregnant library worker further disassociated notions of family from career by implying something shameful in the woman's public appearance.

These colorful stories are less easy to find in the Enoch Pratt Library's records. However, the number of instances recorded in the Pratt's Annual Reports of

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[33] Passet, 31-32.
[34] Katharine M. Stokes, "Warning-Soft Shoulders," *Wilson Bulletin for Librarians* (March 1939): 470-471, reprinted in Kathleen Weibel, Kathleen M. Heim, and Dianne J. Ellsworth, *The Role of Women in Librarianship 1876-1976: The Entry, Advancement, and Struggle for Equalization in One Profession* (Phoenix: The Oryx Press, 1979), 112-113.

women quitting the library after marrying attests that the dichotomy between marriage and career held throughout the war years.[35] While this phenomenon certainly was not limited to librarianship, women's willingness to resign their posts upon marriage reinforced the notion that women librarians should be personally unattached in order to fulfill their professional duties. By continuing to resign in significant numbers, even as the library struggled to fill their professional ranks, married former-librarians perpetuated the dichotomy between dedication to family and home and adherence to a career.

Gender Models in Conversation: Experiences of War

The effects of librarianship's feminization clearly continued to manifest in Maryland libraries' day-to-day employment practices well into World War II. Yet, the war years are notable not only for the continuation of this trend, but for the unique circumstances in which gender dynamics were being restructured and re-presented amongst the massive physical and social upheaval that occurred as many men left the workplace to fight abroad and women stepped into their abandoned roles by the thousands. Against this backdrop, the serviceman emerged as the pinnacle representation of masculinity and national strength and books an important weapon in his arsenal in the fight against fascism. The nation strove to support the G.I.'s intellectual growth and sustain his morale through actions like creating camp libraries on military bases and collecting books for distribution through the Victory Books Campaigns (VBC). Women played key roles in these activities that were similarly

[35] See for example "General Reference Department," *Annual Report, 1944*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

arbitrated by cultural definitions of their gender responsibilities. Despite their momentum into the public sphere, World War II reinforced women's adherence to home and family in a way that positioned their femininity as a patriotic service to the country. Understanding how the war set the terms for models of masculinity and femininity allows for a deeper exploration of how these notions shaped book selection for soldiers and mediated the interactions between servicemen and women librarians.

America's brand of military masculinity during World War II situated the serviceman as an atomized manifestation of the nation's strength, power, and vitality on the international stage. Artistic representations of servicemen during World War II captured one manifestation of this new model of masculinity. War posters and propaganda accentuated the physical prowess of military personnel as a way of communicating the nation's strength and will through its defenders.[36] This metaphorical reading privileged soldiers' status not only for the scope of their service, but through the national stakes invested in their image. In doing so, the masculinity associated with servicemen came to dominate the national narrative as defense service grew from an alternative to an imperative. Propaganda promoting American farmers, for example, imbued the masculine tones set by works depicting military personnel as a way to persuade young men to stay on the farm. In each type of propaganda, the men are depicted the same: rugged good-looks of a Hollywood star, sleeves rolled up, ready to work for the good of the country. The close resemblance between the two characters, G.I. and American farmer, was meant to communicate

[36] Christine Jarvis, *The Male Body at War: American Masculinity During World War II* (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2004), 45-55.

their equivalence and persuade young farmers that their brand of war service followed in the same steps as military service.[37] Promoting the American cause was the same in each of these representations, but the root of masculinity was based on ideals associated with military service.

While propaganda associated military masculinity with a specific role in American society, it portrayed the traits and characteristics as inherent in every G.I., making it at once highly specific and widely dispersed. As historian, James Sparrow, argued, the serviceman represented the "master key to wartime political culture." As a focal point for national identity, military personnel were imbued with layers of symbolic meaning emphasizing their dedication to the cause and country, ruggedness in the face of trials, and "lack of sentimentality." Yet, his ultimate appeal was that he was incredibly ordinary and easily personified. The G.I., "…provided individuals with a model onto whom they could project a personal, intimate identification, as if he were a brother, father, son, or husband.[38] By personifying the highest cause of dedication in a period based around sacrifice and service, the soldier came to stand as the model of masculinity projected onto every man who wore a uniform.

World War II also forced a reconsideration of expressions of American femininity as mobilization for defense called upon women to serve in traditionally male capacities. During the war years, thousands of women entered the workforce, taking up positions vacated by men who left to join the service. This move was necessary to support the massive domestic wartime production underway, but it was

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[37] Katherine Jellison, "Get Your Farm in the Fight: Farm Masculinity in World War II," *Agricultural History Society* vol. 92, no. 1 (2018): 5-20. https://www.jstor.org/ (accessed November 14, 2018).
[38] James T. Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 72-74.

ultimately conditional and limited by traditional gender precepts. After surveying women's movement into factory work during the war, historian, Karen Anderson, concluded that, "…wartime changes did not signal any radical revision of conventional ideas regarding women's proper social and economic roles."[39] Women's efforts in wartime service were additionally expressed as supplemental to the larger campaign and overwhelming shaped by the assumption that their basic alignment would remain within the home. The lack of postwar planning for women's fulltime employment, "…suggest[ed] that employers and government officials operated from a perspective that deemed wage labor as merely an adjunct to women's "real" role, which was full-time home-making."[40] Ultimately, the war did not allow for a shift in conceptions of women's social and economic position despite the significant change in their immediate circumstances.

Not only did women's role in society remain relatively unaltered as a result of World War II, but the circumstances created by the war necessitated a doubling down on women's femininity. Women's participation in defense jobs threatened to undermine their traditional alignment with the home and family and expose them to morally questionable situations. Late nights from shift work put women outside the protection of the home, conjuring a spectacle of lascivious behavior from unsupervised nighttime activity. Advertisements for beauty products sought to circumvent these situations by reminding working women of the attention due to their

[39] Anderson, 60.
[40] Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II* (Amherst, Massachusetts: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 26-27, http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=13848&site=ehost-live.

physical appearance. Pond's Cold Cream ran a campaign aimed at war workers that sought to negotiate their new position by reconnecting female defense workers to more traditional feminine concerns. One ad depicted a shift worker using the product to "smooth away tiredness" created by the laborer's new rigid work schedule. Highlighting concerns over appearance not only illustrates the continuation of women's adherence to beauty standards in wartime circumstances, but it points to a deeper cultural prescription for the worry about women's entrance into unsupervised terrain. After all, "If women working night shifts devoted more time at home to their faces, they would be less likely to compromise their bodies or their reputations."[41] As this example demonstrates, World War II produced a cultural reliance on traditional definitions of femininity, such as beauty, purity, and alignment with the home, as a way to cope with women's entrance into traditionally masculine territory.

Reading Gender: Collecting and Distributing Books for the Serviceman

Traditional gender assumptions translated into the act of reading and underpinned how librarians and volunteers selected and prepared books for servicemen. Library historian, Patti Clayton Becker, described the weeding guidelines given out by the VBC committee, writing, "The instructions reflected librarians' long-standing poor opinion of series books and romance stories, and the military's disdain for works they thought insufficiently manly."[42] This martial literary taste manifested in practical delineations about what types of books servicemen would want to have

[41] Melissa A. McEuen, *Making War, Making Women: Femininity and Duty on the American Home Front, 1941-1945* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 2010), 20, https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/book/11453.
[42] Patti Clayton Becker, *Books and Libraries in American Society During World War II: Weapons in the War of Ideas* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 140.

access to and what sorts of books distributors provided to them. An article from the Maryland Library Association's newsletter highlights these assumptions in action. While describing the establishment of a station library for women war workers in Cecil County, the article noted that the book collection consisted of, "…volumes…selected from the thousands of titles received which would *not* have interest to the men in our armed forces."[43] This example defines literary taste as an extension of gender by coding book selection as a binary action. Either books were for servicemen through merit of their themes, subjects, etc. or they were not, in which case the discarded books were equally used to define feminine reading tastes.

While the committee perspective made the process of selection and weeding a neat expression of servicemen culture, military personnel's own experiences in the stacks blurs a clear reading on gendered literary tastes. In an article on the United Seamen's Service Club library in Baltimore, Nanette Manning, a Pratt librarian and volunteer director, observed that visiting sailors never openly sought "… 'slushy' books, or love stories" but that these types of books, "…show(ed) signs of frequent handling."[44] The impulse to peruse these types of books clandestinely demonstrates that projected gendered reading habits loomed large in the psyche of sailors as they decided what they should be seen reading. However, the books themselves betrayed the knowledge that sailors' actual reading tastes were more fluid than imagined.

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[43] "Cecil County," *Between Librarians* vol. 10, no.1 (May 1943). Maryland Library Association Archives, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.
[44] "Seamen Want To Read Of Sea: Service Club Library Needs More Maritime Books To Meet Requests," *Baltimore Sun*, October 11, 1943, https://search.proquest.com/docview/538092749?accountid=14696 (accessed September 2, 2018).

Another article on sailors' reading tastes from a few years later likewise confirmed their proclivities for traditionally "feminine" reading but traced it to a more commonplace reason: it was simply entertaining. "Those rough-and-reading seamen who man American merchant ships," the article stated, "are avid readers of the *Ladies' Home Journal*. They also like the *Woman's Home Companion*…she (American Merchant Marine Library Association representative, Elizabeth Sappington) knows that sailors like women's magazines because they have good fiction..."[45] This article pushed back on the perspective that tried to arbitrate gendered reading across strict topical grounds and implied that subject and packaging mattered less to sailors than a story's ability to transcend their circumstances.

The Soldier and the Librarian-ess: Recruiting Librarians for Military Work

Reading tastes might have crossed gender lines for soldiers and sailors but interactions between servicemen and women librarians reinforced gender models shaped by the war. Maintaining and supplying books for military personnel brought women librarians into regular contact with servicemen and into a deeply masculine environment where their basic femininity was accentuated to contrast and reinforce the serviceman's masculinity. Although military libraries were nothing new, women's prominent role in them was a recent development. During the first World War, military library directors discouraged women and outright barred them from serving as librarians in military camps. The military's emphasis on "clean living" for soldiers necessitated that men and women be kept separate from one another to avoid the

[45] Gray Johnson Poole, "Seven League Books," April 7, 1947, *Baltimore Sunday Sun*, Folder 16, Box 4, Maryland World War II Records, Maryland Historical Society.

"moral corruption" that came with unsupervised mingling of the sexes. In addition, many military supervisors thought that camp libraries would prove too physically taxing for women and thus discouraged their hiring.[46]

All this had changed by the 1940s as the military eagerly sought women librarians for employment in stateside camps. An advertisement from the library publication, *Between Librarians*, listed two job opportunities for librarians, the first for assistant librarians and the second for post and hospital librarians. The second job offered a higher salary, had more stringent educational requirements, and was only open to women between the ages of twenty-five and forty.[47] How did the military turn from barring women in camp libraries to actively, almost exclusively, recruiting them? Women's entrance into military positions as Women's Army Corps (WAC) and Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Services (WAVES) volunteers offers one possible explanation for the military's acquiescence to women librarians. Military leaders gradually came around to the idea of women in military work as they recognized their utility in other countries' forces (notably Britain and Canada) and as they realized that women were able to takeover already feminized types of work, such as clerical responsibilities, freeing men up for combat positions.[48] Clerical work, much like nursing, presented a smooth transition for women into military-related

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[46] Caroline Daniels, "The Feminine Touch Has Not Been Wanting": Women Librarians at Camp Zachary Taylor, 1917-1919." *Libraries & the Cultural Record* vol. 43, no. 3 (2008): 286-307 http://www.jstor.org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/stable/25549497 (accessed September 22, 2018).
[47] Col. Ray L. Trautman, "Army Post and Hospital Librarians Needed," *Between Librarians* vol. 12, no. 3 (September 1945): 2. Folder 6, Box 1, Series 9, Maryland Library Association archives, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries. Women older than forty were likely not sought for military positions as the prevailing wisdom in military circles believed that menopausal women were not fit for service. D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984), 28-29.
[48] Campbell, 37.

careers by placing them in already socially acceptable positions. As another feminized profession, librarianship represented a similar traditionally gendered job that was unthreatening when staffed primarily by women. Although women's dominance in librarianship was virtually an established fact by WWI, women's acceptance as military personnel during the Second World War likely cushioned the transition to employing women as librarians in military camps as well.

Women's growing involvement in the military undoubtedly enabled their participation as camp librarians, but the cultural impressions of librarianship fueled a simpler explanation that framed the profession's feminization as an expectation to be met in any circumstance. Describing airmen's experiences as library patrons in Portland, Oregon, Becker wrote that, "Until the camp library was established, men stationed at the Portland, Oregon Air Base used the Portland Public Library. They received adequate service, they told library staff, but wished for "a librarian who is young, goodlooking, and *feminine*."[49] The servicemen's explanations paralleled deeper trends in librarianship that valued women librarians' physical attractiveness as an asset to their service-oriented role. By emphasizing this quality in their own librarian, these airmen were likely looking for a little fun amidst their changing circumstances, but they also acted out gender ideologies deeply tied to their respective professions: the soldier as the cultural paragon for masculinity and the librarian as a visible touchstone for femininity.

Servicemen and librarians' strong association with hegemonic gender roles structured their interactions as a space where language and action mutually reinforced

[49] Becker, 61.

their gender ideologies. As demonstrated earlier, providing books to military personnel brought women into soldiers' orbits in carefully structured, culturally appropriate ways. This access point applied to professional and nonprofessional women alike. As a significant port, Baltimore served as a distribution center for the American Merchant Marine Library Association (AMMLA). The Baltimore chapter's director, Wilma Smith, curated a collection of books for sailors and personally distributed them to departing ships. A 1942 *Baltimore Sun* article described her interactions with sailors, writing, "Her arrival at the ships is always greeted with courtesy and friendliness. The men are always glad to see the librarians who brings them material to while away the long hours of duty. "I don't think a man would be treated as nicely as they treat me," she said. "They are always so considerate."…"They insisted on hailing a cab for me," she laughed, " as if I weren't used to walking along the water front alone at night. ""[50] Smith's gender acts as the focal point in this interaction, structuring the sailors' ensuing treatment of her. Their warm welcome and chivalrous attention to her safety feed into their brand of military masculinity by situating Smith as the object of their self-definition. Her femininity, and its associated characteristics, allows the sailors to project onto her a level of attention and concern inappropriate to one of their own gender, feeding their own self-image as protector and provider. In return, Smith's role as a librarian emphasizes her alignment with the home and all that needs protecting by positioning her as a representative of culture and creature comforts.

[50] "Her Library May Travel Far, But Miss Wilma Smith Stays At Home," November 30, 1942, *Baltimore Evening Sun*, Folder 16, Box 4, Maryland World War II Records, Maryland Historical Society. One cannot help but think of the Enoch Pratt's "library girls" at the turn-of-the-century and the public outrage at their late hours.

Camp librarians encountered a similarly gendered structure of service with their military patrons. As one librarian serving at Fort Meade wrote, "…the adjustment to be made from being a Public Librarian to becoming a Camp Librarian is a somewhat startling one. From the respectful or irritated "Lady" or "Miss" we are now breezily addressed at "Toots" or "Chick." And one enterprising soldier for the modest consideration of a dollar week offered to call us "Glamour Puss.""[51] The casual, borderline disrespectful language employed by the soldiers captures the way military life unraveled civilian formalities and emphasizes the gender contrast between the librarian and the soldier. The language is flirtatious, meant to stir a reaction from the addressee, and work to prove the speaker's underlying masculinity. Again, the librarian is employed as an object of self-definition, a way for the soldier to demonstrate his gender identity by reaffirming it against a feminine persona.

While language positioned the soldier as a "man's man," the librarian's impressions of her military patrons deepened the meaning of their masculinity by situating them as worthy representational figures for the nation. "…viewed from behind one Library desk," the Fort Meade librarian wrote, "the American soldier appears to be the most patient, the most courteous, the best natured, and the most appreciative customer any librarian could want."[52] Soldiers could be uncouth to prove their toughness and their common touch, but there needed to be a quality of greatness about them to function as representations of the nation's strength and power. Women librarians factored into this schema by operating as representational figures in their

[51] Lucile Walsh, "The Citizen Soldier And His Library," *Between Librarians* vol. 9, no. 2 (October 1942): 3, Folder 6, Box 1, Series 9, Maryland Library Association archives, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.
[52] Ibid.

own right. Their cultural femininity positioned them to act as identity points for servicemen while their judgement, spoken with the authority of regular interaction, affirmed soldiers and sailors as true men, ready and worthy to serve the nation.

Conclusion

Roughly sixty years had passed since Pearl Fenwick Hopkins found herself banished to the stacks by the Enoch Pratt's head librarian and during that time the gender politics of librarianship had hardly changed at all. As the mid-century crept closer, the Pratt Library continued to shape the definitions and expressions of female librarians' gender identity as an extension of librarianship's service model. While women librarians expanded their outlooks through extensive education, the same training placed a premium on their ability to function as pleasing, attractive hosts within the institution. The needs of the profession, its competitiveness, and women's own willingness to set aside their professional ambitions helped reinforce a model that capitalized on the limited expressions of their gender. Even the onset of total war and the push to move all American citizens into defense production did not budge the manifestations of femininity within the profession. Rather than operate as a period of liberation, World War II initiated a doubling-down on librarianship's feminization for how it could anchor a cross-definition of servicemen's masculinity. Like figures in a play, the soldier and the librarian came to stand for the nation's will to dominate in the conflict ahead and the value of home and hearth being defended.

Though the circumstances of its expression shifted throughout the first half of the twentieth century, librarianship's feminization continued to impact the profession by drawing circles of inclusion and exclusion. Tying professional success to discrete

expressions of femininity implied that certain women would meet those definitions and others would not. While librarianship's feminization allowed many women to engage in a career outside the home, as we will see in the chapter ahead the same mechanisms barred African American women's entry into Maryland libraries until after the war had ended. Unearthing the roots of librarianship's lineage means recognizing the real limitations early gender assumptions placed on the profession's development and the ways they dictated the terms of women's experiences as professional librarians.

Chapter 4: Recalibrating the Narrative of Library History: Locating African American Library Experiences in Maryland During World War II

Introduction

While describing the early years of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Philip Arthur Kalisch, the institution's most celebrated historian, observed a fundamental contradiction in the library's basic design and service. "Although the library delivery room was purported to be a striking example of democracy "where neither wealth nor poverty, high nor low position in society, color nor any other distinction entitles the individual to special privileges before the law"…" he wrote, "the fact remains that few of the laboring class were able to utilize the institution to their advantage."[1] Kalisch's keen observation points to an underlying puzzle in library history: how to reconcile libraries' democratic impulses with their social limitations. Libraries were built on a promise of self-attainment, rooted in the American dream that hard-work, self-sacrifice, and a little ingenuity could pull any man to a position of social, economic, and cultural achievement. Public libraries provided the tools for this journey, but more than that, provided them in such a manner that they were purportedly equally distributed and freely accessible to any who wanted to use them.

As Kalisch observed, this democratic dream was never fully recognized. Though his statement concentrated on the Enoch Pratt's shortcomings across the economic spectrum, the passage he quoted named another, equally overlooked group in the library's purview. The Enoch Pratt Library's promise of service regardless of

[1] Philip Arthur Kalisch, *The Enoch Pratt Free Library: A Social History*, Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1969, 71. Quoted section from the Enoch Pratt Free Library Annual Report, 1887.

"…color (or) any other distinction" pointed to its commitment to serve racial minority groups, namely African Americans, within its community. But did the institution follow through on this promise? Were African American Baltimoreans similarly limited, as Kalisch notes, in their ability "to utilize the institution to their advantage"? Was Baltimore an exception or an example for the rest of Maryland? Posing these questions shifts the narrative of library development by reframing the meaning of access and use as a multiplicity of experiences and not a singular policy. In the case of mid-twentieth century Maryland, such a lens reveals a parallel story of struggle and denial to claim the library as source of individual advancement and opportunity.

Fully accounting for the diversity of experience in library institutions has historically been a weak point in the literature. In recent years, library historians have sought to rectify this by moving away from institutionally-driven histories to concentrating on, "the user in the life of the library" as a way of inverting the question of agency. In doing so, they have encouraged a broader vision of how users and nonusers' experiences shaped libraries as public institutions.[2] This reader-centric view has given rise to an express interest in African American's experiences as library users. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, African Americans remained largely outside the dominant narrative surrounding public libraries. As historians such as Michael Fultz and Cheryl Knott demonstrated, the racial inequalities throughout the United States not only limited African Americans' access

[2] Wayne Wiegand championed this perspective in his work, *Main Street Public Library: Community Places and Reading Spaces in the Rural Heartland, 1876-1956*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2011, 4.

to public libraries but excluded them from these institutions' histories.[3] Knott and Fultz centered their work where this disparity was most obvious: southern libraries operating under Jim Crow law. Here, segregation viscerally fractured the public library by actively denying its use to a significant portion of the population. Forced into subpar facilities or compelled to establish their own, African American library patrons mattered significantly in the life of their institutions because it was often their own force of will which kept these facilities alive and accessible.

While Knott and Fultz's work fills a large hole in the historiography, their writings also exemplify a trend of equating African American library experiences with southern ones. These stories are undoubtedly important, but they are not wholly representative. Institutions throughout the North and Midwest were often nominally integrated facilities. Yet, works like Ethelene Whitmire's article on Regina Andrews, an African American librarian working in 1920s New York, highlight that integration did not produce equality.[4] Similarly, the experiences of African American patrons in World War II Maryland complicate the binary between segregated and integrated facilities by eschewing a simple geographical label. As a border state, Maryland encompassed both northern and southern impulses that grafted competing notions of opportunity and inequality into the marrow of its public institutions. While its loadstar library, the Enoch Pratt, remained an integrated facility, it existed inside a

[3] Michael Fultz, "Black Public Libraries in the South in the Era of De Jure Segregation," *Libraries & the Cultural Record* vol. 41, no. 3 (2006): 337-359 http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lls&AN=502888817&site=ehost-live (September 22, 2018); Cheryl Knott, *Not Free, Not For All: Public Libraries in the Age of Jim Crow*, Amherst, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015.

[4] Ethelene Whitmire, "Breaking the Color Barrier: Regina Andrews and the New York Public Library," *Libraries & the Cultural Record* vol. 42, no. 4 (2007): 409-421, https://www.jstor.org (September 22, 2018).

Jim Crow city with segregated schools, hospitals, and other public institutions. Thus, it imbued certain racial assumptions that curtailed its expressions of equality throughout the early twentieth century and into the war years. Yet, even amidst visible discrimination, the Pratt Library also promoted racial tolerance and operated as a space for African Americans to challenge segregationist politics. Tracing each of these narratives breaks down a monolithic understanding of accessibility based only on official policy and demonstrates how the reality could be messy, confusing, and even hopeful.

Pushing beyond Baltimore's city limits demonstrates a similar dynamic at work throughout the state. Though the Enoch Pratt remained exceptional in its size and scale, its struggle over the boundaries of accessibility and the manifestations of equality similarly plagued library professionals throughout Maryland. As the state rewrote its library legislation, it parroted the democratic line of full and free services to all potential patrons while leaving no clear mechanism for expanding libraries to African American Marylanders. These contradictions in the Enoch Pratt Library and libraries throughout the state force a reevaluation of regional influences in public library development by highlighting how competing commitments to integration and segregation could exist within the same community and even within the same institution. As banner institutions for the promotion of democracy and extensions of their local communities, public libraries lived at the crossroads between competing ideals, making them unique spaces for examining the dissonance between equality and discrimination and accessibility and denial.

African American Library Service and Baltimore: The Prewar Years

In a 1980 article on the Enoch Pratt Library and its service to African American patrons, authors Stanley Rubinstein and Judith Farley extolled the institution for its early policy of integrated library service for all users. "Recent works by library historians," they wrote, "which charge that public libraries openly discriminated against black patrons either ignore or discredit the example of the Enoch Pratt Free Library."[5] In one sense, Rubinstein and Farley's laudatory description of the Enoch Pratt was fairly applied; in a segregated city the Pratt Library stood apart as a rare institution willing to provide services to all Baltimoreans regardless of race.[6] However, their emphasis on the library's virtue demonstrates a one-dimensional reading of equality that takes the presence of this word at face value without understanding its manifestations and limitations. From its inception, the Enoch Pratt Library remained tied to the Jim Crow policies of its host city. Even as African Americans enjoyed the library, their presence among and within the stacks was constantly called into question by the city's racist attitudes and its claim to Dixie heritage. Exploring how these beliefs manifested in the pre-World War II era complicates the library's image as an integrated public institution by reframing it as more than its institutional policies. Concentrating on the words and actions from members of the community reconstructs the Enoch Pratt as a contested space where social discourses determined belonging as much as institutional bylaws. Following

[5] Stanley Rubinstein and Judith Farley, "Enoch Pratt Free Library and Black Patrons: Equality in Library Services, 1882-1915," *The Journal of Library History* vol. 15, 4 (1980): 445, https://www.jstor.org (accessed August 31, 2018).

[6] Enoch Pratt's liberality in integrating his public library from its inception is likely a product of his Northern sensibilities; Pratt was born in Massachusetts and lived there until 1831 when he moved to Baltimore. Kalisch, 47.

this thread through the first decades of the twentieth century demonstrates segregation's staying power as an ideological platform that significantly shaped the library and impacted its functions into World War II.

Beneath the Enoch Pratt Library's veneer of equality, public opinion on who should have primary access to the library and whose interests it should serve revealed a dedication to segregationist policies at odds with the library's integrationist stance. On January 16, 1910, a letter to the editor appeared in *The Baltimore Sun* from a disgruntled library patron protesting the presence of three "colored children" who were using the main reading room in the central branch:

> These children were…somewhat ragged and unmistakably dirty-decidedly unpleasant as neighbors at a reading table,…I had the opportunity to ask them if they could read…Two said they could not: the third said he could read his schools books…Should such young children be allowed in public reading rooms…who cannot read…should dirty, or ragged, children be allowed in a public reading room at all?[7]

To Rubinstein and Farley, this example is one that merely demonstrated the institutional commitment to integration as such calls for limited access, "…were ignored by librarian Bernard Steiner and the Board of Trustees…"[8] Yet, their top-down view dismissed the deeper implications embedded in the article's basic assumptions. At play in the author's words are ideas about who could make claims on the public library and who could not. By questioning these children's place in the library, the author claimed the authority to elucidate those judgements, sidelining institutional authority in the process. In fact, the only appearance of library personnel

[7] "Colored Children in Library," *Baltimore Sun*, Jan. 16, 1910, https://search.proquest.com/docview/538341503?accountid=14696 (accessed September 2, 2018).
[8] Rubinstein & Farley, 449.

in the article is a brief mention of a library attendant lending picture books to the three children.[9] This mention frames the institution as an enabler for what the author viewed as a misguided attempt to bring the library's services to unworthy users. By discounting institutional policies, the author bolstered their claim to make those decisions, placing themselves as central figures in the library's institutional life.

Furthermore, the author's decision to write to the newspaper with their complaint elevated what was a private matter to an issue of public interest. Vocalizing their opinion through a public forum worked to raise interest in the matter and, supposedly, to rally support for the author's view, thus expanding the authority claimed from a singular entity to the whole community. By claiming the right to question the library's practices and by extending that voice to the public at large, the writer subtly shaped the library's meaning and terms for those around them. This subtext of usership and authority demonstrates that the library, as a public institution, was intimately tied to its sociocultural contexts and that the terms of that terrain were constantly in flux.

The author's calculated questioning of usership qualifications demonstrates the inherent racial biases that worked to destabilize the library as a racially integrated public space. The author's final series of questions tacitly invoked a set of binaries that juxtaposed their innate belonging with the children's sense of "otherness." What emerges is a checklist of qualifications that pitted some Baltimoreans as rightful patrons and others as not. Should library users be literate? Should library users be adults? Should library users have good hygiene? And, looming behind all the rest,

[9] "Colored Children in Library"

should library users be white? Though never outright questioned by the author, the other complaints orbited around this final qualifier as satellites to the central issue. Not only was Blackness implicitly linked to these other defaults, it stood as the first designator for what the wayward children were, and, therefore, what other library users should not be.

The Enoch Pratt's contested status as a racially integrated institution also came through over battles regarding the library's sectional loyalty as represented in its bookshelves. In the fall of 1909, a series of letters appeared in *The Baltimore Sun* challenging the library's decision to weed pro-Confederate author, Thomas Dixon's, works, *The Leopard's Spots* and *The Clansmen*, from the institution's stacks. According to the initial complaint, Pratt librarians considered these works to be, "…too strongly pro-Southern and anti-negro in their purport," which led to them being removed. The author (writing under the not-so-subtle non de plume, Vox Populi) attacked the library staff for removing these books while they maintained copies of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: "…as everyone knows the mission of "The Leopard's Spots,"…was to answer that detestable and odious pro-Northern and pro-negro book…written by that neurotic and insanely violent abolitionist, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe..."[10] There is a process of othering in this article that positioned sectional literary works as proxies for competing notions of belonging. Like the article dismissing African America children's claim to the library, this letter similarly weaponized the library as a tool for creating lines of inclusion and exclusion within a

[10] "Criticises Enoch Pratt Library," *Baltimore Sun*, Oct. 9, 1909, https://search.proquest.com/docview/537809352?accountid=14696 (accessed September 2, 2018).

community. Insisting on the presence of *The Leopard's Spots* and *The Clansmen* in the library allowed pro-Southern Baltimoreans to reflect their support of Confederate history and white supremacy in the very materials the Pratt Library owned. It demonstrated their confidence that the library, as part of their community space, should subscribe to their vision regarding who the library was for and what sort of ideology it should support.

In that same vein, the author used race to build lines of exclusion within the library community. Describing the presence of Stowe's book and similar works, Vox Populi wrote, "…these…books are more frequently read by the black population than any others, a fact that is abundantly evidence by the presence of the strongly suggestive and characteristic Ethiopian odor with which each of these volumes is redolent."[11] Vox Populi's description of the smell these books supposedly carried linked African American library patrons to common racist sentiments as being dirty and corruptive. As a public institution with materials meant to be passed from person to person, this imagery conjured notions that African Americans' use of books would tarnish them and spoil them for community use. In addition, this statement worked to discredit Northern sensibilities within the library by circumscribing their popularity to a limited group within the city. In doing so, the author marginalized pro-Northern, and, presumably, pro-Black, ideology as antithetical to Baltimore's true heritage.

Similar to the Pratt patron's dismissal of the library staff in the article about the three Black children, the Dixon letters generated a certain disregard for institutional authority that undercuts any easy measurement of race and equality

[11] Ibid.

within the institution. One outraged Baltimorean challenged head librarian, Bernard Steiner, directly, writing, “The Dixon books must go in, Mr. Steiner, or you go out. I suggest a self-appointed committee of five or seven well-known citizens wait upon Mr. Steiner and inform him to withdraw the Stowe books from the library shelves at once. They are a stench in the nostrils of every man whose heart beats for Dixie.”[12] Though nothing came from it, the author’s threat of removal demonstrates a belief that the library’s hierarchy was disposable and subject to the community’s desires. Read in this light, the Enoch Pratt Library’s integrated service loses its stability as a measurement for equality. Rather than standing apart from Baltimore’s Jim Crow line, the library was under constant pressure from it.

Despite being nominally accessible to all patrons, the Enoch Pratt Library was hardly a ground of equality. Racist elements in Baltimore leveraged the library to reflect their own biases even as some within the library sought a more proactive approach to fighting discrimination. This breaks down a binary way of thinking about equality in library services as a matter of physical accessibility. Instead it reconstructs the library as a site of contested ideologies and practices. This complexity continued into World War II as the Enoch Pratt perpetrated a tacit segregationist approach towards its youngest patrons, encouraged a "One World" educational model, and became the site of challenge over its discriminatory hiring practices.

[12] “Letter to the Editor 1,” *Baltimore Sun*, Oct. 19, 1909, https://search.proquest.com/docview/537774625?accountid=14696 (accessed September 2, 2018).

Branch Service and Segregation During World War II

During World War II, Baltimore's African American population grew steadily as more and more people drifted into the city for work in the defense industry. By 1945 the African American population had jumped from sixteen to twenty percent and numbered over 200,000. [13] Under segregation, most newcomers found themselves squashed into dilapidated housing with limited options as to where they could live. Throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, existing patterns of residential segregation had curtailed the spread of Baltimore's African American neighborhoods while privileging the city's white residential growth.[14] By the war years, this resulted in cramped, nearly unlivable housing that packed residents into neighborhoods with a population density as high as 78,000 people per square mile.[15]

Locating the experiences of African Americans within the Enoch Pratt Library during these turbulent years can be difficult as they do not find much representation in official records. However, the city's shifting demographics disrupted the library's existing service to children and left its mark throughout the institution's annual records. Children's librarians' reactions to the presence of a growing Black clientele highlights a continued discriminatory treatment that mimicked older patterns of racist ideology and new manifestations of tacit segregation. By the first years of the defense boom, the Pratt records already noted the increased presence of African American

[13] Amy Bentley, "Wages of War: The Shifting Landscape of Race and Gender in World War II Baltimore," *Maryland Historical Magazine* vol. 88, no. 4 (1993): 421, https://www.mdhs.org/publications/maryland-historical-magazine (accessed September 19, 2018).
[14] Andrew Skotnes, *A New Deal for All?: Race and Class Struggles in Depression-Era Baltimore*, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2013, 16-17, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/umdcp/detail.action?docID=1173223.
[15] Bentley, 425.

children in their main reading room and branches. The 1940 Annual Report submitted by the head of the Children's Department highlighted the anxiety surrounding this development for Pratt librarians:

> NEGRO PROBLEM. Shifts in population are changing the character and color of readers in the areas reached by Branches 2, 3, 5, 6, 11, and 12, as well as Central Children's Room. The situation is serious because of the heavier wear and tear on books and because of the decrease in the number of white children permitted to mingle with the colored or willing to do so. A program to meet this development is urgently needed…[16]

The language employed in this statement and the presumed outcomes for library service are telling indicators of the ways Pratt librarians viewed African American children as patrons. For one, this statement positions African American children as a threat to maintaining white services. The reverse calculation does not appear to have entered the librarian's imagination (i.e. that white children would threaten Black children's service). This indicates a prioritization in racial hierarchies that not only defaulted to white patrons as the status quo but privileged their service above the rest.

In addition, the librarian here drew a link between increased African American patronage and incurred damage to materials. The idea that books would receive "heavier wear and tear" from this portion of their clientele indicates that librarians assumed these children would lack the care and dignity to use the facility and take care of books properly. This assumption echoed longstanding ideas about the relationship between African Americans and the public library and manifested in public outlets outside the library's records. The association of damaged goods and Black use draws a stark parallel to the Dixon editorials from thirty years prior. These

[16] "Work With Children 1940," *Annual Report, 1940*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

letters similarly saw African American's handling of library materials as corruptive to the books themselves and ruinous to community use.

By World War II these ideas came out in subtler ways that nevertheless characterized African American patrons, and children in particular, as unfit library users. A newspaper article from 1944 hinted at this idea in an exchange between Pratt personnel and a young African American patron. Upon returning a book to the library, the librarian noticed that the book had been chewed by mice. She warned the returner to keep further materials safe from vermin. When the child came to the library again, the book she returned had been scorched by a fire. "…you told me to put it where mice can't get it," the girl explained, "and the only place like that in our house is the stove."[17] In the retelling, this episode is framed as a humorous moment in which the damage done to the book is softened by the child's simplicity and the librarian and reader's knowledge that a stove is a most inappropriate place for a book. Yet, it is once again an instance of foolishness or carelessness involving book-handling associated with the African American community in a way that also tied them to images of poverty and squalor.

The tension over the growing number of African American children in the Pratt libraries came to a head in 1944 with the curtailment of branch libraries' hours to three nights a week from August through December. In the 1944 annual report, Children's Room librarian, Isabella Jinnette, noted the effect the closures had had in Black children's use of the central building. She wrote, "Efforts over a period of years

[17] "Bookmarkers Reveal Human Stories," *Baltimore Sun*, April 12, 1944, https://search.proquest.com/docview/542983179?accountid=14696 (accessed September 1, 2018).

to guide the children to use Branch 1 (had been) torn down practically over night."[18] By the mid-1940s, the neighborhood surrounding the Branch 1 library at Freemont Avenue and Pitcher Street served a predominately African American community. The influx of defense workers increased the number of African Americans living in the area so much that the Pratt library broke their rule against hiring African American library assistants and appointed one to the branch's children's department.[19] The library's admission that they had been purposefully directing African American children away from the central building and to a branch located in a predominately Black neighborhood demonstrates the institution's embrace of a quasi-segregationist policy. As Cheryl Knott noted, integrated libraries throughout the north commonly followed a pattern of residential segregation in their branch services.[20] The Pratt Library proved no exception to this version of de facto segregation and even supported it with unofficial policies. This, coupled with the librarians' negative view of African American children as patrons, complicates the Pratt Library's history of equal access. Service was given to all but the terms and assumptions behind that accessibility prevented African Americans from fully claiming the library as a public space.

The Complexities of a "One World" Approach

Baltimore's demographic changes during the war years drew the Pratt Library's prejudicial undertones to the forefront in ways that contradicted its

[18] "Work With Children, 1944," *Annual Report, 1944,* Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.
[19] "Annual Report, 1942 Branch 1, Enoch Pratt Free Library," *Annual Report, 1942*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.
[20] Knott, 14.

supposed commitment to equal service. Yet, the war also induced actions and policies from the library that demonstrated a commitment to racial unity and understanding. As international events provoked criticism towards the United States' racial policies, the Pratt Library responded by promoting critical inquiry into the "racial problem" in a manner that emphasized peace and equality. The librarians addressed racial questions with a sincere desire to improve relations in the city but, in many ways, failed to move beyond their racist legacies. Like the gap between the Pratt Library's commitment to integrated service and its privileging of white patrons, the library's educational push into race relations yielded an institutional front with little change.

World War II pushed the United States' racial problem into the international spotlight. While political leaders spouted off against the dangers of Nazism's racial hierarchies, the home front brewed with social unrest. The basic contradiction between the country's claim to freedom and equality was hard to swallow as riots erupted in Detroit and Los Angeles. Schools and other educational institutions sought to promote a unified front by introducing a "one world" approach in their studies. The program sought to integrate the diversity of American society into the curriculum through efforts like promoting the study of Black history.[21]

The Enoch Pratt Library pursued this agenda through designated reading lists and promotional exhibits. In 1944, the library released a reading list tailored towards promoting critical inquiry into international race relations. The list was called "World Racial Problems and Permanent Peace" and included such works as *Brothers Under*

[21] Lisa L. Ossian, *The Forgotten Generation: American Children and World War II*, Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011, 32-33.

the Skin (a critical analysis on the origins of racial prejudice in the United States), "Christianity and the Race Problem," and "Minority Peoples in a Nation at War."[22] That same year an exhibit appeared in the Pratt Library windows promoting "The Brotherhood of Man." The exhibit centered on a painting depicting Christ surrounded by the glorious heroes of Anglo-American past with George Washington on a white stallion, a frontiersman, crusaders robed with crosses down their front, and at the right-hand sleeve of Christ, a small Black child. Numerous pamphlets and books that similarly promoted American unity in the face of Nazi prejudice also framed the painting. A small book bearing the face of George Washington held the title, "…to bigotry no sanction," a pamphlet produced by the Council for Democracy decried "Nazi Poison," and another title in the top left corner carried the picture of interracial children playing with the caption, *Out of the Many-One*.[23]

The annual report for that same year gives some context as to the community impact pamphlets and exhibits like these may have had. In reviewing subjects of interest for the previous year, the Civics and Sociology department noted a steady inquiry into race relations, writing, "Many conferences, including those of the Baltimore Interracial Fellowship and the Fellowship of Reconciliation, discussed this question aided by exhibits and reading lists of books and pamphlets prepared in the department."[24] As this statement and the list and exhibits indicate, the Pratt Library took a supportive, but forceful role, in stimulating movement towards reconciliation

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[22] *World Racial Problems and Permanent Peace*, February 1944, Folder 11, Box 68, Maryland World War II Records, Maryland Historical Society.
[23] "The Brotherhood of Man," Window 7 (Schaefer #33), Feb. 14-March 5, 1944, *Photographs of Window Displays, Enoch Pratt Free Library*, Maryland Room, Enoch Pratt Free Library.
[24] Harriet P. Turner, "Report of the Civics and Sociology Department for 1944," *Annual Report, 1944*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

between the races within their community. World War II acted as the catalyst in this moment, providing the external stimulus of identifiable hatred and evil against which the diverse communities within American could unite. When the country emerged from the war, it would be to a new vision of cooperation and tolerance, a vision which the Pratt Library fully intended to have a hand in shaping.

During World War II, the library also took an active role in supporting and promoting African American history. In 1944, the library ran an exhibit during "Negro History Week" that highlighted books about famous African Americans and histories detailing the community's struggles in and contributions to America.[25] Likewise, librarians made an effort to provide materials for local schools celebrating "Negro History Week."[26] Both these examples demonstrate the library's efforts to increase the visibility and educational opportunities of their community's most marginalized. In this regard, the "one world" approach fostered by the chaos of the war years proved to be a benefit for the library in increasing the diversity of its outreach.

However, the impact of this call to representation proved to be shallow at best. An article from Baltimore's leading Black newspaper, *The Afro-American*, dated shortly after the war ended criticized the Enoch Pratt for its racist depictions of African Americans in its photo collection. The piece recounted a local schoolteacher's request for materials from the library for Negro History Week. The items provided by Pratt librarians featured stereotypical representations of African

[25] "Negro History Week," Window 10 (Schaefer #26), Feb. 14-March 5, 1944, *Photographs of Window Displays, Enoch Pratt Free Library*, Maryland Room, Enoch Pratt Free Library.
[26] Joseph L. Wheeler, "Summary of 1944 Library Report," *Annual Report, 1944*, 3, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

American history with "Uncle Tom" characters and broken-English captions. Librarians rebuffed the teacher's protests, stating that if she had wanted other pictures, she could have come to pick them out herself. They also claimed that not all their photo collections depicted similar scenes; the ones in question were what were left after numerous locals had asked for material in anticipation of Negro History Week.[27] This incident highlights the Pratt Library's inability to manifest honest representation within their own collections. Despite striving for racial reconciliation within the city and an enhanced appreciation for African American's contributions, the library remained uncritical of the ways it supported the very ideology it strove to dismantle. Part of this was undoubtedly due to the lack of institutional presence for African Americans. Throughout its first sixty years, the Enoch Pratt refused to hire African Americans in professional library positions. Without input from the community in its everyday decision making, there was no way the library could ever strive for more than surface-level expressions of equality and diversity. World War II would challenge this paradigm, though, as Baltimore's Black community sought to stake a more visible presence in the Pratt Library's organizational hierarchy.

Kerr vs. Pratt: Dismantling Enoch Pratt's Hiring Policies

The Enoch Pratt Library's complex relationship with accessibility, equality, and representation demonstrates that the library was a product of competing forces both from within the institution and without. The community's hegemonic norms imbued the library with a certain ideology, enabled by the influence community

[27] "Insulting Pictures in Pratt Library's Files," *The Afro-American*, March 2, 1946, https://search.proquest.com/docview/531595696?accountid=14696 (accessed September 2, 2018).

members could claim over the library and from librarians' attitudes and actions. Yet, the same flexibility that made the library a reflection of Baltimore as much as a force within it also allowed the city's most marginalized to leverage the institution as a mechanism for their social ends. The struggle to change the Pratt Library's hiring policies highlights how Baltimore's African American community used the library as space and a symbol to challenge the city's Jim Crow politics.

Though the library practiced a nominal equality in its services, the Pratt Library had a long-standing policy of refusing to hire African Americans in professional positions. A 1933 resolution from the Board of Trustees affirmed the library's racial hiring policy, arguing for no change, "in view of the public criticism which would arise and the effect upon the morale of the staff and the public." This policy was upheld again in 1942 when the Board reaffirmed that admitting African American students to the training program was "unnecessary and unpracticable." Since the majority of the library's patrons were white, the Board of Trustees believed that white librarians could better, "…render more acceptable and efficient service to the public…"[28]

Despite this official line from the Enoch Pratt Library's governing body, some within the organization and many from without attacked this policy prior to World War II. One library training course director, Marian S. Scandrett, spoke out adamantly against the institution's biased hiring practices in the 1938-1939 Annual Report, writing,

[28] "Pratt Library Held Public Institution," *Baltimore Sun*, April 18, 1945, https://search.proquest.com/docview/542913202?accountid=14696 (accessed Sept. 2, 2018).

> Enoch Pratt Free Library's location in a borderline city gives it a rare opportunity as well as a special obligation to take positive rather than negative positions on racial matters. It is always easy to excuse the failure to act justly on the ground of the pressure of local mores. However, there is no equitable excuse for the exclusion of (a) qualified Negro from admission to the Training Class. Discrimination hurts not only those discriminated against, but poisons far more subtly the minds of those who exercise it. The presence of qualified Negroes on our staff would benefit the white members more than it would them. Until a public library is an example of democracy by its manner of working, it cannot claim to be a truly democratic institution, not that its outlook is truly professional.[29]

Scandrett's appeal built upon a deeply held belief in the professional community that libraries were key mechanisms in a healthy democracy. This ideal had become increasingly at odds with the profession's acquiescence to segregation's ugly denial of many Americans' basic rights.[30]

Similarly, many within Baltimore's African American community recognized the basic hypocrisy at play in the library's hiring practices and continually challenged it. A 1942 article in *The Afro-American* detailed one rejected applicant's interaction with the Pratt Library's staff. Upon discovering that the woman applying for the Pratt's training course had attended a Black high school, the interviewer cut the hiring process short. The *Afro-American* reported on their following exchange, writing,

> Well you know we don't employ colored people in the public libraries. No. I didn't know it; I thought the library was financed by city funds. It is, but just the same we don't employ colored. You understand very well how the racial situation is in Baltimore. You knew this is a borderline city and whites would resent having colored people wait on them in public places. (as if a hotel

[29] Marian S. Scandrett, "Report of the Training Class," *Annual Report, 1938-1939*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

[30] The issue became a controversy at the 1936 ALA meeting held in Richmond, Virginia when several Black librarians were denied accommodation at the convention and forced to sit in segregated seating during events and lectures. The meeting caused a schism in the profession, with many members calling for a boycott of the ALA hosting events in southern cities. For an overview of the meeting, see Jean L. Preer, "This Year-Richmond!": The 1936 Meeting of the American Library Association," *Libraries & Culture* vol. 39, no. 2 (2004): 137-160, https://www.jstor.org (accessed September 22, 2018).

dining room is not a public place, so he must have meant high public places.)[31]

The article's designation of the library as a "high public place" speaks volumes about the symbolic value an integrated staff would have in a segregated city like Baltimore. The library was a civic achievement, one of the largest public library systems in the country, and a representation of culture, education, and attainment. Placing African Americans within the library's ranks would not only open an entire profession to them, but give them the ability to be cultural curators, educators, and arbiters of taste for the city.

In addition, librarianship was one of the few professions readily available to women. As detailed in chapter three, women librarians in World War II Baltimore walked a convoluted line in a profession that readily empowered them but also relied heavily on their adherence to femininity. For African American women, librarianship represented an avenue that allowed them to claim professionalization as women. An article in *The Afro-American* noted this gap in employment, writing, "The library bars colored women from its twenty-six branches as librarians or clerks; however, the library advertises for them as janitress "to do men's work" in mopping, window-washing from ladders, moving furniture…"[32] The association of librarianship and femininity is fraught but women's participation in the profession evoked notions of an idealized womanhood from which African American women were actively being

[31] Henry French Winslow, "Library Policies: Only Whites Trained Diplomacy Discarded Elevator vs. Desk Force Now in Order," *The Afro-American*, July 25, 1942, https://search.proquest.com/docview/531361136?accountid=14696 (accessed September 2, 2018).
[32] "NAACP to Sue Pratt Library," *The Afro-American*, October 30, 1943, https://search.proquest.com/docview/531364043?accountid=14696 (accessed September 2, 2018).

disassociated. Their entrance into the profession would mark a symbolic acceptance into a status that linked them with white women by proximity and capability.

Finally, the library's unique position as an avenue between the domestic and public spheres threatened to introduce racial intermingling within white homes. As argued in chapter two, libraries were invested in restructuring the family unit as a way to secure the "second front" from dissension within. This concentration on the family and the home meant that libraries possessed a unique access to the domestic sphere that could threaten white authority. Theories on schools and segregation in the postbellum South provide a parallel that further illuminates this point. Schools function as sites of social reproduction that work to maintain ideologies across generations. The end of slavery and the rise of civil rights meant that the specter of integrated schools could threaten to overturn generations of white supremacy through racial intermingling and education. Read against the complex dynamics of power and authority between parents, teachers, and children, public schools emerged as institutions that could reshape the social terrain by training the next generation to think differently and by shifting the power dynamics between the races.[33] Some have argued that integrated libraries did not carry the same weight as schools because libraries did not force social interaction in the same way schools did, which may partially explain why the Enoch Pratt tolerated nominal integration.[34] However, the presence of African American librarians would have vested them with an authority and a position to penetrate the domestic sphere in a similar manner to schools. As

[33] Jane Dailey, *Before Jim Crow: The Politics of Race in Postemancipation Virginia*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000. See especially chapter 3.
[34] Fultz, 348-349.

such, they stood as a threat to the sanctity of white homes and the continuation of a Jim Crow society.

Clearly, Baltimore's African American community stood to gain much by overcoming the Enoch Pratt's biased hiring practices. In fact, organizers within the city identified the library as an important target, actively challenging the institution several times during the 1930s. In 1933, Juanita and Virginia Jackson organized a campaign through the City-Wide Young People's Forum to gain, "Permission to qualify for positions on the staff of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, a tax-supported institution." The petition was submitted to the Board of Trustees, which, while sympathetic, refused to change its hiring policies. The library's 1933 affirmation of its hiring code likely stemmed from this incident. In 1937 the Forum tried again to overcome the Pratt Library's hiring policies this time in partnership with the NAACP. Organizers attempted to push through the hiring of Jean Blackwell, an African American librarian trained at Columbia University and with experience working at the New York Public Library. The Enoch Pratt again refused to integrate its staff.[35]

The turning point would come during World War II when Louise Kerr, a Baltimore elementary school teacher, applied for the Enoch Pratt Library Training Course. The Library denied Kerr entrance under the pretext that it would not have a spot for her if she completed the program. She and her father, T. Henderson Kerr, sued the Enoch Pratt for discriminatory practices as a public institution. The elder Kerr claimed that the city had illegally seized his income as taxes to support the library if the institution was, in fact, not public. Charles H. Houston and W.A.C.

[35] Skotnes, 88; 277.

Hughes represented the Kerrs. The Federal District Court of Baltimore initially dismissed the case. Judge W. Calvin Chesnut ruled that the library's refusal to admit Miss Kerr was not discriminatory as it was not based on any personal prejudice but an extension of administrative best practices for the library. Furthermore, Judge Chesnut ruled that the library was not a public institution since it was privately endowed and the appropriations granted by the city were voluntary, thereby making any appeal to the 14th amendment irrelevant.[36]

The Kerrs and their lawyers appealed the case, which was heard before the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in the spring of 1945.[37] In a nine-page opinion, Judges John J. Parker, Morris Soper, and Armstead Dobie overturned the original ruling. They dismissed the decision that the Library Board's hiring practices were not racially motivated, citing that race was the only motivating factor in their decision not to admit Louise Kerr. The judges also concluded that the library constituted a public institution due to the nature of its relationship to the city's government. Summarizing their stance, Judge Soper wrote, "Even if we should lay aside the approval and authority given by the state to the library at its very beginning, we should find in the present relationship between them so great a degree of control over the activities and existence of the Library on the part of the state that it would be unrealistic to speak of it as a corporation entirely devoid of governmental character."[38] The Board of

[36] "Judge Dismissed Library Lawsuit," *Baltimore Sun*, March 8, 1944, https://search.proquest.com/docview/534083065?accountid=14696 (accessed September 2, 2018).
[37] "Virginia Court Airs Kerr Case," *Baltimore Sun*, March 16, 1945, https://search.proquest.com/docview/542890286?accountid=14696 (accessed August 30, 2018).
[38] T. Henderson Kerr and Louise Kerr v. The Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore City, Thomas S. Cullen, Henry Stockbridge, III, Blanchard Randall, Jr., William J. Casey, Albert D. Hutzler, Robert W. Williams, William G. Baker, Jr., Joseph L. Wheeler, James A. Gary, Jr., Henry Dugg and May and

Trustees appealed the case to the Supreme Court, which refused to review it, effectively dismantling the library's institutional mechanisms for barring African Americans from employment.[39]

V is for Victory?

The Fourth Circuit's overturn of the Kerr case was an undeniable victory towards dismantling segregation in Baltimore. As reports on the case printed in *The Afro-American* observed, the outcome demonstrated the courts' potential to be an important mechanism in attacking segregation in institutions that skated the line between public and private. Charles Houston recognized this potential in the wake of the decision, stating "I think the principle…will affect hospitals and other public institutions where, although owned by the public and supported by tax money, practical control has been turned over to a private organization such as a medical society, which draws a color line without any reference to individual fitness."[40]

Breaking the racial barrier within the Enoch Pratt also represented increased educational opportunities for African Americans and the potential to effect significant change within the community. Although library schools for African Americans existed by the mid-twentieth century, the relationship between the Enoch Pratt training course and the library situated it as a program with immediate and intimate

City Council of Baltimore, 1945, 4th Cir., Enoch Pratt Free Library-Employment Discrimination Lawsuit, 1943-1945, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Employment Discrimination Lawsuit, Vertical Files, Maryland Room, Enoch Pratt Free Library.

[39] "Library Case Declined by High Tribunal: Review Was Sought By Pratt Trustees in Suit Involving Negro," *Baltimore Sun*, October 9, 1945, https://search.proquest.com/docview/538173316?accountid=14696 (accessed September 2, 2018).

[40] "Library Case Victory Seen As Avenue For Opportunity," *Baltimore Sun*, October 20, 1945, https://search.proquest.com/docview/531552179?accountid=14696 (accessed September 2, 2018).

consequences for the community.[41] Training course graduates were nearly always placed within the institution's ranks, making participation in the program as good as an offer of employment. By laying claim to this resource, African American librarians cemented their educational and vocational future within the city of Baltimore. As demonstrated, Enoch Pratt librarians were deeply tied to community activities both as leaders and influencers. Rather than moving outside of the community or even the state, as most library schools for African Americans compelled them to do, opening the training course permitted them a new avenue of prominence and community empowerment.

While the Kerr case moved the African American community forward, it also found resistance from the city and the library itself, which limited the scope of its impact. An editorial in *The Baltimore Sun* praised the court's decision, but also softened the victory with a word of warning:

> It is natural, and perhaps inevitable, that all racial groups should be sensitive. If the member of such a group fails at something, there is a tendency to jump to the conclusion that there has been biased judgement and to blame the failure on race prejudice…If the Pratt Library is to retain its high standards of service it must see to it that its staff is composed of good librarians…Now that the court ruling removes this racial distinction they must not expect special consideration because they are Negroes. They must win their way on individual merit.[42]

This editorial evoked the specter of a color-blind meritocracy in a language both condescending and insulting towards African Americans' ability to be good librarians. The caveat demonstrated a basic impulse to restrain the implications of a

[41] By 1941, twenty-five accredited library schools across the country admitted African American students, David M. Battles, *The History of Public Library Access for African Americans in the South; or, Leaving Behind the Plow* Lanham, Md.: The Scarecrow Press, 2009, 87.
[42] "A New Opportunity, and A New Challenge, for Negroes," *Baltimore Sun*, October 18, 1945, https://search.proquest.com/docview/542858647?accountid=14696 (accessed September 2, 2018).

fully realized and implemented integrated library staff by limiting the city's responsibility in equalizing its institutions. Shifting the center of responsibility to the African American community promised to create more obstacles to true integration and placed future blame for lack of progress squarely at the feet of those most limited in their ability to effect change.

This statement did not go unanswered by Baltimore's African American community. Both Juanita Mitchell and Lillie M. Jackson, prominent leaders in Baltimore's African American community and important figures in the Civil Rights Movement, penned responses that ran in *The Sun*. The women criticized the premise that Black Baltimoreans had ever sought privileged treatment, emphasizing instead their pursuit of basic rights and full citizenship.[43] The dialogue between Jackson and Mitchell's articles and the original editorial highlights the disconnect that existed between Baltimore's activists and even those sympathetic to their cause. In this context, a fundamental misunderstanding as to what implementing the Kerr decision would entail limited its impact from the start.

Staff changes in the library's Pitcher Street Branch (Branch 1) during the years of the Kerr trial further demonstrates the limited vision the institution had for integrating its staff. The same year that Pratt training course directors rejected Louise Kerr's application, the library hired Mrs. Iona Wood Collins to be the children's librarian at Branch 1 and the Pratt's first African American library professional. This branch, it will be remembered, served a predominately African American clientele;

[43] Lillie M. Jackson, "Negro Aims," *Baltimore Sun*, October 24, 1945, https://search.proquest.com/docview/542857501?accountid=14696 (accessed September 2, 2018); Juanita Mitchell, "Enoch Pratt Library Case," *Baltimore Sun*, October 25, 1945, https://search.proquest.com/docview/542869345?accountid=14696 (accessed September 2, 2018).

thus, the step to hire Mrs. Collins fit with the institution's existing policy of maintaining racial continuity between the staff and the public. The librarians at Branch 1 positively received Mrs. Collins' hiring, with the director noting that, "…the results in community good will prove the step was a wise one."[44] By 1944 the library had hired another African American librarian, Alma Bell Gray, who was appointed as the head of the branch. While this was undoubtedly a positive development for the community and the library, it also shepherded in a larger change in staffing that left the entire branch staffed by African Americans.[45] In a warped way, the segregationist impulses from the early years of the war had reverted to create a library branch worked by African Americans for an African American community. Rather than introducing integration and moving Black library professionals throughout the city, the Enoch Pratt continued to follow its segregationist policies.

Baltimore and Maryland: A State Experience

During the mid-twentieth century, the Enoch Pratt Library existed within a complex environment shaped by the institution's robust legacy and the community's diversifying neighborhoods and flourishing industrial sector. The pressures of war added another layer to these dynamics, creating a unique situation that both expanded and curtailed African American's experiences as library users. Despite its complexity, the Enoch Pratt Library can represent but a slice, albeit an influential one, of a larger narrative. During the turbulent war years public libraries throughout the state were on the brink of immense change as administrators reexamined the state's commitment to

[44] "Annual Report, 1942 Branch 1, Enoch Pratt Free Library," *Annual Report, 1942*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.
[45] Alma L. Bell, "Annual Report-Branch 1, 1944," *Annual Report, 1944*, Special Collections Department, Enoch Pratt Free Library Archives.

fortifying their existence. In doing so, library professionals also evaluated their service for African American Marylanders, leaving behind a rare glimpse into the existing state of libraries for this community and the profession's aims for postwar service. Expanding the scope beyond Baltimore reveals a disquieting commitment to segregation in the border state that wielded its influence even as the war promised to bring a powerful new purpose to libraries.

In December of 1944, the State-Wide Library Survey Committee of the Maryland State Planning Commission published the results of its three year-long study on the status of public libraries throughout Maryland. The study was part of an ambitious plan, in partnership with the Maryland Library Association and the Maryland Public Library Advisory Committee, to overhaul existing library legislation to enact government support for a state-wide, county-based library system. The Committee's report provided the hard facts for this platform. Its findings painted a bleak picture of public libraries' status in Maryland at the midpoint in the century. Sixty-one libraries were surveyed, though only forty made-up the basis of the report as some the Committee discarded for being subscription libraries and others they found to be inactive. The Enoch Pratt Library also remained unsurveyed as the Committee focused on county library distribution and Baltimore is not in any county.[46] The Committee reported that library service in Maryland tended to follow patterns of urbanization and wealth distribution. The five most populous, and wealthiest, counties accounted for 44.4% of the libraries within the state. In addition,

[46] Maryland State Planning Commission, "The Free Public Library in Maryland" (Publication No. 42, Baltimore, 1944), 18. Internet Archive. https://ia802704.us.archive.org/9/items/freepubliclibrar42mary/freepubliclibrar42mary.pdf.

even with Baltimore included, the report concluded that only 68.6% of Marylanders had some form of library service available, leaving 31.4% of the population with no access to public library service at all.[47]

Library service was even more tenuous for African American Marylanders. While the majority of African Americans lived in Baltimore and hypothetically had access to the Enoch Pratt Library, 70% of those outside the city had no library service. Three of the four existing county library systems in the state offered service to African Americans, six other counties had some library service for them, and thirteen counties offered no service at all.[48] Segregation loomed large in libraries outside of Baltimore even in new facilities that emerged during the defense years. For example, a branch library for African Americans opened in Annapolis in 1941. It was located in a housing project and staffed by National Youth Administration workers with a significant backing by local African American clubs and lodges.[49] As described in chapter two, public libraries often targeted housing projects as a way of introducing their services into specific communities through spatial convenience. While planting libraries in individual neighborhoods opened them up to underserved communities, those same institutions followed the existing pattern of community

[47] Maryland State Planning Commission, 21. It should be noted that the Library Survey Committee's findings do not match what Louis R. Wilson found in his ground-breaking study on public libraries, *The Geography of Reading*, in 1938. His survey, pulled from A.L.A. statistics, had Maryland with much higher coverage at 80%. However, Wilson's study was much more expansive than the Committee's and included no detailed study of Maryland. It is possible that population shifts and the closure of several public libraries in the state dropped the coverage in the intervening years. For more on Wilson's study, see chapter 1 of Louis R. Wilson, *The Geography of Reading: A Study of the Distribution and Status of Libraries in the United States*, Chicago: American Library Association and The University of Chicago Press, 1938.
[48] Maryland State Planning Commission, 21.
[49] Margaret Barkley, "Roundabout the State," *Between Librarians* vol. 8, no. 1 (April 1941), Folder 6, Box 1, Series 9, Maryland Library Association archives, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

development, in this case segregation. This example complicates the relationship between segregation and the public library by introducing factors outside of individual institutional choice. Breaking the pattern of segregation in libraries meant more than just integrating individual institutions; it also meant challenging structural forces that shaped the community as a whole.

Maryland library professionals' attitudes towards African American service followed existing tensions between the desire to improve libraries' strength and status and an unwillingness to confront deeper social issues. The lack of good service for African American Marylanders concerned many librarians during World War II. In a preview article detailing the progress of the Library Survey Committee's report, committee member Eleanor W. Falley commented that "the indifference to the Negro" was a troubling feature of many libraries in the state.[50] Though she emphasized her point through concrete examples, Falley's article barely scratched the surface on the issue, providing little contextual information and offering no solutions.

This theme continued to resonate in the state's professional literature throughout the subsequent years. An article in the Maryland Library Association's professional publication, *Between Librarians*, outlined the origins and progress of library services for African Americans in a national context. Written by Eliza Atkins Gleason, the first African American to receive a doctorate in library science, the article described existing organizational patterns of library development and suggested areas for concentration in the postwar years. What is most interesting about

[50] Eleanor W. Falley, "Present Status of the Library Survey," *Between Librarians* vol. 10, no. 2 (October 1943): 5, Folder 6, Box 1, Series 9, Maryland Library Association archives, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

Gleason's publication is its refusal to challenge segregation directly. Gleason admitted that current patterns of service, particularly with a branch organization, often failed to deliver full service to African Americans. However, she concluded her article by stating that, "The present branch and independent patterns are not satisfactory; yet not all of those in existence should be abolished."[51] Gleason's full motivations and reasonings for this position are outside the scope of this paper. Perhaps she was exercising the pragmatism of all librarians, constantly under-resourced and overworked, to improve things as much as she could within the system's existing limitations. What is relevant here is the article's publication in a Maryland-based journal. The underlying premise, that there was a problem with existing services and that something needed to change, aligned with attitudes espoused by most Maryland librarians without challenging existing precepts with radical notions of overhaul and integration.

This position came full circle with the Library Survey Committee's report and the Library Bill passage in 1945. Despite consistent awareness-building regarding the inadequacy of library service to African Americans, the Committee's final report made no significant recommendations for improving services to the community. More importantly, when the Committee's work became law under the Library Bill in 1945 no mechanisms for restructuring service to African Americans were put into effect. Under the new law, counties could tax and organize libraries for their citizens with aid from the state government. There were explicit procedures in place for

[51] Eliza Atkins Gleason, "Regional Library Service Negroes," *Between Librarians* vol. 11, no. 2 (June 1944): 11-12, Folder 6, Box 1, Series 9, Maryland Library Association archives, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.

electing a governing board of trustees and hiring competent staff.[52] Yet, there was no mention of if or how services for African Americans would be folded into the new county system, implying that these decisions would be left up to the counties themselves. The unwillingness to take actionable, broad-sweeping measures towards improving library service for African Americans implies that the community's needs remained a peripheral issue for Maryland library professionals. Despite the momentum created by the war and the surrounding push to overhaul existing library services, library professionals failed to fully reckon with segregationist legacies and politics. Instead, their concern remained surface-level and a lip service to libraries' democratic impulses masked the deeper potential for change.

Conclusion

When library chroniclers introduce the experiences of minority communities into the public library's history it fundamentally reorients its timeline. Stories of progress breakdown under the ugly facts of discrimination and neglect. Institutions lose their golden face and the incredible promise of accessibility becomes more untrustworthy.[53] Reexamining the Enoch Pratt Library's legacy under these conditions similarly complicates its historical narrative. World War II constituted a period of both change and retrenchment for the racial ideologies apparent within the Enoch Pratt Library. Incremental movement towards equality came through a new emphasis on tolerance and racial understanding in the face of Nazi atrocities and through the ground-breaking triumph over the Pratt Library's "whites-only" hiring

[52] A copy of the passed bill was printed in *Between Librarians*, "The New Library Legislation: Senate Bill No. 543," *Between Librarians* vol. 12, no.1 (March 1945): 3-6, Folder 6, Box 1, Series 9, Maryland Library Association archives, Special Collections, University of Maryland Libraries.
[53] Knott, 5-6.

practices. Yet, each of these victories stalled under the city's legacy of white supremacy and Jim Crow politics, limiting the impact they might have had within the institution and the community at large.

Grounding the Enoch Pratt's experiences in the wider context of Maryland further illustrates the complex dynamics shaping public library development for African Americans. Moving away from Baltimore, the center of public library activity in the state, to the peripheries of Maryland demonstrates the incredible variability one could find in terms of service from county to county and even town to town. As library professionals worked to impose order on their institutions, they simultaneously pushed for greater recognition of the need for competent library services for African American Marylanders. The gap between their words and the products of their actions, however, effectively wrote African Americans out of official policy. With no legal measures in place to guarantee adequate service, the future for state-wide public library facilities for African Americans remained in doubt.

All this serves to challenge the basic correlation between geography and cultural legacy in library development. Moving outside of the Deep South demonstrates that African Americans, even in seemingly integrated institutions, faced constant manifestations of discrimination both openly and tacitly. Yet, these institutions also provided the space for African Americans to challenge existing paradigms as individuals and as a community. The contradiction in these features parallels a similar tension over libraries' role in American society. Even as World War II stoked the democratic rhetoric surrounding public libraries' aims and ideals,

these basic tenets failed to fully penetrate institutions' organization and services, exposing a lingering gap between what libraries represented and how they actually functioned. Reinserting African Americans' experiences into public libraries' development not only brings this to light but serves as a powerful metaphor for lasting contradictions in American ideology that promises freedom and equality to all while denying those rights to its most vulnerable.

Conclusion; or Public Libraries and the Postwar Order

By late summer of 1944, after a series of Allied victories in Europe and the Pacific, American confidence in an Allied victory seemed secure. As a result, the public's consumption of the latest war news settled into the background of everyday information seeking. Public libraries nationwide sensed the cultural shift in information and began turning their interests to the postwar society.[1] As librarians confronted the end of their wartime role as a hub for public information, discussions turned to the future of public libraries and the place of libraries and librarians in shaping postwar American society. Driven by the success they found in promoting war-related services, many leaders in the American Library Association (ALA) saw the postwar period as the perfect opportunity to affirm public libraries' prestige as cultural institutions.[2] Leading the discussion on the next wave of pressing issues, such as reintegration of soldiers into society, unemployment, and the lingering problems around housing, would not only sustain libraries' relevance, it would position librarians to lead the attack on social issues within their communities.

So it was in Baltimore where library leaders from around the state regularly met to establish an agenda for their institutions in the postwar order. Yet, even as opportunity blossomed in front of them, Baltimore's librarians once again found themselves incapable of dealing with old sins. A 1943 *Afro-American* article described the outcome of a meeting of the Maryland Institute on War and Post-War

[1] Patti Clayton Becker, *Books and Libraries in American Society During World War II: Weapons in the War of Ideas* (New York: Routledge, 2005): 188; Walter F. Bell and Maurice G. Fortin, "Texas Libraries in World War II," *Texas Library Journal* vol. 67 (1991): 116.
[2] Becker, 190-191.

Issues held at the Enoch Pratt Library. Members of the local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) chapter attended the institute where they raised the issue of improving library services for minority communities. Chairman Paul Sheets, a liaison from the Office of War Information (OWI), tabled the proposition without action, stating unequivocally that the institute "…was not concerned with the issue." Despite some protest from head librarian, Dr. Joseph Wheeler, the matter was closed.[3] As they turned the corner towards the postwar future, Baltimore's public libraries had both eyes on the horizon, demonstrating their own foresight by attempting to anticipate community needs in the aftermath of the war. However, Pratt librarians' inability to fully confront persistent racial and gender discrimination in American society eroded their intentions from within, furthering a lasting contradiction between their democratic ideology and unequal operations.

In a way, this episode is the perfect encapsulation of World War II's complicated legacy in the history of the Enoch Pratt and Maryland libraries. World War II amplified the existing tension between libraries' fervent pursuit of service to their communities and their own shortcomings as agents of social change. The conflict placed a high cultural premium on information production and distribution, framing knowledge as a weapon aimed at bolstering industrial production, assuaging public anxieties, kindling patriotic pride, and relieving the boredom and emotional pressures of a wartime society. As public information institutions, libraries leapt to meet the new informational demands generated by the state and their communities.

[3] "OWI Man Nips Talk of Library Fairness," *Afro-American*, May 22, 1943, https://search.proquest.com/docview/531445252?accountid=14696 (accessed August 30, 2018).

The Enoch Pratt Library actively championed war-related services, mediating experiences of the war for their communities in ways that helped unique groups and individuals understand the stakes involved in the crisis and commit to the calling for their own sacrifice and service. From this spectrum of services, the library built a network of information dispersal that encompassed not only its local community, but Americans serving abroad as well. This broad-based realm of service challenges a singular view of the library's influence, demonstrating instead its impact as a trusted information and social center.

As the Pratt Library expanded its activities across the war and home fronts, fear of social instability within the city and the nation at large compelled the institution to focus its attention on securing the domestic sphere. Leveraging its cultural association with the home and family, the Enoch Pratt Library initiated a series of programs meant to overcome resource limitations and burdens of inaccessibility by physically relocating the library nearer to individual homes. Equipped with good literature, Pratt librarians stocked defense housing projects and a circulating book wagon with material meant to defend its community from corruption from within. The war provided the impetus for both these programs while tightening the library's integration within the community. No longer bound to one location, the Pratt Library became a dispersed influence throughout the city set upon elevating its patrons through the civilizing effects of a freely accessible education in books.

Even as the Enoch Pratt Library willingly raced to meet the shifting information needs of World War II, the period simultaneously revealed the simmering social limitations lurking beneath the institution's surface. As the Pratt Library

compiled materials for circulation through its book wagon, leaders within the institution targeted neighborhoods they viewed as inherently threatening to America's home front. In doing so, program leaders linked economically disadvantaged and minority communities with delinquency, despite evidence to the contrary, and pursued an agenda meant to forestall juvenile criminal activity through the assimilating power of morally righteous books.

Similarly, Baltimore's public libraries demonstrated a commitment to traditional gender roles that disempowered female librarians even as women gained new ground in the professional sphere. Continuing a pattern of librarianship modeled on Victorian notions of true womanhood, the Enoch Pratt Library training course encouraged circumscribed expressions of femininity in its applicants that curbed professional representation from lower-class and minority communities. The city's transition to defense mobilization and libraries' extension to military camps throughout the state deepened this trend. As war culture reached its zenith, ideas of masculinity came to represent more than a social dynamic; they became a cultural shorthand for denoting America's strength and will to dominate in the conflict ahead. Library leaders and cultural commentators leaned into women librarians' femininity as a crucial component in fixing representations of military masculinity. Through their interactions with servicemen, female librarians posed as a counterweight to soldiers' ruggedness and independence, exemplifying their strength, and consequently the nation's, in contrast to the librarians' demureness. Instead of expanding opportunities for women in the profession, World War II initiated a recommitment to

exclusive models of librarianship that restricted women's identity and limited their potential for integrated growth.

Finally, the World War II-era for Maryland's public libraries highlighted the lingering contradiction between institutional belief in equal opportunity and the reality of libraries' limited service for minority communities. World War II pushed the library to reconceptualization its relationship with minority communities as educational initiatives nation-wide strove to demonstrate America's commitment to democracy and equality in the face of Nazi prejudice. The Pratt Library touted a policy of "One World" education, supporting African American history weeks and publicizing messages of American unity. However, the Enoch Pratt's resistance to an integrated staff belied those beliefs, demonstrating them to be only surface-level expressions of a nicer propaganda covering up the institution's shortcomings. Despite being a nominally integrated institution, the Enoch Pratt Free Library remained tied to its community's Jim Crow heritage, practicing a form of de facto segregation in its management of branch libraries throughout the city.

Similarly, public libraries across Maryland experienced a reevaluation from state leaders who viewed their institutions' increasing attention as a viable opportunity to strengthen state support for library systems. Again, library leaders touted service to minority communities as a critical component in overhauling the existing system. However, when the new legislation passed in 1945, it contained no references to integrating libraries or even provisions for African American residents. Like women's roles in librarianship, World War II promised to introduce a new era of opportunity and equality for African American library patrons and professionals.

Instead, the period produced little change for minority communities in Maryland, leaving them to agitate themselves for the change they desired.

Lingering on the contradictions evident in the history of public libraries in Baltimore during World War II helps to break down a narrative of institutional progressivism by locating libraries in their social contexts. First wave library historians framed public libraries as exemplary institutions committed to the uplift of American society and the free expression of democratic thought. This image persists not only in celebratory institutional histories, but in the popular imagination of what public libraries are and how they function. Reinserting a critical analysis of libraries' social context privileges a community perspective on institutional development that complicates its legacy. In the case of World War II-era Baltimore, a grassroots analysis reveals that public libraries' loyalty to social ideologies consistently limited their commitment to accessibility and institutional opportunity, knocking them from their vaunted position as institutions in the vanguard of social progress.

At the same time, concentrating on the contradictions in libraries' history clarifies moments where individuals and communities were able to break through institutional barriers to enact meaningful change. Locating the incongruencies in institutional narratives invites a deeper analysis into library history by creating the space to identify and analyze historical forces. In mid-twentieth century Baltimore, library policies barred African Americans from serving as professionals. The successful repeal of this position did not come from Pratt librarians or the Board of Directors or even the ALA but from members of the community like Louise Kerr, Juanita Mitchell, Lillie M. Jackson, and Charles H. Houston. This example

demonstrates an inversion of power dynamics between the library and public that privileges the community as a driving historical actor in the library's development. Maintaining this perspective shifts our conceptions of public libraries by positioning them not as a self-contained force within a community but as conduit through which ideas and movements could coalesce and manifest.

Ultimately, concentrating on public library history provides the opportunity to deepen historical scholarship across a variety of fronts. Unearthing the roots of libraries' institutional development elevates the muffled voices of those traditionally outside the historical record. Racial minorities, children, and women all find prominent positions in libraries as professionals and users in a way that grants visibility to their experiences in times and places where their lives are hard to locate. Furthermore, analyzing library history denaturalizes its functions by placing it as a product of a specific historical community in a specific time. This draws out institutional complexities that continue to have ramifications on our modern conceptualization of public libraries. Even as the tools of information seeking change, Americans cling to the promise of free, readily accessible knowledge as a hallmark of a democratic society. Library history tells us otherwise, indicating that there is powerful insight in the commonplace, everyday institutions of our lives.

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