The Black Intellectual Tradition: Black History and the Making of Black Librarianship

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"There is the definite desire and determination to have a history, well documented, widely known at least within race circles, and administered as a stimulating and inspiring tradition for the coming generations."[1]

Black librarianship has been understudied in the field of library science and black history which has led to generations of scholar activists being underrepresented in major works of history. More importantly, black intellectual history has been understudied in the field of American intellectual history. Research about the formation of black intellectual history focuses primarily on the work of African American men. Because black intellectual history has privileged one perspective, the study of both black librarianship and black intellectual history deserve greater study . The fields of Black intellectual history and black librarianship have grown in the 21st century, however, there have been few attempts to intersect the history of black librarianship into the broader study of intellectual history.

Although existing scholarship ignores this intersectionality, black librarianship is rooted in 19th century intellectualism. This paper will make the connection between black intellectuals and the development of black libraries, librarians, and the field of library science. Since the establishment of black/africana studies departments in the late 1960s, certain black libraries and librarians have garnered the attention of mainstream scholarship.[2] Arturo Alfonso Schomburg, Puerto Rican and black bibliophile has been written about extensively in recent years. Scholars have often linked his career to the development of several HBCU libraries, as well as several black intellectuals and scholars at the turn of the 20th century.[3] However, Schomburg was not a licensed librarian. He did not receive a degree in library science nor did he intend to pursue

[1] Arturo Schomburg, "The Negro Digs Up His Own Past" in *New Negro: An Interpretation* (New York, Albert and Charles Boni), 1925.
[2] Referring to scholarship on Arturo Schomburg and Dorothy Porter Wesley.
[3] See Vanessa Kimberly Valdés, *Diasporic Blackness: The Life and Times of Arturo Alfonso Schomburg*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2017; Elinor Des Verney Sinnette, *Arthur Alfonso Schomburg – Black Bibliophile and Collector: A biography*, The New York Public Library & Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1989.

librarianship as a profession. Schomburg's career is proof of the intersectionality between black intellectual history and librarianship . My argument will hopefully inspire a new generation of scholarship that will consider black librarianship in conjunction with black intellectual thought. Asserting that the field of black librarianship was a product of the black intellectual tradition will center black women, and black librarians at the center of black intellectual history .

I contend that black librarianship should be viewed as a part of the much larger black intellectual movement that produced generations of scholarly activism. Black librarianship should also be viewed as an integral part of the formation of black women's studies . Simply tracing the start of black librarianship to the first African Americans to get degrees in library science contributes to the false assumption that the American education system has been historically fair to people of color . African American intellectuals took interest in archival methods long before the field of library science was established. To further that point, black scholars were excluded from academia for generations, and even when they were gradually accepted, only a select class were able to pursue a college education. Academia consistently fails to give academic credibility to those who did the work of academics but operated outside of the academy. For example, abolitionist Frederick Dougalss was one of the preeminent American thinkers of the 19th century. Douglass was deeply concerned with Black history, and he often alluded to ancestral Africa in his speeches. As a journalist and editor of the *NorthStar*, Douglass covered all parts of the world. Later black academics built upon his analysis of history and civilization, incorporating his ethos into their work. Douglass did not need a degree in sociology and/or history to be considered a pioneer in either of those fields. Abolitionists Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and Maria Stewart did not receive academic degrees, but still their intellectual contributions have been foundational to the study of history, philosophy, and religion.

By failing to recognize those who did the work of librarians as pioneers in librarianship does a disservice to history and the field at large. Among the many distinctions given to black thinkers, one that completely gets ignored is their achievements as archivists and/or preservationists. Pioneers in Black historical scholarship were concerned with preservation even before the modern concept of an archive. George Washington Williams, author of the first overall history of African Americans, frequented the library because he was convinced that there was an "inestimable" amount of material on African AMericans.[4] Historian John Hope Franklin describes his pursuit of African American history as an investigation, suggesting that Black history was one that had to be found and discovered.

Understanding the scarcity in documentation of the Black past, intellectuals desired to not only document but to preserve and commemorate the past. Making distinctions based on American academic standards ignores the shared missions of both librarians and historians. Ignoring Williams's achievements as an accomplishment in black archival methodology fails to encapsulate the significance of black historical scholarship.

For the purposes of analysis, Black historians have often been segmented into generations.[5] For example, Williams would be considered a pioneer of the first wave of black historical scholarship while Franklin would be considered a third generation historian. The first generations made it possible for Franklin and others to expound and fully chronicle African American history. It is the first generation of black historical scholarship that embodied the dual responsibility of being both a preserver and producer of history.

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[4] John Hope Franklin. "George Washington Williams, Historian." *The Journal of Negro History* 31, no. 1 (1946): 65.

[5] See David Blight's review, David W. Blight. Review of The Restoration of Black History: Benjamin Quarles and the Paradox of Race, by Benjamin Quarles. *Reviews in American History* 17, no. 1 (1989): 152–58.

W.E.B Du Bois's career and his monumental rejection of the Atlanta Compromise was the turning point for black education and black librarianship in the 20th century. A central event in black intellectualism was the speech given by Booker T. Washington at the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta . Known as the Atlanta Compromise, the famous speech famously led to friction among Washington and scholar-activist Du Bois. An understudied ramification of their famous feud was the emergence of black librarians and libraries during this shift in black intellectual thought. By the time of Washington's death in 1915, black education would mirror the vision of Du Bois. Du Bois's activism and academic vision can be linked to almost, if not all, black libraries. Du Bois, coming of age in the 19th century, would dedicate the 20th century to investigating the Black past through his scholarship.

There has been literature produced by historians and librarians that have examined black librarianship, mainly current literature exists in the form of edited collections, and biographies.[6] There have also been efforts by literary scholars to investigate the archival method of certain black bibliographers.[7] There have also been studies done on the history of black library schools and training programs. Recently, Aisha M. Johnson-Jones's *The African American Struggle for Library Equality: The Untold Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund Library Program* chronicled the history of black library programs funded by businessman and philanthropist Julius Rosenwald.

Although the recent scholarship signals growth in this subject area, recent literature has ignored the practice of black librarianship as an active field in the Black freedom struggle .

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[6] *Dorothy Porter Wesley at Howard University*, *Arthur Alfonso Schomburg–Black Bibliophile and Collector,* and *The colored librarian: Thomas F. Blue and the Louisville Free Public Library's Colored Department*.

[7] Referring to Laura Helton. "Making Lists, Keeping Time: Infrastructures of Black Inquiry, 1900–1950." In *Against a Sharp White Background: Infrastructures of African American*, edited by Brigitte Fielder and Jonathan Senchyne (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2019), 82-108.

Although several prominent historians and activists worked directly with their institution's library, librarians are overlooked in the context of their career successes. Libraries were not only pivotal in the promotion of black scholarly work, but they served as training grounds for the eventual modern civil rights movement.

Historians have written at length about the founder of Black History. Dr. Carter G. Woodson. Though those biographies discuss at-length his role in building HBCU libraries, historical scholarship has overlooked the librarian as being of equal importance in establishing black history. One of the major partnerships of Woodson was his collaboration with Dorothy Porter, library pioneer at Howard University. Although Dorothy Porter Wesley has had extensive research done on her career in the last decade, Wesley's biographer Janet Sims-Wood stressed that even her biography of Wesley did not do justice to Wesley's career significance at Howard.[8] My research will demonstrate the connection between black librarianship and black intellectualism. This paper also argues that black librarianship as a discipline should be viewed in the much larger discussion of Black history .

After the civil war, the emphasis on black education became of great concern to both the North and the South. Prior to the war, a small number of African Americans were formally educated, but those African Americans were primarily educated in the North. Slavery's end led to the formation of a number of historically black colleges. During the era of Reconstruction (1866-1875), Blacks experienced political,educational, and economic progress. Some African Americans were able to hold political offices and gain rights to vote. However, the end of reconstruction meant the reversal of almost all the progress made by African Americans. The infamous Compromise of 1877 meant the beginning of Jim Crow. Although free from

[8] Library Of Congress. "Dorothy Porter Wesley at Howard University." Filmed February 2015 in Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress.Video. https://www.loc.gov/item/2021689678/.

enslavement, Jim Crow legislation, southern terrorist groups, and widespread lynchings deterred African Americans from any political participation. During the era of Jim Crow, the South as a whole suffered from a lack of formal schools and education compared to the North.

As a result, Blacks received the least amount of formal education. Although built for the education of African American students, the previously mentioned institutions were led by white faculty and administration. Despite that, the era of Reconstruction produced a new African American, one who had experienced the period of enslavement and was determined to realize the promise of Reconstruction. For the sake of this narrative, leaders of this period like Booker T. Washington, Ida B. Wells, and W.E.B Du Bois serve as central figures for the early tenets of black intellectual thought which would later form the ethos of black librarianship. Prior to the 20th century, most African Americans were denied access to libraries. By the end of the 19th century, there had only been one African American to gain formal education in a library school.[9]

The life and career of Edward Christopher Williams, the first professionally trained African American librarian in the United States, demonstrates the educational difference between the North and South. Born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1871, Williams went to Western Reserve University. Unlike those who followed a century later, Williams did not attend a HBCU. He pursued his education and career all in the North.

In contrast, Booker T. Washington was busy running Tuskegee institute in Alabama. Tuskegee Institute embodied the Hampton model of education that prioritized vocational training and education.[10] Unlike Williams, Washington was born into slavery in 1856. He spent 9 years on a Virginia plantation as a child. Historians argue that Washington's childhood and experience

[9] Aisha Johnson-Jones, *The African American Struggle for Library Equality: The Untold Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund Library Program* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 62.
[10] Earl E. Thorpe . "FREDERICK DOUGLASS, W. E. B. DUBOIS and BOOKER T. WASHINGTON." *Negro History Bulletin* 20, no. 2 (1956): 39–42.

in the Jim Crow south shaped his attitudes towards education.[11] Washington, himself, was a highly educated African American who graduated from Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute.

By 1881, he became the president of Tuskegee institute at the age of 25. His education differed from the liberal arts education provided to black intellectuals who would later oppose him. Washington's success justified his accommodationist ideology that supported African Americans becoming skilled laborers. His solution to what historian Rayford Logan would call the "nadir of race relations" was to prioritize becoming valuable members of the American labor force. Washington's approach was supported by whites in the North and the South. At Tuskegee, he was able to establish partnerships and friendships with white philanthropists including Andrew Carnegie, Julius Rosenwald, and John D. Rockefeller.[12] Washington had succeeded in getting white philanthropists to support black education across the South. However, his intentions caused an uproar among more radical intellectuals. As it pertains to black librarianship, his connections with Carnegie and Rosenwald would later prove vital to the establishment of black libraries and library schools. Black libraries, especially at black institutions, owe much to Washington. However, despite his efforts, Washington's ideology was in direct opposition to what black librarianship would deem its core mission in the 20th century.

HBCU education, particularly in the 19th century, did not mean a black education. At the institutions run, taught and funded by whites, Black students were not exposed to black history or black subjects. Instead, they were indoctrinated with a Eurocentric view of the world. White teachers at HBCUs intended to train a generation of educated Blacks who were

[11] Referring to Louis Harlan, "Booker T. Washington in Biographical Perspective." The *American Historical Review* 75, no. 6 (1970): 1581–99; Robert Norrell, *Up From History: The Life of Booker T. Washington* (Harvard University Press, 2009).
[12] Norrell, *Up From History: The Life of Booker T. Washington*, 154, 274-76, 368-70.

accommodationist and assimilated into American society. These private, elite institutions chartered a liberal arts education. Adam K. Spence, dean at Fisk during Du Bois's tenure, stated that "if he is superior, give him inferior training; but if he is equal, give him the same."[13] Two students of Fisk University Ida B. Wells and W.E.B Du Bois would become proponents of a new intellectual tradition that would create the concept of black librarianship. Unlike Washington, Du Bois and Wells were advocates for social and political change. In the period after reconstruction, Ida B. Wells became the face of black women's activism. She spoke against rape, lynchings and Jim Crow. As an educator, she mentored and stewarded black women scholars. Despite the underrepresentation of black women as pioneers in intellectualism, Wells was one of Du Bois's greatest influences. Both Wells and Du Bois were students at Fisk University. While Du Bois graduated from Fisk in 1888, Wells briefly attended the institution for summer sessions. For Du Bois, Fisk was his introduction to the Jim Crow south. Although trained in the classics and inundated with European philosophy, he witnessed the rise of lynchings in the South. Du Bois's journey to Fisk also demonstrates the divisions in class among Black Americans during the late 19th century. Although these were schools for Black Americans, institutions like Fisk were costly.

In the words of historian David Levering Lewis,

"dancing off a pinhead of privilege, the sons and daughters of affluent Afro-America came to Fisk, as they did Atlanta, Talledega, Howard, Lincoln, and a handful of other colleges, in such numbers that , although never the majority, they set the tone and defined the institutional character".[14]

[13] David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B Du Bois: A Biography of a Race 1868-1963* (New York: Henry Holt, 1993), 59.
[14] Lewis, *W.E.B Du Bois: A Biography of a Race 1868-1963*, 61.

Lewis adequately described the Black Victorian class, destined for a better life than the previously enslaved generation.

While Ida B. Wells' family had the economic means to send her to Fisk, Lemoyne and Shaw College, Du Bois relied on the community of Great Barrington for financial support.[15] Ida B. Wells came from an educated, middle-class background in the South. After the civil war, her father served on the board of trustees at Shaw University.[16] The first iteration of the "New Negro"class pioneered different views of how to attain freedom and equality while establishing indicated education as a pathway for freedom.

Edward Williams, representative of the black middle class, stressed the importance of library services for African Americans. Like Du Bois, he was trained in the classics, and felt that a liberal arts education was essential for African American progress. While Williams's experience came primarily from the North, Du Bois's investigation into the Black past was inspired by his observations in the South. According to Dubois, Fisk's liberal arts education made it a "good college for students of color."[17] However, it was his education about the brutality of lynchings and segregation while at Fisk that sparked his further investigation into the color line. Fisk's library was one of the most robust amongst HBCUs. As an undergraduate, Du Bois spent most of his time learning about the "literary lore of the past and present" on the second floor of his male dormitory.[18] After Du Bois's departure from Fisk, the university's library would develop one of the most significant black collections in the country.

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[15] Lewis, 52-56.
[16] Ida B. Wells-Barnett. *The Memphis Diary of Ida B. Wells : An Intimate Portrait of the Activist As a Young Woman*. Black Women Writers Series (Boston, Mass: Beacon Press, 1995), 7.
[17] Lewis, 77.
[18] *Fisk Herald*, April 1889, 5

The year 1895 was significant for Du Bois for two reasons. In 1895, Du Bois became the first African American to gain a PhD from Harvard. That same year, Washington gave the famous speech in Atlanta that would turn out to be "one of the most consequential announcements in American history."[19]. Du Bois's experience at Harvard was symbolic of the racist attitudes towards black institutions. Harvard refused to acknowledge Du Bois's Fisk degree despite his curriculum being of equal value. Du Bois's thesis and dissertation at Harvard signaled the dawn of a new black intellectual age. Du Bois's M.A thesis and dissertation focused on the Atlantic slave trade. Identifying Du Bois's career as the central point in African American scholarship demonstrates that 19th century intellectualism influenced the values and visions that created Black intellectual history and shaped the black librarian. Du Bois's education at both FIsk and Harvard made him an impassioned advocate for education reform. It was no longer acceptable for Blacks to be just educated. For Du Bois and his mentor Ida B. Wells, there needed to be a specific education for Black America–one that educated them about their past and their current experience. A radical and active education needed to be chronicled, studied and then preserved. In the last years of the 19th century, the black archival methodology was born.

Most of Washington's opponents were those of equal educational or socioeconomic status..Furthermore, black intellectuals felt that Washington relegated Blacks to second-class citizenship and betrayed the race.[20] Though Du Bois had not always opposed Washington, the Atlanta Compromise would mark the start of their famous feud. With that speech, Washington became the most important Black man in America. No African American had more political, social, or economic power than Washington. After all, Washington had built the Tuskegee political machine and had quelled some of the extreme racial violence existing in the South.

[19] Lewis, 174
[20] Norrell, 6-7.

Coined the wizard of Tuskegee, Washington was a shrewd businessman who established an economic pathway for Blacks. Du Bois, a newly minted PhD, initially saw Washington's mentorship as necessary to becoming a member of the growing black leadership class.

Before taking his professorship at Wilberforce University, Washington offered Du Bois a job as professor at Tuskegee Institute. Du Bois ultimately concluded that Tuskegee's program was not in need of his services.[21] Du Bois's refusal to work at Tuskegee demonstrated his growing desire for a more radical education for Blacks. Shortly after completing his dissertation, Du Bois became one of, if not, the preeminent black intellectuals in the United States.

In 1897, Du Bois joined the American Negro Academy (ANA). Led by intellectual Alexander Crummell, an elite class of black men sought to encourage African Americans to pursue studies in liberal arts. This period of Du Bois's career formed his later controversial Talented Tenth philosophy. Referred to as "the first major Black learned society", The ANA was run and led by only Black men.[22] Though there were several black women who were educators, activists, and advocates of a liberal education, studies on Black history overlook their contributions in education reform. It was not just men such as Du Bois and Crummell who epitomized black middle class intellectual leadership, but Black women played a vital role in the formation of the black intellectual tradition.

Prior to the formation of the ANA, The National Association for Colored Women (NACW) was formed July 21, 1896.[23] The NACW embodied what would later become the scholarly activism of black women librarians. Like the ANA, the NACW explored the color line

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[21] Mark Bauerlein. "Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois: The Origins of a Bitter Intellectual Battle." The *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 46 (2004): 108

[22] Quote "the first major Black learned society" is from Alfred Moss, *The American Negro Academy: Voice of the Talented Tenth* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State Press, 1981), 1.

[23] Beverly W. Jones. "Mary Church Terrell and the National Association of Colored Women, 1896 to 1901." *The Journal of Negro History* 67, no. 1 (1982): 22.

both domestically and abroad. The growth of women's clubs in the late 19th century illustrated the strategic activism of black women. Together, both black middle class men and women opposed Washington's accommodationist vision.

Before the 20th century, most discussion about education prioritized the public sphere. Although intellectuals were college educated, they understood the importance of the black public's education. Though considered almost always in opposition to a liberal education, Washington served on the Fisk Board of Trustees. Washington's position at Fisk exposes his contradicting message to the Black masses. Those who had means and achieved a decent socio-economic status did not always have the common man in mind. No ideology formed during the 19th century demonstrated black elitism more than Du Bois's Talented tenth philosophy.

While scholars have criticized the talented tenth for being elitist in principle, historian Stephanie Shaw argues that it was neither elitist nor conservative. [24] To further that point, the talented tenth was a thoroughly radical proposition put forth at a time when many thinkers, writers, and activists were proposing alternatives to what people regularly described as a "Gospel of Wealth."[25] Du Bois's 1903 Souls of Black Folk is one of the foundational texts in African American literature. Furthermore, Du Bois's work in pioneering sociology shaped the mission of black scholars and librarians of the 20th century.[26]

Booker T. Washington's relationship with philanthropist Andrew Carnegie has been long documented. To Washington's and Carnegie's credit, their partnership established several HBCU and academic libraries. However, their partnership also highlights the elements of class in

[24] Stephanie Shaw. *W. E. B. Du Bois and The Souls of Black Folk* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 8.
[25] Shaw, *W. E. B. Du Bois and The Souls of Black Folk*, 9.
[26] Rhonda Evans, "Libraries and the Color Line" in *The Black Librarian in America : Reflections, Resistance, and Reawakening*, edited by Ana Ndumu, Nichelle M. Hayes, Shaundra Walker, Shauntee Burns-Simpson (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2022), 9.

Washington's Tuskegee machine. While Washington and his family benefited from middle class status, his mass leadership denied the black public sphere the opportunity of an equal chance of education. Among Washington-Dubois debates, Du Bois was critical of Andrew Carnegie's public library system. Although Carnegie had a great relationship with Washington, he still supported segregated library facilities.

As the number of black library professionals increased in the north, efforts for integrated library facilities and/or Black libraries grew. The growing concern for black education and the new sociological approach to the study of African American life led to radical organization. One could argue that Du Bois's philosophy is responsible for conceptualizing the black librarian.

By 1905, Du Bois had become a staunch opponent of Washington and arguably the second most prominent Black man in America.[27] That year also marked the formation of the Niagara Movement. Unlike the ANA, the Niagara Movement was a more concentrated group of the talented tenth, spanning 14 different states. At the same time of Niagara's founding, New York Public Library's 135th Street Branch in Harlem had been opened to the public. Harlem had been home to a predominantly Jewish population, but in the following years, Harlem would become almost 95% Black. Starting in 1910, African Americans began to migrate North to escape the Jim Crow south.[28] With an influx of migrating Black Americans, Harlem would become an African American cultural hub. From 1905 to 1908, the Niagara movement had become the face of Black intellectualism.

[27] Bauerlin, "Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois: The Origins of a Bitter Intellectual Battle," 114.
[28] For information about the Great Migration see, Isabel Wilkinson, *The Warmth Of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (Random House, 2010).

The fight for library equality undoubtedly started with the public library system. In the north, attitudes toward Black library access were more progressive than in the south. During the antebellum period, a combination of Quaker, abolitionist, and literary societies made efforts to provide free Blacks access to library services.[29] After the civil war, the north led the way in library development by having African American leaders and administrators.[30] Evidenced by the childhoods of W.E.B Du Bois and Edward Williams, Northern Blacks experienced a more progressive education than their southern contemporaries.

The progress made in the New York public library system was a central point in the establishment of the black library professional. Although there had been African Americans working with or in libraries, Catherine Latimer's hire marked a turning point in black librarianship. Latimer was representative of the new generation of black scholars, products of the previous generation of the black elite class. Latimer's mother, Minta Bosley, was a women's suffragist and a member of the NACW. Bosley was also a graduate of Fisk, and she later married a real estate agent who represented Du Bois.[31] Latimer's roots were clearly in the 19th century intellectual movement. Carrying with her the organizing spirit of her mother, Latimer's road to professional librarianship was determined to be one of consciousness. More importantly, she shouldered the responsibility of preserving black history. Latimer's hire coincided with the birth of the Harlem Renaissance, a movement of young Black, up-incoming artists and scholars. Several of the Renaissance writers and scholars are credited as being compilers and bibliographers. These young scholars were also products of the Great Migration. Much like the

[29] Johnson-Jones,*The African American Struggle for Library Equality: The Untold Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund Library Program*, 2-3.
[30] Johnson-Jones, 2.
[31] Nancy Page Fernandez. Biographical Sketch of Minta Bosley Allen Trotman. Alexandria, VA: Alexander Street, 2018.

black elitist class that had been established in Washington D.C in the 19th century, Harlem became the epicenter of black history and culture. Prior to Latimer's hire in 1920, Schomburg had worked to establish library collections at Fisk and Howard. The 19th century black intellectuals investigated the Black past, and by doing so, they also created a model for Black education. No longer was it acceptable to say that African Americans came from a dark continent with little-to no history. Black intellectual thought had investigated beyond that trope, discovering that African Americans not only have a history but they have a culture as well. For the Renaissance scholars, taking after the philosophy of Alaine Locke, the black public sphere must recognize its culture and work to preserve it. Latimer might have been the first librarian to head a New York Public Library, but she was far from the first to do the work of a librarian.

One might look at the studies done by Du Bois in the 19th century as pure sociological studies. Yes, he established a model for urban sociology, but he also insisted on documenting the present, understanding that it would expose the past. There is no secret as to why Du Bois was outspoken about the Harlem branch library. He saw it as an achievement in the progress of African American economic and social status. It is also fair to assume that seeing a black woman head a library, in a predominantly black city, reflected Du Bois's vision for Black America. When one describes Harlem as an epicenter, embedded in that description is the acknowledgement that Harlem had clearly become Black. In Harlem, black elites could mingle, collaborate, and live as middle-class Americans. Intertwined in the nexus of black librarianship is the mission to acquire and collect. More than anything else, Black intellectuals looked to collect anything produced by Black artists, writers, and scholars. There is a clear connection between acquisition practice and the organizing vision of the 19th century. Black librarians, if

nothing else, have always been organizers. Therefore, the organizational practices of the 19th century organizations such as the NACW and the ANA were embodied by the "new negro".

Daniel Murray Payne, first Black librarian at the Library of Congress (LOC), created a pamphlet of works by Black authors. Payne's collection was not only used at the 1900 Paris exhibit but it is now also housed at the LOC. He and his wife Anna Murray were both staunch black elites who worked closely with Du Bois. In D.C, the Murrays were fixtures in the developing black community. While Murray focused on educating the youth, Daniel was consumed with investigating Black literature. Biographer Elizabeth D. Taylor coined Daniel Payne as a "black history pioneer".[32] In addition to that, Payne was an early advocate of making black encyclopedias. He believed that a people's historical tradition built nationalism and group pride.[33] Joining the LOC staff in 1871, Payne is one of the earliest examples of the black librarian and black historian being an almost interchangeable designation. Payne's collaborative effort with Du Bois to curate the acclaimed Negro Exhibit in Paris marked one of the earliest actions of Black curation.

The library science field has a troubled history, specifically as it pertains to people of color. The field initially excluded African Americans and refused leadership to women. Even during the early career of Edward C. Williams, the American Library Association (ALA) did not support African Americans attending meetings.[34] The founding of the ALA in 1876, saw only 13 women at the inauguration conference. The ALA would not see a female president until the 20th century, in 1911. Under those circumstances, to only save the title of librarian to men would be

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[32] Elizabeth Dowling Taylor. *The Original Black Elite: Daniel Murray and the Story of a Forgotten Era*, ebook (HarperCollins, 2017), 526.
[33] Billie E Walker. "Daniel Alexander Payne Murray (1852-1925), Forgotten Librarian, Bibliographer, and Historian." *Libraries & Culture* 40, no. 1 (2005): 26.
[34] For information about the ALA's attitudes toward African Americans, see Rosemary Ruhig Du Mont. "Race in American Librarianship: Attitudes of the Library Profession." The *Journal of Library History* (1974-1987) 21, no. 3 (1986): 488–509.

in support of the long, troubled history of the ALA. The presence of Theresa Elmendorf, as president, was a product of the advocacy of suffragists in the 19th century. Undoubtedly, a large reason behind the women's suffrage movement's success was Black women. However, the ALA would not see A Black woman as president until 1976. The history of the ALA demonstrates that Black women suffered from exclusion in several leadership and academic circles. Once allies in their stance against Washington, Ida B. Wells would later accuse Du Bois of intentionally excluding her from recognition as a NAACP founder.[35] Black history, librarianship and activism have all been guilty of misogyny. Misogynistic views on leadership, education, and labor led to generations of Black women being overlooked as "historians".

In some ways, librarianship was the only avenue for Black women to do historical work. Anna Cooper, the first Black woman to receive a PhD in history, would not receive it until 1924, outside of the United States–at the University of Paris. However, she was considerably older than Du Bois, who often is referred to as a founder of black historical production. Like Du Bois, Cooper was also an advocate for classical education and she was in attendance at the first Pan-African Congress.Cooper also attended the famous Paris Exposition, an event where black men receive most of the credit for its success. Like her fellow 19th century contemporaries, Cooper established herself in D.C. Cooper along with Wells, Mary Church Terrell, was a leader in the black women's club movement. Although her associates did not receive a PhD in history, they clearly shared her values. Cooper's life and career is another example of the pioneering efforts by women in black historical production.

D.C, in many ways, was the prior generation's HArlem. It was one of the few cities where Black people could achieve leadership and professional positions. The 20th century saw a

[35] Ida B. Wells. *Crusade for Justice : The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*, Second Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), 278.

growth in the amount of Black people who reached middle-class status. Seeming as though most of this progress existed in the North, many southern preservers of history are often underlooked. Ida B. Wells's work as a journalist should be viewed much in the same way as Frederick Douglass or Du Bois. There was no way she could have been a PhD in the south, or a "librarian". But looking at her obvious impact on and in scholarship, it is clear that she is one of the preeminent African American scholars. Wells also fits into the category of documentor. Her career as a scholar, activist, and journalist should also be seen as an early practice of public intellectualism. Though she did not directly work in a library, Wells served on several committees that supported desegregated libraries and education. Her role in the Women's club movement could also be seen as a precursor to the radical leadership styles of future librarian women. Future black women librarians would cite Wells as an inspiration for their black feminist ideology put into practice.

Post WWI, the American labor force saw a shift. Men who fought in the war, came back home, and worked in factories, businesses, and industry. Positions such as librarian would see an increase in women leadership. This was not due to society "righting their wrongs", instead it was that professions such as nursing, homemaking, teaching and social work became the acceptable professions for women workers.[36] Most black men associated with building Black libraries in the 20th century worked in business or academia. Not until WWII would a number of black men turn back to librarianship as a profession. The Renaissance era saw one of black librarianship's greatest contributors at work. Dorothy Porter, librarian at the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center (1930-1973), was the epitome of black librarianship. Benjamin Quarles, Black history

[36] Stephanie Shaw. "Creating a Black Female Professional Class after the Civil War." *Negro History Bulletin* 63, no. 1/4 (2000): 32.

pioneer, claimed that "Porter would be destined to live in history."[37] Needless to say, Porter inspired a new generation of historical scholarship. For Porter, the work of librarian and historian had a shared mission. In addition to publishing several bibliographies, Porter published several profiles on African Americans.

Later Black women historians would carry her mission to further the work done on African American biography. Porter's significance to black librarianship has been long chronicled, however, her significance goes far beyond librarianship. One should consider Porter as one of the integral figures in establishing African American history as a discipline. While some acknowledge Rayford Logan, John Hope Franklin, and Benjamin Quarles as preeminent scholars of the third generation, Porter should be discussed in the same vein. If not for the work of Porter at Howard, works done by Black historians would not have reached as wide of audiences. Credited as building the Moorland-Spingarn center, she had to use her valuable connections with the Renaissance scholars to acquire collections. She was tasked with building the library with insufficient funding. With the help of Locke, Woodson, and Schomburg, she helped establish Howard as a preeminent library for the African American experience.

In much the same way Du Bois gets credit as pioneering Pan-Africanism, Porter carried his ethos and invited Pan-Africanists to Howard's campus. Evidence of the progress made in black librarianship, Porter advocated for a new cataloging system at the LOC–the library that a generation prior hired Daniel Alexander Payne. Porter's career connects several periods of Black achievement. Once a graduate of Howard, Porter became arguably its most significant alumni. She spent over 40 years married to James A. Porter, one of the most admired Renaissance artists of the time. Porter culminated the intellectual evolution that had taken place in the 19th century.

[37] Esme E. Bhan, "Dorothy Porter" in *Notable Black American Women*, edited by Jessie Carney Smith. (Detroit: Gale Research, 1992), 864.

Darlene Clark Hine, prominent Black woman historian, credits Porter as being a "beacon of light".[38]

The hallowed generation of Black woman historians, who emerged in the late 70s and early 80s, saw Porter's work as pioneering in Black history.[39] Black librarianship should be viewed as an extension of Black history. Unique to the Black scholar is the responsibility to archive, chronicle and preserve the past. Black history and black librarianship are inextricably linked, one is not possible without the other. The role of the black librarian and the black historian remains multi-faceted and layered, requiring a nontraditional characterization. One must not solely look at black historical production from an academic perspective or status. Rather, black history has more value when one looks outside the academy and into the people it continues to affect.

[38] Bhan, "Dorothy Porter", 864.
[39] "The hallowed generation of Black woman historians, who emerged in the late 70s and early 80s" refers to black women historians Darlene Clark Hine, Nell Irvin Painter, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham.

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