From Past to Present
The History and Mission of Libraries

I. INTRODUCTION

Not all societies can have libraries. Libraries require at least three conditions: a centralized population, economic development, and political stability (Harris and Johnson 1984). Physical libraries do not prosper in nomadic conditions; there must be a stable location for the materials. The centralization of population in cities and towns was particularly important. However, even a small stable population such as a university or monastery can serve as a sufficient concentration to produce a library. Similarly, libraries cannot prosper when the primary energies and resources of the community are devoted to subsistence; the development of libraries requires a certain level of wealth and leisure to read. Finally, libraries cannot flourish in times of revolt and political chaos. Many great libraries have been destroyed when empires fell or in times of war or other armed conflicts. Understanding how libraries emerged and the functions they served throughout history provides a basic context for understanding the current mission of American libraries and helps frame the discussion of the role of the library in the future. The discussion that follows is not a history of libraries per se, but a historical overview of the various missions of libraries with special attention to the development of libraries in the United States.

II. THE EARLY MISSIONS OF LIBRARIES

A. The Earliest Mission: Maintaining a Records Archive

No one knows when the first libraries were established, but at least two significant factors provided impetus for their creation: the rise of commerce and the invention of writing. The earliest written records date from 3000 BC and probably come from Sumeria or its environs in Mesopotamia. Sumeria was a busy commercial center. People conducted business, managed estates, and lent money in the temples which were the social and economic center of Sumerian communities. To record these transactions, wet clay from nearby river valleys was shaped into tablets and a square or triangular-tipped stylus was pressed into it producing characteristic wedge-shaped-markings. Called "cuneiform" (from the Latin *cuneus*, or wedge), the writing was both pictographic (comprising pictures) and phonographic (comprising sounds). The dried tablets were stacked on wooden shelves or in jars and baskets. Some important tablets were stored in clay envelopes.

Excavations of these ancient tablets revealed numerous insights into Sumerian society, including the holdings and sale of cattle, food, and textiles (Walker 1998) as well as important records dealing with mathematics, grammar, medicine, astrology, omens, and collections of religious prayers and incantations (Dunlap 1972). Some historical and literary works (including the *Epic of Gilgamesh*), have also been found as well as early codifications of law (Harris and Johnson 1984). Municipal and government libraries held business records as well as deeds, contracts, tax lists, and marriage records (Harris and Johnson 1984). References to small private libraries have been found as well, but little is known about them.

Reading was very rare in Mesopotamia and the culture, as it was elsewhere, was primarily oral. When reading did occur it was generally aloud. There were no librarians as we think of them today. However, an organized system for retrieving these materials was required. Evidence suggests that some of the temples had schools that taught specially qualified people how to make clay tablets, how to write cuneiform, and how to record Sumerian literature, mathematics, and accounting. These well-educated scribes or priests were known as "masters of the books" or "keepers of the tablets." These first "librarians" attached tags or marked at least some of the tablets on their edges. Sometimes a large number of tablets might be stored in a box or a series of boxes and an additional tablet was prepared summarizing the contents—a "tablet of contents," so to speak (Walker 1998). There is even evidence that there was a hierarchy among scribes with senior scribes serving as chief administrators of the tablet archives. Given the rarity of their skills, it is not surprising that these scribes were part of the elite of Sumerian society (Walker 1998).

B. The Religious and Practical Missions of Egyptian Libraries

By the third millennia BC, Egyptian society was thriving. Still primarily an oral culture, less than 1 percent of Egyptians could read and many of those were just barely literate. As with Sumeria, Egyptian temples were cultural centers that served as both historical archives and places for learning. Writing was considered a sacred activity. The temple priests trained professional scribes in a type of apprentice-master system to write a pictographic and phonographic language called hieroglyphics (Davies 1998). As clay was not plentiful, records were kept on scrolls made from flattened papyrus reeds (Jackson 1974).

The earliest Egyptian libraries probably emerged around 2400 BC The library at Edfu, known as the "House of Papyrus," had a collection of practical and spiritual materials that included writings on administration, magic, astronomy, astrology, and medicine (Thompson 1962; Shera 1976). Egyptian libraries were particularly notable for their medical collections, which included pharmacological information as well as materials on diagnosis and treatment of diseases and surgery (Harris and Johnson 1984). In addition to the temple libraries, there were also extensive private collections among royalty and individual wealthy Egyptians. Perhaps the most notable royal library was that of Pharaoh Ramses II in Thebes between 1200 and 1300 BC. This library might have had as many as 20,000 scrolls (Nichols 1964). According to the Greco-Roman historian Diodorus Siculus, the portal to the library at Thebes was inscribed with the words "Healer of the Soul," suggesting it contained both spiritual and medicinal materials, but we do not know the actual contents (Jackson 1974).

C. The Mission of Scholarship and Research

The eighth century BC Assyrian king, Ashurbanipal, was a learned man with knowledge of languages, mathematics, and astronomy as well as military strategy (Starr 1991). He believed that a library should not only maintain archival records, but should also serve as a source of current reference materials and contribute to the education of future generations (Dunlap 1972). To this end, he expanded the library at his palace in Nineveh, Mesopotamia, begun by his great-grandfather, Sargon II. Ashurbanipal directed scholars and assistants to collect clay tablets produced from other lands and the library soon had thousands of tablets on a wide variety of subjects. The collection contained Sumerian and Babylonian literary texts, history, omens, astronomical calculations, mathematical tables, grammatical and linguistic tables, and dictionaries, as well as commercial records and laws. Many of these materials were translated from their original language into Assyrian. There is also evidence of a "keeper of the books," as the collection was organized with the titles

arranged by subject and listed in registers. Some of the tablets had markers to help in locating and shelving them but nothing else is known (Jackson 1974).

The library of Ashurbanipal was the greatest library of its time, providing a rich collection of materials and information on Mesopotamia and its culture. At its height, it was estimated to have as many as 30,000 clay tablets, two-thirds of which were collected during Ashurbanipal's reign (Dunlap 1972). Taken as a whole, the Royal Library at Nineveh was a remarkable achievement for several reasons:

- The collection was a concerted effort to acquire a vast amount of material on a variety of subjects.
- The holdings were developed, at least in part, for future generations.
- Many of the materials were translated to increase accessibility.
- The materials were systematically organized, marked, and arranged.
- A "librarian" played a significant role in the library's activities.

No doubt part of the reason for the library's existence was to glorify Ashurbanipal, but the characteristics noted above also suggest that the Royal Library was the first attempt to build a library for reference and research.

Advancing the scholarly mission of libraries was also one of the notable contributions of the Greeks. The values of knowledge, learning, and education were an integral part of Greek culture. Throughout much of its history, Greece, like Sumeria and Egypt, was primarily an oral culture. In the fifth century BC, a transition to a written culture began. There is some evidence that even a century earlier, the then leader of Athens, Pisistratus, had collected many works and created the first "public" library.

Written materials, whether on scrolls or clay tablets, were believed to be helpful in furthering education. Many scholars and young aristocrats established private libraries that they believed might help them obtain social and political success (Jacob 2002; Staikos 2004). Even Plato had a large library, although he believed that written materials were problematic. He was concerned that the written word would supplant memory and oral discussion which he believed were critical to understanding ideas. Plato never taught from a written text or spoke from written notes. He prized the ability to speak well above the written word (Staikos 2004). Nonetheless, spurred by the rise of the philosophical schools of Plato, Aristotle, the Sophists, and others (Dunlap 1972), Greece soon became a center for the production of written materials.

Artistotle's library, in particular, was extensive. His student, Alexander the Great (356–323 BC) played a major role in promoting libraries. Although he was not directly

responsible for building libraries, by extending his empire he consequently extended the Greek values of reading and learning. Literacy, by Alexander's time, was more common compared to previous cultures and centuries—perhaps as high as 10 percent. While the wealthy could obtain a more complete education including the "classics" such as Homer, geometry, and music, others learned a basic education of writing and reading (Davies 1998; Starr 1991). In addition, Alexander might have been the first one to propose the idea of a great library in Alexandria, Egypt (Staikos 2004).

Following Alexander's death in 323 BC his conquered lands were divided among five Macedonian generals, one of whom, Ptolemy Soter (Ptolemy I), was given Egypt. Ptolemy, considered a fine diplomat, had great respect for the written word and a love for learning. He encouraged scholars and artists to immigrate to Alexandria, which in addition to a bustling port, became a center of culture, learning, and critical studies of Greek and other literatures. In order to facilitate these studies, Ptolemy and his son Ptolemy Philadelphus (Ptolemy II), with the help and encouragement of Demetrios of Phaleron, founded the Alexandrian Museum and Library.

The mission of the library was ambitious—to collect the entirety of Greek literature. The library was to be a "universal" library which promoted the Greek language but also included Near Eastern traditions. The Alexandrian, like the library of Ashurbanipal before it, aggressively collected materials. Ptolemy sent requests to the leaders throughout the known world asking them for copies of all the books they possessed in their libraries and archives so that they could be stored at the Alexandrian. Sometimes whole libraries were acquired. In some cases, the founders went to questionable lengths. Ptolemy, for example issued a royal decree that all books found on ships coming to Alexandria would be confiscated and copied. Then the *copies* would be returned to the ships! An entire annex of the Alexandrian library was created to make such copies (Staikos 2004).

The librarians organized, evaluated, classified, and maintained the materials in two buildings. A major research library called the Brucheion, was divided into ten great halls, each hall representing a separate area of learning subdivided with smaller rooms for individuals involved in special studies (Parsons 1952). A smaller library, called the Serapeum, might have provided some service to students and the public (Harris and Johnson 1984).

Many of the librarians achieved great personal fame, such as the scholar Callimachus. According to some historians, under Callimachus's guidance, the library exceeded more than a half-million items (Blackburn 2003), although the actual size

of the collection relies on various accounts of questionable authenticity (Parsons 1952; Jochum 1999). Callimachus is especially known for organizing the collection. His goal was to compile a comprehensive list of authors and their works that would serve as a library catalog (Staikos 2004). His subject catalog of the library holdings, called the Pinakes, contained 120 scrolls arranged into ten subject classes. Within each class, there were subdivisions listing authors alphabetically with titles. Because some entries included historical or critical remarks, some historians regard the Pinakes as more than a catalog, suggesting that it might have also served as a history of Greek literature (Jackson 1974).

The Alexandrian possessed the characteristics of any great research institution: a comprehensive collection of materials and scholars to acquire, organize, and maintain the collection. At its height, the total collection might have amounted to between 500,000 and 700,000 items. The Alexandrian became a self-contained community of scholars that attracted other notable scholars including Euclid, Archimedes, and Galen. Many of the researchers were provided with grants and other privileges including food, lodging, and servants so that they could pursue their academic activities undisturbed (Battles 2003; Staikos 2004). Common to academic institutions even today, this was a source of much jealousy and criticism by those who were not part of the privileged community. Interestingly, Staikos (p. 167) refers to the community of scholars as a "gilded prison" because the scholars were given great freedom inside the library, but were pretty much confined to it. Arrest and imprisonment might await any attempt to leave!

In fact, the Alexandrian represented a cultural core for Greek influence on the known world. As Battles (2003) noted:

> By bringing scholars to Alexandria and inviting them to live and work, at royal expense, among an enormous store of books, the Ptolemies made the library into a think tank under the control of the royal house. The strategic implications of a monopoly on knowledge—especially in medicine, engineering, and theology, all among Alexandria's strengths—were not lost on the Ptolemies. (p. 29)

It is unclear when and how the Alexandrian was destroyed. Some historians claimed that at least part of it was set afire when Caesar invaded Alexandria in 48 BC, but there is some reason to doubt that account (Jochum 1999). Blackburn (2003) argued that the scrolls which supposedly had been destroyed had actually been removed by the librarian to protect them and still await discovery. Nevertheless, the Alexandrian deteriorated with the decline of the Greek Empire and by the third century AD suffered badly from pillaging and destruction.

D. The Missions of Personal Status and Public Use: The Roman Libraries

Around the first century BC, with the rise of the Rome as a military and cultural force, the mission of libraries appeared to shift. During the early days of Rome, the Romans possessed few, if any, libraries. Following the conquest of Greece, however, Greek libraries were plundered, and possessing a library became a symbol of status and rank as well as personal pride for many generals and the aristocracy. Rome viewed itself as the heir to Greek culture and even the Roman educational system was modeled after that of the Greeks. Many Greek philosophers and teachers migrated to Rome from the first century BC onward helping to establish a book culture among Roman patricians—keeping in mind that for the most part the "book" was a scroll. Interestingly, although owning a library provided status, knowing how to write did not. Many of those who taught, edited, and copied manuscripts, or prepared documents were educated slaves usually from Greece—quite different from earlier times, although these slaves were often prized by their owners (Battles 2003).

By the first century BC there were many libraries in Rome. Some were associated with temples, others could be found in public baths which had alcoves in which to store scrolls. Many were in the private homes of wealthy Romans. Aristotle's library, for example, was brought to Rome in the first century BC by the Roman general Sulla (Thompson 1962). Cicero had a library in each of his seven villas (Staikos 2005). Lucullus opened his libraries to others who lacked the means to have their own collections, and it was not uncommon for fellow aristocrats of similar literary interests to loan materials from their private libraries to each other (Dix 1994). Julius Caesar's imperial library contained major works in Greek and Latin along with busts of their authors (Barker 2001). Many of the library collections in Rome were known as "double libraries," that is they contained Greek materials separate from the Latin collection (Staikos 2005, p. 7). This suggests that although the Greek culture was much revered, it was distinct from Rome's.

There might have been several factors that led to the creation of the first public library in Rome. First, during the time of Julius Caesar, there was an increasing belief that works of literature were to some extent public property that should be available to all citizens, although it is likely that less than 10 percent of the Roman citizenry could read (Harris, 1989). Second, there was increasing availability of literature in both the Greek and Latin languages; there was a thriving trade in books as well. Finally, Caesar, after his conquest of Alexandria in 47 BC was affected by seeing the great library there. When he returned to Rome, he planned to build the

first "public" library and he instructed the scholar Marcus Varro to begin collecting a wide variety of materials in both Greek and Latin. Unfortunately, Caesar's death delayed this project. Nonetheless, the project was continued by one of Caesar's consuls, Asinius Pollio, and it is he who is given credit for the completion of the library about 39 AD. The library was built in isolation but was connected to a group of other public buildings. Its purpose was twofold: it was a center of learning and study, and a place to serve the ever-increasing number of educated men and teachers (Staikos 2005). The emperor Augustus built two additional public libraries in Rome and by the fourth century AD there were as many as twenty-nine public libraries in the city, often associated with Roman temples (Boyd 1915). In addition to religious items these libraries also held public records and general literature, which might have been available for borrowing under rare circumstances (Harris and Johnson 1984). They also often had rooms or larger spaces that served as a public forum. It is important to remember that Roman society, like the Greeks, was primarily an oral culture, and even written works were usually spoken aloud. People, as a rule did not read silently. Instead, citizens attended special recitations at which poets or writers would recite their new works which was considered a form of publication during those times (Dix 1994; Harris 1989). The purpose of such recitations was either to obtain criticism from the listening audience, or to gain popularity and sales by entertaining fellow Romans. These public recitations evolved over time from small gatherings to much larger meetings which required larger rooms, which we now know as "auditoriums" (Staikos 2005). Although the presence of "public" libraries with public readings is a distinctive feature of the Roman achievement, one should not make too much of it. It is really unclear whether there was truly general access to these libraries, it is more likely access was still to the educated and privileged. Nonetheless, because some libraries were found in public baths, there is reason to believe that in at least some cases many Romans could partake of limited collections. Overall though, access was probably limited to an exclusive few (Dix 1994).

During most of the time of Roman domination, the Romans recorded their history and accounts using papyrus scrolls, like the Greeks before them. The scrolls, called *volumina* (volume), could be as much as 20 to 30 feet in length. There were some obvious disadvantages to the scrolls; they were bulky and it was more difficult to find one's place because there were no pages. During the first century AD, due to persecution and the need to record religious text quickly and in readily transportable form, the early Christians abandoned the scroll and replaced it with the parchment codex (book). The early Christians were the first to publish biblical manuscripts in codex form with bound pages and a wood covering (Boser 2006).

> The format was a radical one because bound books were considered second class; almost all lengthy texts at the time were published on scrolls. But with its hard cover and compact size, the codex traveled better than a scroll and could be opened flat and have page numbers, which made for easier reading. (Boser 2006, p. 28)

For many subsequent centuries the papyrus scroll and the codex coexisted. During this transitional period, many scrolls deemed important by their possessors were copied into the codex format thus aiding the eventual domination of the current book form. By the fourth century AD, the codex was in widespread use and had replaced papyrus scrolls (Thompson 1962).

Also by the fourth century, the social tension between Greco-Roman "pagan" beliefs and those of the ever-growing number of Christians produced much friction and included attention to the written accounts that undergirded both pagan and Christian doctrine. The books and other writings of Greek and Roman philosophers and those of the Apostles and Church fathers drew fire from their opposing camps and produced sometimes violent forms of censorship. As political leadership ebbed and flowed in the first four centuries of the Christian era, whichever leadership dominated often attempted to censor the books and authors of the other. This was an era in which brutal and sometimes fatal punishments for authors and those who possessed their works were meted out. Book burnings as well as people burnings were not uncommon and both Christian and non-Christian leaders shared in these excesses.

As most of Western Europe plunged into political, economic, and social chaos, however, the archival and scholarly missions of libraries were sustained by Byzantine and Muslim libraries in the East, and in the monastic libraries of Western Europe.

E. Preserving Scholarship: The Byzantine and Muslim Libraries

The Middle Ages, which extended broadly from about 300 AD to 1500 AD, was a complex period. Although it is generally viewed as a period of great calamity, poverty, and chaos, this is a serious oversimplification. Generally, Western Europe in what remained of the rapidly disintegrating Western Roman Empire suffered serious political dislocations and great economic depression. Especially from 400 to 800 AD Western Europe experienced many invasions from groups outside the Empire, including the Goths, Vandals, Mongols, Visigoths, and Vikings. Political leadership in the West changed frequently and was often disorganized and fragmented. Urban areas declined and cities physically and politically disintegrated. There were

essentially two classes of people: a small number of elites who dominated government, economics, and religion; and a large peasant class who provided agricultural and sometimes military labors in service of the elites (Cantor 1993). The dominant way of life was rural, provincial, impoverished, and difficult. Small villages and towns peppered large rural areas that were poorly farmed and sustained a peasant population who were poorly educated and with very low standards of living. Political control was mostly exercised locally rather than by an Emperor or King. As we will see in the discussion below, such social, political, and economic conditions were not amenable to large, universal libraries. Such conditions made it difficult or impossible for libraries to exist at all.

But while Western Europe was declining, the Eastern Roman Empire, known as the Byzantine Empire, was flourishing under the leadership of the Christian emperor Constantine and his son. This empire extended along the Mediterranean from Greece to Northern Africa, including Egypt. The empire was a center of trade and commercial activity. Constantine was the first Christian emperor of Rome and while only 10 percent of the Roman Empire was Christian at the time of his conversion, his ascension to power greatly increased Christianity's influence (Mango 2002).

The center of the Byzantine Empire was Constantinople, where Constantine's son, Emperor Constantius, strove to make the city the intellectual capital of the Empire. To accomplish this, he founded the Imperial Library in 353 AD (Jackson 1974). It appears the library operated much like a university library although it was open to the public. Like Assurbanipal and the Ptolemy's before him, Constantius sent messengers throughout the Empire to seek out Greek and Latin texts (and Christian texts as well), and to bring them to the library. Many works thus discovered were on papyrus and in serious disrepair. As a consequence, the library contained not only a large collection, but a staff of individuals and a conservation area. Here, scrolls were repaired or copied onto new parchment codices (Staikos 2005). Although the Eastern Empire was more influenced by Greek culture and traditions than Roman ones, the Imperial Library contained both Greek and Latin works organized as a "double library" (Harris and Johnson 1984, Staikos 2005). By 450 AD the Imperial Library held 100,000 items.

Constantinople was also home to private libraries and a large university library. The mission of these libraries was scholarly as well as religious, and it is impossible to overestimate their importance in preserving many Greek and Latin texts that sustained the future of Western society. As Harris and Johnson (1984) noted, "of the Greek classics known today, at least seventy-five percent are known through Byzantine copies" (p. 83). Without the preservation of these materials, the Renaissance would not have been possible.

The same can be said concerning the achievements of the Muslim Empire, which flourished from 650 AD until 1100 AD. Because of the respect afforded reading and learning in the Muslim culture, libraries were commonplace in private homes, royal palaces, and universities throughout the Muslim world. Literacy was widespread. The caliphs in many of the major cities had a deep respect for learning and some were scholars and literati (Thompson 1962). Although religion was deeply important to the culture, there were also strong secular forces that promoted learning in the sciences, medicine, and philosophy. Arab rulers built great libraries that became a critical force in fostering the translation of many materials especially classical Greek works by Aristotle, Archimedes, and Euclid. The proliferation of libraries throughout the Muslim world was impressive: Spain had seventy libraries, Baghdad thirty-six, and "every important city in Persia had its library" (Thompson 1962, p. 353).

The earliest major library was the Royal Library in Damascus, which contained materials from throughout the world on a wide variety of topics, including medicine, philosophy, history, and literature (Harris and Johnson 1984). Later, during the eighth and ninth centuries, Baghdad, under the Abbasid dynasty and the leadership of Caliph Ma'mum became the cultural center for the study of Greek medical, scientific, and philosophical works and "abounded with libraries" (Thompson 1962, p. 351). The most notable library in Bagdad at this time was the "House of Wisdom." The "House of Wisdom" was a universal library like the Alexandrian, and scholars travelled to it translating important works and studying mathematics, astronomy, and geometry. In addition, research and learning were furthered by large university libraries in Baghdad, Cairo, and Cordoba. The Cairo library might have held more than 200,000 volumes and the library at Cordoba was reported to contain between 400,000 and 600,000 volumes—larger than the Alexandrian (Harris and Johnson 1984; Thompson 1962).

With the waning of the Muslim Empire and the capture of Constantinople by the Crusaders around 1200, Muslim libraries fell into decline. Nonetheless, Muslim libraries made a substantial contribution to Western culture by preserving the central works of Western thought. The Western world owes a particular debt to the Muslims for preserving the works of Aristotle.

F. The Religious Mission: Monastic Libraries of the Middle Ages

As noted above, with the fall of the Roman Empire, social and political chaos led to economic instability throughout Western Europe. Libraries went into a similar decline, but they did not disappear. What saved libraries? During the first centuries

of the Christian era, Christianity grew rapidly, even though it was viewed as an illegal activity in the Roman Empire. It is estimated that by 300 AD, nearly 25% of the Roman Empire, 15 million people, were Christians (Cantor 2003). Christianity placed considerable emphasis on education and study, and it is not surprising then that libraries would develop and prosper in some form and that reading, especially reading the scriptures would be encouraged (Staikos 2005). The form it took was the monastery library.

Monasteries, which were well established by 500–550 AD, provided a means of isolating Christian adherents, both geographically and spiritually, from the disorder that had spread and was continuing to spread across Western Europe. The mission of the monastic library was threefold: to provide a place for spiritual reflection, to archive religious texts, and to reproduce religious and sometimes secular texts.

Perhaps the best exemplar of the religious mission of the monastic library comes from the Benedictine Order, established in 529 AD in Monte Casino, Italy. According to St. Benedict, the purpose of monastic life was to concentrate on spiritual matters and to avoid secular thoughts. Much of the monk's day was spent either in physical labor, meditation, or in reading religious literature. A monk's life was to be devout and mostly silent. To this end, books were often read to monks during meals (while the monks remained silent). The purpose was less enlightenment than to keep their minds from straying to frivolous or worldly matters. Similarly, each monk was provided one book for study each year (Clanchy 1979). Other rules involved the copying of books in a special room called the scriptorium. The purpose of copying was not necessarily to create more useful and instructive texts, it was also to keep the monks busy (Thompson 1962). Sometimes copying was also used as a punishment for a recalcitrant monk, and the resultant quality of the copy often left much to be desired (Shera 1976). Nonetheless, it is clear that books, study, education, and libraries were a valued part of Benedictine life. By 800, many of the larger Benedictine monasteries had schools, substantial libraries, and scriptoria. Both literacy and publishing benefited: the scriptoria became the publishing houses of the middle ages; and a large percentage of the literate individuals in Western Europe were educated in these monastic schools (Cantor 2003).

Other monasteries founded in Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, Scotland, France, and Great Britain regarded copying in a different vein. They saw the copying of religious texts as a means to derive inspiration. Many of these monasteries produced fine, illuminated manuscripts intended to reveal the beauty of God. These works of art reflected the copyist's realization that he was representing sacred words from Scripture. Their physical beauty, however, might also have been inspirational to the laity and might even have served as an early incentive to literacy (Clanchy

1979). One other debt is due the monks, the Dominicans in particular. The Dominican friars created written guidelines related to locating the best site for a library, providing adequate shelving, organizing the library by subjects, marking the spines of the books with their titles, replenishing and weeding the collection, establishing hours of operation, and selling duplicate titles (Clanchy 1979).

Regardless of whether the purpose of reading and copying books was to learn, to inspire, or to achieve an ascetic life, the monasteries helped preserve some of the writings of antiquity. However, as Thompson (1962) observed, "it is equally true their preservation was as often due to neglect and mere chance as it was to conscious intent . . . the medieval scriptorium was more often a treadmill for meaningless labor than it was a shrine where the expiring flame of literary culture was sedulously preserved" (pp. 30–31).

G. The Educational Mission: Cathedral and University Libraries of the Late Middle Ages

The educational mission of libraries reemerged in Western Europe in the late Middle Ages (800–1200 AD). With the growth of cities and towns, improved trade and other economic and social conditions, there was a concomitant improvement in the intellectual climate. The increasing respect for learning made fertile conditions for libraries once again.

By 1100, the cathedrals in major cities served as the administrative centers for bishops and archbishops and as training centers for priests and other religious functionaries (Harris and Johnson 1984). The cathedral libraries were larger than those in monasteries and were less dominated by religious works (Shera 1976). In fact, the mission of the cathedral libraries, unlike the monastic libraries, was to support the educational program of the cathedral and encourage study. Although some of the cathedral libraries were substantial, such as those in Verona and Monte Casino, Italy, and at Rheims and Chartres in France, they still could not rival the larger libraries of the Muslim Empire (Dunlap 1972).

Although the church continued to be a vital part of the life of the late Middle Ages, it was also a period of transition. For several centuries, the societies of Western Europe were devoted to survival; energy was devoted to the most elementary forms of literacy and education. By the eleventh century, however, opportunities for more speculative, secular thinking were emerging. The monks lost their leadership in education, and a significant proportion of the laity and intellectual aristocracy placed diminishing reliance on church teaching to guide their intellectual pursuits (Cantor 2003, Hessel 1955). In the place of church teaching, there was a growing interest in

classical writings as well as an interest in more contemporary studies in law, architecture, government, economics, education, arts, and sciences. A vernacular literature written in the local language rather than Latin, began to emerge with nonreligious writers creating a characteristic literature for the individual regions. This, in turn, created the foundation for the emergence of nationalism within Europe that was soon to follow (Cantor 2003).

In addition, during the late Middle Ages, European governments became more stable which in turn fostered the growth of cities, a stable middle class, and a more orderly legal system. As secular legal systems grew in importance so did the importance of those who knew the law and a new class of civil servants (secular clerks and civil lawyers) became essential to governmental functions. These developments, coupled with the dominance of less contemplative and more secularly involved religious sects such as the Dominicans and Franciscans, spawned the growth of academic centers in Bologna, Paris, and Oxford. The universities that were created in these centers supported not only theological studies, but also classical and professional instruction in law, medicine, and philosophy. Law, not theology, was the dominant discipline that was studied in these universities, and many of the civil servants needed by governments throughout Europe were educated in these universities. By the thirteenth century, the universities dominated academic activity in theology, philosophy, law, and the sciences.

Initially, these universities did not have libraries; rather, students bought their books from booksellers. The University of Paris established the first university library in the mid-thirteenth century, and Oxford and Cambridge soon followed, among others (Shera 1976). These libraries were often small, well under 1,000 items, but their mission to support and expand the educational mission of the university served as a bridge from the domination of the medieval church to the birth of the Renaissance (Harris and Johnson 1984; Shera 1976).

H. The Humanistic Mission and the Reemergence of the Library for Personal Status

The period following the Middle Ages (fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries) was a time of considerable economic, social, and political ferment, much of it centered in Italy, most notably Venice and Florence. Contributing factors included the rise of secular monarchies, an increased sense of nationalism, a decline in the power of the church, an increase in literacy, interest in natural sciences and secular politics, and a reawakening of the philosophical traditions of ancient Greek and Roman thinkers. This fervor for the knowledge of the ancients and for new

secular knowledge, rather than spiritual enlightenment, characterizes much of what is referred to as Renaissance Humanism. The result was a cultural and educational transformation in the arts, sciences, and politics.

The Renaissance was primarily an aristocratic enthusiasm. It was a time of great wealth among the secular upper classes that now possessed considerable political and social power and who promoted a powerful and expansive city-state; its protection and beautification was paramount. The state was an end in itself. It was a time of emphasizing civic patriotism and pride and the importance of human freedom. Education for these aristocrats emphasized civic virtue, not theology (Cantor 2003).

It was also a time of great private libraries developed by leading literary figures such as Petrarch and Boccaccio, who themselves were sponsored by popes or Renaissance princes such as the dukes of Urbino and the Medici. These sponsors were passionate book collectors as both a matter of personal vanity and a genuine interest in secular learning. They sent agents throughout Western Europe to locate manuscripts in deteriorating monastic libraries. Sometimes the manuscripts were copied but often enthusiastic agents confiscated (or saved) these items for their sponsors. As a result, Renaissance libraries were richly appointed and filled with beautifully illuminated texts. They served as places for scholarship, but also as places where aristocrats could "display their sensitivity to classical Latin" (Jackson 1974, p. 107).

Although the Renaissance princes might have taken the notion of the private library as personal aggrandizement to its highest form of ostentatious display, it was hardly a new concept or new mission (remember Ashurbanipal and the wealthy Romans). Yet, the passion of these Renaissance scholars and collectors brought together entire collections of the greatest classical thinkers, including Cicero, Plato, and Aristotle (Cantor 2003). One might reasonably contend, as Dunlap (1972) did, "Had it not been for the enthusiasm of a few collectors of that age . . . we should certainly possess only a small part of the literature, especially that of the Greeks, which is now in our hands" (pp. 106–107).

I. Promoting National Pride: The Mission of the National Libraries

The growth of secular monarchies and nationalism is consistent with the emergence of a new type of library—the national library. Early examples of such libraries arose in the seventeenth century in England, France, Germany, Denmark, and Scotland. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw additional national libraries in Austria, Italy, Sweden, Norway, Greece, Spain, and Ireland, among others (Gates 1976). What distinguished these libraries was not simply their large collections, but rather their special mission to preserve the cultural heritage of their countries. This

meant developing a comprehensive collection of materials by and about the country, including books, manuscripts, documents, and other records.

To meet this mission, a unique collection development technique arose: the creation of a depository right. That is, some nations passed laws requiring that at least one copy of each item published within the country be sent to the national library. This was accomplished, for example, in England in 1610, when an agreement was made between the Stationers' Company (which licensed publications in England) and the Bodleian Library of Oxford University. This agreement stipulated that one copy of each book published would be given to the Bodleian in return for limited borrowing privileges (Jackson 1974). In essence, this meant that all items, or nearly all items, published would become part of the national collection. In the United States, this depository right is held by the LOC and although it is not officially our national library, it is a very close approximation.

III. MAKING MODERN MISSIONS POSSIBLE: The Printing Press

If one can identify a single historical development that profoundly affected all libraries, it would be the revolutionary invention of the printing press in 1454 in Mainz, Germany, which affected much more than libraries. Eisenstein (1979) refers to the advent of printing as "inaugurating a new cultural era in the history of Western man" (p. 33).

The printing press made books available to the masses for the first time and thus increased a desire for learning. By 1468, the church in Rome referred to printing as the "divine art." Others referred to it as the "art which preserves all other arts" (Eisenstein 1995, p. 2). It is impossible to consider the modern mission of libraries without considering the changes wrought by the printing press (Eisenstein 1979):

The ability to produce exact copies: Before printing, all copies were made by hand. This laborious process sometimes produced extraordinary works of art. More often, however, copying resulted in less-than-perfect versions; copiers made mistakes or even intentionally omitted or amended text. The printing press could produce identical copies.

The ability to produce more titles and more copies: The sheer volume of printed materials increased dramatically. By the sixteenth century, more

than 100,000 different books were printed in Europe alone (Harris and Johnson 1984).

The ability to cover more subjects: In the first decade of printing, ending in 1460, most of the books printed were in one of four medieval categories: (1) sacred literature (Bibles and prayer books), (2) learned literature (grammatical and scholastic works such as those of Thomas Aquinas), (3) bureaucratic literature (official documents such as papal bulls and indulgence certificates), and (4) vernacular literature (works in the language of the people, notably German readers) (Clanchy 1983). During the second decade of the press, the breadth of subjects increased and spread beyond medieval categories.

The creation of new techniques for the organization of published materials: Given the growth in size and subject diversity of library collections, new techniques for organizing and classifying materials became necessary. This eventually led to the complex systems we have today.

The stimulation of literacy and education for the general population: When books were scarce, only a few could have access to them. As more books became available, it was inevitable that more people would learn to read. This, in turn, generated a new audience for libraries.

The impact of the printing press on society was profound and rapid. By 1500, there may have been as many as 1000 printer's workshops employing 10–20,000 people; in addition, it is likely that more than 15–20 million books had been printed (Man 2002)! The most common early example of this effect was the Protestant Reformation. Martin Luther effectively disseminated his religious tracts throughout Europe using the press. The effect of the subsequent Protestant Reformation can hardly be overestimated. But there were other significant impacts as well. The printing press led to mass production of maps and navigational tables dramatically improving sea navigation and exploration, mass-produced mathematical and astronomical tables significantly enhanced scientific discoveries and their dissemination, religious knowledge found new expression through the written word rather than just through images, and the early printers' workshops became the centers for scholars, scientific thinkers, and other learned individuals (Eisenstein 1979).

For libraries in particular, the invention of the printing press, coupled with the reawakening of secular and scientific interests during the Renaissance, ultimately formed the foundation for the growth in number and in the size of libraries and consequently broadened and widened the missions of libraries.

IV. LIBRARIES IN THE UNITED STATES: New Missions

Although European libraries continued to develop in the seventeenth century and beyond, it is during this time that American libraries emerged, some with new missions. The focus of the ensuing discussion is on American library developments.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were formative periods for American libraries. During the early part of the seventeenth century there were few libraries because the social preconditions were not yet in place; people were struggling for subsistence. Other than Boston there were few urban settings, and there was limited economic development or individual wealth. As an agrarian society that depended on manual labor, literacy rates in the general population were low. A few ministers, doctors, and other prominent citizens had private libraries in their homes that served as a resource for dealing with the practical or spiritual problems confronting settlers in the New World. Most of these collections were quite small.

There were also a few modest college libraries. Harvard University, founded in 1636, hired its first librarian in 1667 and by the mid-eighteenth century possessed a small library of approximately 5,000 volumes. Yale University, founded in 1700, held around 2,500 volumes by 1750 (Harris and Johnson 1984). The paucity of college libraries was a reflection of the dearth of college-educated citizens. By 1775 less than one in a thousand attended any college (Hanson 1989). By 1792, only nine colonial colleges had libraries. The size of the typical college collection was small for several reasons: the low number of book titles produced in the United States, lack of fiscal resources, and lack of recognition of the library's role in academic life. If a college had a library, it was usually open infrequently and had no librarian. When assistance was available, it was usually a faculty member who served only secondarily as a librarian (Harwell 1968). The growth of the collection depended primarily on donations. Additional book selection was accomplished usually by a committee of trustees or faculty members (Hamlin 1981; Shiflett 1994).

The religious mission of libraries was also preserved. In England near the end of the seventeenth century, an Anglican clergyman, Thomas Bray, created the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which advocated for establishing libraries devoted solely to religious purposes (McMullen 2000). Numerous parish libraries were established throughout England, and his teachings soon spread to America. By the early 1700s, seventy parish libraries were established, many in the south Atlantic region (Harris and Johnson 1984).

By 1876, there were more than 10,000 libraries of over eighty different types (McMullen 2000). Their variety was impressive: agricultural libraries, antiquarian society libraries, art society libraries, church libraries, county libraries, government

libraries, historical society libraries, hotel reading rooms, ladies' libraries, law libraries, mechanics' libraries, medical libraries, prison libraries, public libraries, railroad libraries, saloon reading rooms, scientific and engineering libraries, sewing circle libraries, state libraries, university libraries, and YMCA libraries. Obviously, discussion of all these different types of libraries lies outside the scope of this book, but it is important to reflect on the character and purposes of some of the major types that formed the foundation of American libraries today.

A. The Mission of Self-Improvement: The Social Libraries of the Eighteenth Century

Advances in mechanical technologies during the eighteenth century led to the Industrial Revolution which, in turn, soon led to the growth of the economy with concomitant growth in individual and community wealth. This meant that some of the more fortunate citizens had more leisure time, time that could be spent pursuing self-development. These were fertile conditions for the emergence of new libraries and missions.

The social library emerged during the first half of the eighteenth century. According to Shera (1965), "the social library was nothing more than a voluntary association of individuals who had contributed money toward a common fund to be used for the purchase of books" (p. 57). There were two types of social libraries: proprietary libraries and subscription (association) libraries. Proprietary libraries operated on the principle that those who contributed money for the library actually owned the material purchased; in essence, they were stockholders. In subscription libraries, individuals paid a fee to use and circulate the collection, but they did not own the items (Shera 1965). Some social libraries were hybrids of the two models, with some members owning shares while others participated by annual subscription. Most social libraries had fewer than fifty members and consequently, the collections were often quite small, often less than 300 books.

The mission of the social library was to assist individuals' self-improvement and the search for truth. Many of the members had a genuine love of literature and believed that the sharing of books and information led to character improvement. They also believed that the members gained knowledge by discussing the ideas they found in books and newspapers. One of the earliest proponents of this mission was Benjamin Franklin, who is credited with establishing the first social library, called the Junto, in Philadelphia in 1728. The Junto was short lived, but he soon founded a second library, which he called a subscription library, in 1731. It survives today as the Philadelphia Library Company.

The social library became quite popular throughout New England in the latter half of the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth, with its apex between 1825 and 1835. Although they were particularly popular among white, middle- and upper-class aspiring businessmen, the mission of self-improvement was not restricted to the relatively aristocratic and well-educated. As individuals migrated West, they took the social library model with them, which resulted in a wide variety of libraries—YMCA libraries, agricultural libraries, "ladies' clubs," mechanics, and mercantile libraries—all developed to meet the special interests of their particular constituencies (Arenson 2006). There were also many general interest social libraries that did not focus on one particular subject area. These collections often contained religious materials, history, travel, and literature (not to be confused with popular fiction, of which there was little). Although these social libraries might have contained materials of a more diverting nature, their purpose was still to appeal to one's "better angels."

Another important aspect of these social libraries was that although they required individuals to pay money, as institutions they had a distinctly public character. The majority was created for the general citizenry; anyone who could afford the modest fee could partake of the collection. Because there were few places other than work or home where one could occupy one's time productively, social libraries became a third place. There an individual could spend time conversing with friends, developing a sense of community, and reading newspapers or books (Arenson 2006).

However, given the voluntary nature of social libraries, their mission was deeply affected by the ability of their members to sustain the library. Often these libraries relied on one or a few benefactors, and shifting economic times, depressions, wars, and social unrest led to the relatively quick demise of many. Similarly, the rise of the public library in urban areas significantly diminished the desirability and economic soundness of social libraries. After all, why pay taxes to support a public library and provide additional funding for a private agency? Nonetheless, the legacy of the social library is significant, especially as it relates to the social nature of such institutions and the role they played as "parlors" in the public sphere (Arenson 2006). Social libraries were, in fact, an important and necessary stage for the eventual creation of tax-supported public libraries (Valentine 2011).The idea that libraries were a place to go for self-improvement became ingrained in the American psyche, and subsequently when social libraries foundered, many of these collections formed the core of new public library collections.

B. The Mission of Providing Entertainment: The Circulating Library

While the social library was attempting to meet the need for self-improvement, the mission of the circulating library (sometimes called a rental library) was to satisfy public demand for fiction and popular material intended for entertainment rather than education. Circulating libraries were well established in England and first appeared in America in the 1760s. Although there were some selections from literature, history, and theology, the majority of the collection was fiction. The popular novels of the time consisted mostly of romances (much like today), which were fairly well established in America by 1790. Although there were few romances by American authors, there was ample supply of popular foreign novels printed by American presses. As many as 350 foreign titles might have been published in America from 1789 to 1800, compared to thirty-five titles by American authors (Shera 1965).

The distinguishing feature of the circulating libraries was their profit-making character. Usually associated with a printer or bookstore, the books were rented or individuals were charged a membership fee that allowed them to borrow a designated number of books over a specified period of time. Serving mass tastes appears to have been as profitable in colonial times as it is today; many of these libraries prospered and spread throughout New England.

It is worth noting that circulating libraries often incurred the wrath of certain segments of society who were concerned with the immoral effects of popular reading. As sometimes happens today in public libraries, circulating libraries were suspected of corrupting youth, usually because of the corrupting effects of popular novels—especially the French ones (Shera 1965).

The circulating library also made several contributions to contemporary public library philosophy and service. For example, despite its profit motive, its mission to appeal to popular taste has echoes in contemporary public library service. In addition, Kaser (1980) noted, circulating libraries were the first to provide (1) service to women, (2) newspapers and magazines, (3) extended hours of service, (4) reading areas in the library itself, and (5) outreach services, including the home delivery of books. These are substantive contributions. The circulating library's survival, however, was ultimately threatened by its low status and competition from tax-supported public libraries (Kaser 1980).

C. The Mission of Providing Information: The Rise of Special Libraries

Although the circulating library as a money-making venture failed to survive, its spirit of free enterprise was certainly consistent with a capitalistic economy. Shortly after the start of the Industrial Revolution, public libraries and a few businesses started collections for factory workers, technical workers, craftsmen, and managers (Kruzas 1965). Most of the libraries associated with business and commerce were used for information and education, consultation with expert sources, or diversion. However, at the beginning of the twentieth century, American business and industry discovered the instrumentality of the library, and there emerged a new library whose purpose was the "direct application of recorded information to the practical goals of profit-seeking business enterprises" (Kruzas 1965, p. 109). The purpose of the commercial library was to promote the profitability of the company. The librarian's job was to provide reference service to the organization rather than build a collection per se. Providing information to an individual was much more important than instructing that person on where to find the information. This remains a fundamental characteristic of special libraries to this day. These libraries collected only materials that focused on the direct needs of the enterprise, many of which, such as technical records, industrial and market reports, proprietary documents, and business conference papers, were unfamiliar to many public librarians.

The unique concerns of these types of libraries led to the creation of the Special Libraries Association in 1909. Special libraries also fostered new technologies such as microfilm, which became available in the 1920s. Most significantly, the mission of special libraries to provide specific information rather than books or other materials was an important factor in the rise of information science and the exploitation of information technologies in libraries.

D. The Mission to Support Teaching and Research: The American Academic Library

Although the educational mission of libraries emerged as early as the Alexandrian library, the mission of the library as a full partner in American academic institutions did not evolve until the latter part of the nineteenth century (Hamlin 1981). There are historical reasons for this late development. From the colonial period to the Civil War, the American university curriculum followed a classical model emphasizing theology, philosophy, history, and the trivium of the liberal arts—grammar, rhetoric, and logic (Hanson 1989). The faculty taught from a single text or, at best,

a few books. Classroom recitation was strongly emphasized (Hamlin 1981). Such methods produced little need for libraries, and academic collections remained small throughout this period. However, three significant events in the mid-nineteenth century substantially changed academic institutions and shifted the role of the academic libraries: changes in the academic curriculum, the rise of the research model, and the passage of the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862.

1. Changes in the Curriculum

With the dawn of the Industrial Revolution came a need for college graduates with a practical education rather than an understanding of the classics (Hanson 1989). By the 1840s, universities began offering courses in the natural sciences. In 1850 Brown University began the first elective system including courses in the sciences and languages (Shiflett 1994). Teaching methods also changed. Seminars, laboratories, and independent study emerged as an alternative to the recitation techniques of the past (Hanson 1989). As the breadth of the curriculum expanded, access to more diverse materials became an increasingly important issue, concomitantly increasing the importance of the library. The evolution of the academic curriculum and its implication for librarianship were recognized early by Melvil Dewey (1978):

> The colleges are waking to the fact that the work of every professor and every department is necessarily based on the library; text books constantly yield their exalted places to wiser and broader methods; professor after professor sends his classes, or goes with them, to the library and teaches them to investigate for themselves, and to use books, getting beyond the method of the primary school with its parrot-like recitations from a single text. (p. 136)

2. The Rise of the Research Model

At the turn of the eighteenth century at the University of Berlin in Germany, a new model of the modern university emerged. This model envisioned faculty members as independent researchers. Objective scholarship was promoted, and an expansive faculty research agenda was encouraged (Shiflett 1994). Given the obvious need for published resources for research, the academic library played an increasingly critical role. The reforms in German higher education did not go unnoticed at some of the more prestigious academic institutions in the United States, many of which sent American students to study in Germany. Returning individuals, many of whom became professors themselves, brought the concept of research, coupled with teaching, back with them (Shiflett 1994).

Although these ideas had some effect on American higher education throughout the nineteenth century, it was not until 1876 that this model was explicitly adopted with the founding of Johns Hopkins University. Johns Hopkins placed research as a central function of the university. The seminar model of teaching was emphasized and students were encouraged to consult a wide variety of published sources. Soon thereafter, Harvard, Cornell, and Columbia adopted this teaching approach (Jones 1989). The need for a library with current and deep collections was essential to fulfill this function, and the result was to increase substantially the importance and centrality of the academic library. Although the mission of academic libraries continues to evolve, the need to support the academic curriculum and provide research support for faculty remains the academic library's primary function.

3. The Passage of the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862

Most colleges founded before the Civil War were private and sectarian. By the nineteenth century, however, it became clear that higher education for the citizenry was also a matter for the state. Beginning in the East and South, state universities were founded in Vermont, Maine, North Carolina, Georgia, New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Kentucky. By mid-century, the federal government recognized that it could play an important role in promoting education by providing land to states for establishing universities. This led to the passage of the Morrill Land Grant Act in 1862, which allocated 30,000 acres of public land to establish state universities promoting agriculture and the mechanical arts. The universities founded as a result of the act, including the Ohio State University and the University of Illinois, emphasized applied sciences and technology (Hamlin 1981).

E. Supporting Primary and Secondary Education: The Mission of the School Library

During the colonial period, there were few publicly supported schools, although in the mid-Atlantic states and the South there were some parochial and private schools (Hanson 1989). What schools there were provided elementary-level education, considered sufficient to create an efficient pool of agrarian labor. The few secondary schools available prepared elite students for a limited number of colleges (Hanson 1989). It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that public schools began to emerge. In 1852 Massachusetts passed the first compulsory school

attendance laws. By 1890, half of the states had such laws. At the same time, more and more schools, including secondary schools with libraries, were being built.

The earliest attempt to support public school libraries occurred in New York in 1835 when the state legislature passed a law that permitted school districts to apply some of their tax receipts to create and maintain school libraries. By 1875, twenty states had passed similar legislation (Knight and Nourse 1969). In 1892, New York again passed legislation that provided matching funds to purchase library books for school districts as long as the books were first approved by the Department of Public Instruction. Approved materials consisted of "reference books, supplementary reading books, books related to the curriculum, and pedagogical books for use by teachers" (Gillespie and Spirt 1983, p. 3). Some of them could even be taken out of the library. Unfortunately, many of these legislative efforts proved unsuccessful, often allocating money for books but not for administration and maintenance. Sometimes money allocated for books went to teachers' salaries. The result was poorly developed, poorly maintained libraries that were seldom used (Knight and Nourse 1969; Cecil and Heaps 1940). Although these libraries had great potential, they did not perform their central mission. Gillespie and Spirt (1983) have suggested, however, that these early efforts to create and maintain public school libraries established the idea that public funds were an appropriate means to support school libraries, and that school libraries could play a useful role in public school education. By the last decade of the nineteenth century, the number of school libraries, especially in high schools, increased substantially, and by 1895 it was estimated that there were from 2,500 to 4,000 school libraries (Knight and Nourse 1969).

Several groups were concerned with the development of school libraries, including the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the National Education Association (NEA), and the American Library Association (ALA). In 1914 the NCTE formed a standing committee on school libraries and ALA formed a School Library Section (Cecil and Heaps 1940). In 1915 the NCTE conducted a national survey, and the findings expressed serious concern about the adequacy of school libraries. This prompted the NEA and ALA to appoint a joint committee headed by Charles Certain to study the condition of school libraries and to develop standards. Certain's first report, published in 1920, focused on high schools; the second, in 1925, focused on elementary schools. Both reports concluded that school libraries were seriously deficient.

The standards prepared by Certain's committee described the library as "an integral part of the daily life of the school" and included several significant recommendations (Certain 1925, p. 5):

- They emphasized the centrality of "materials of instruction," that is, curricular support.
- They advocated for a centralized collection. The centralization of materials in the school had been an issue for some years, with some arguing for small library collections in each classroom and others arguing for a centralized location and control of library materials.
- They promoted library instruction as a duty of school libraries.
- They recognized the integral character of the school library within the total setting of school life.

Certain's reports were significant in that they proposed the first national standards for school libraries which were endorsed by both ALA and NEA (Gillespie and Spirt 1983). One should not assume, however, that Certain's reports led to the quick development of centralized, modern school libraries, though they certainly made a major contribution. Fortunately, in addition to the reports, other significant factors contributed to progress in that direction. Among them was the educational reform movement looming on the horizon, which Certain (1925) recognized early:

> Modern demands upon the public school presuppose adequate library service. Significant changes in methods of teaching require that the school library supplement the single textbook course of instruction and provide for the enrichment of the school curriculum. (p. 1)

The decade of the 1920s was indeed an era of reform in public education. John Dewey and the progressive education movement introduced a variety of new educational theories:

- A child's growth and development, rather than subject matter, should be the central focus of the school.
- Education should involve children learning through a variety of experiences and exploring a variety of subjects.
- Children learn best when they are exploring subjects of interest to them.
- School should be a social experience that teaches children how to be self-directed. (Fargo 1930)

These "radical" ideas resulted in a more varied school curriculum requiring access to a much wider range of materials. Responding to children's interests, encouraging exploration, and providing a broad range of experiences could only increase the importance of a school library:

> With such a program, it is obvious that the library stands in a far more vital relationship to the school than before. Under the older tradition, books other than texts were desirable; in the new school they are indispensable. They are not the accompaniment of the school's activities; they are its warp and woof. (Fargo 1930, pp. 31–32)

Other influences that contributed to the emergence of the modern school library included new studies and the support of the U.S. Office of Education, NEA, ALA, the Carnegie Corporation, and the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (Cecil and Heaps 1940; Gillespie and Spirt 1983). The combination of changing teaching philosophies and the evaluations and standards developed by NEA and ALA had a substantial impact on establishing the foundations of the school library and its mission—to support the primary and secondary curriculum by providing current and appropriate materials for students and teachers.

F. The Mission of Serving the Public: The American Public Library

The social library and the circulating library each performed a unique mission: the former to educate and enlighten, and the latter to satisfy popular taste. Both of these libraries contributed to the development of the modern public library and its very special mission—to serve the public. The term public library refers generically to libraries supported by public funds. Using this broad definition, by 1876 there were approximately 3,600 public libraries in the United States. Most of these, however, were associated with academic institutions, public schools, or social libraries. As we apply the term today, there were actually very few public libraries. By 1880 only seven of the sixteen largest cities in the United States had municipally supported libraries. The rapid growth of public libraries well into the fourth decade of the twentieth century was caused by a variety of factors. Kevane and Sundstrom (2014) have observed that among the general factors that promoted public library growth were the growth of cities and towns, the presence of an immigrant population, and the presence of state library commissions or associations.

From a historical perspective, all or most public libraries shared certain defining characteristics (see figure 2.1):

The debate as to when and where the first public library in the United States was established will continue. Some have suggested that the honor belongs to Peterborough, New Hampshire, because in 1834 "there for the first time an institution was founded by a town with the deliberate purpose of creating a free library that would be open without restriction to all classes of the community—a library supported from the beginning by public funds" (Shera 1965, p. 169).

FIGURE 2.1
Fundamental Characteristics Shared by All American Public Libraries

Supported by taxes: Public libraries are usually supported by local taxes, although over the years there have been exceptions. The notion of public support through taxation is rare before the nineteenth century. As noted earlier, prior to that time, libraries were most often sponsored or subsidized by private citizens, religious orders, or royal families.

Governed by a board: This board usually has consisted of prominent citizens appointed, or sometimes elected, to serve the public interest.

Open to all: A fundamental tenet of public libraries is that everyone in the community can access the collection. This is not to say that every group has been made to feel welcome. At different times, various subsets of the population have not found public libraries friendly or accommodating to their needs. But in principle, the libraries are open to all.

Voluntary: People are not forced to come; the use of the library is entirely voluntary. This distinguishes it from other educational institutions, such as public schools. Its voluntary nature is also part of the underlying social philosophy of the nineteenth century in which self-improvement was considered an important virtue.

Established by state law: This point is not generally well understood. During the early development of public libraries, serious questions arose concerning whether a town could create a library and tax its citizens for its maintenance without the state's approval. As a consequence, states passed enabling legislation that permitted towns and communities to establish public libraries—a key aspect of their creation. In rare instances, public libraries were not only enabled by state legislation, they were financed by state monies. Such is the case in Ohio today, where a small percentage (less than 3%) of the state's general revenue fund is earmarked for funding public libraries.

Provides services without charge: Although some public libraries charge a small fee for special services, most of the services are provided without fees.

However, there is no dispute as to where and when the first major public library was established. In March 1848, the Massachusetts legislature authorized the city of Boston to provide municipal support for a public library. The Boston Public Library, founded in 1854, receives credit for being the first major public library.

1. The Founding of the Boston Public Library

By the middle of the nineteenth century, urbanization in America had reached a tipping point. As cities matured and prospered economically, their political and

bureaucratic infrastructure, including basic services such as water, sanitation, public health, fire protection, and education, also matured. Boston was typical of a prospering and stable urban environment. Therefore, when the issue of a public library was first raised, many perceived it from an administrative point of view as a logical extension of city services. The concept of a public library for Boston was first advanced more than a decade before its founding by a noted French actor and ventriloquist, Nicholas Marie Alexandre Vattemare. Vattemare was a highly successful and wealthy entertainer who also loved books and collected art. He abandoned his theatrical career and became a global philanthropist with a special interest in developing an international, reciprocal exchange of duplicate copies of books traded among major cultural institutions. He established a significant reputation among U.S. politicians with particular connections in Boston (Havens 2007). In the 1840s he proposed that several of the major private libraries in Boston combine into one public institution to facilitate this exchange. This proposal met with some favor from local officials, but the libraries resisted, and Vattemare's proposal failed. Nonetheless, numerous individuals in Boston had both the wealth and the power to generate a civic interest in libraries. Public discussion on this issue continued for some time and helped maintain the necessary political and social momentum that would ultimately produce the desired result more than a decade later. Particularly notable were the efforts of Charles Ticknor and Edward Everett. Ticknor was the educated son of a wealthy Boston merchant. He assumed that social change was possible if accomplished gradually, and he believed that public schools and libraries could improve social and political stability by promoting the education of the general population (Ditzion 1947). Everett was a Unitarian clergyman, teacher, scholar, and, at one point, governor of Massachusetts. A strong advocate of the public schools, Everett's beliefs were less populist and more academic than Ticknor's. He saw in the public library an opportunity for those no longer attending schools to continue their studies. He believed the public library could extend one's education by providing educational materials, not just for scholars, but for professionals and merchants. The efforts of Ticknor, Everett, and others finally convinced the Boston city fathers to appoint a Joint Standing Committee on the Library, which in turn recommended the appointment of a board of trustees. The Boston Public Library opened in the spring of 1854. Its mission was to serve the educational convictions of Everett and the popular needs espoused by Ticknor.

The creation of the Boston Public library is generally viewed as the result of two major factors: first, it was a natural outgrowth of urban developments in the mid-nineteenth century; and second, it was the result of prevailing social attitudes held by a small group of individuals who concluded, for a variety of reasons, that a

public library was needed for the citizens of Boston. Everett and Ticknor were part of the educated elite of Boston. They believed that the responsibility to improve people lay not only with social institutions. Many members of the upper classes still believed in noblesse oblige and assumed that they, too, bore responsibility to provide the means by which others could improve themselves. This implied a duty on the part of the wealthy and better educated to improve the poor and uneducated insofar as they wanted to be improved. American philanthropy thus became one of the critical foundations for the growth of the public library for years to come. Libraries were seen as an ideal institution to help those less fortunate. This was, ostensibly, an underlying reason for the philanthropy of Andrew Carnegie, who asserted in his 1889 "Gospel of Wealth":

> This, then, is held to be the duty of the man of wealth: To set an example of modest, unostentatious living, shunning display or extravagance; to provide moderately for the legitimate wants of those dependent upon him; and, after doing so, to consider all surplus revenues which come to him simply as trust funds, which he is called upon to administer, and strictly bound as a matter of duty to administer in the manner which, in his judgment, is best calculated to produce the most beneficial results for the community—the man of wealth thus becoming the mere trustee and agent for his poorer brethren, bringing to their service his superior wisdom, experience, and ability to administer, doing for them better than they would or could do for themselves. (1962, p. 25)

The growth of libraries and librarianship during the nineteenth century was deeply rooted in these beliefs (Nielson 1989).

What can we deduce about the mission of the public library from the history of the Boston Public Library? Clearly, it shares an educational mission with American public schools. In 1876, Melvil Dewey stated that popular education was actually divided into two parts: "the free school and the free public library" (Dewey 1978, p. 5). He thought of the library as a school and of the librarian as a teacher. But in what way was the mission of the public library distinct from the public schools? First, the public library could satisfy the interest in reading and learning for all ages, not just for those who were in school; second, it was a means to self-improvement in an age when self-education was still a vital means for improving one's chances in society. Third, it was intended to produce more thoughtful people, individuals capable of making balanced and well-reasoned judgments in a democratic society that depended on their judgments at the voting booth. Such citizens would serve as a strong and stabilizing force to the democratic society. Finally, libraries were perceived as "cultural agencies." Indeed, librarians of the latter half of the nineteenth century saw themselves as agents of social improvement.

It is easy to see how many could view these objectives as noble, and those who advocated for the founding of public libraries often saw them, like museums and world's fairs, as a means to advance the cultural goals of the country. They envisioned the public library as "one cathedral more" to advance the cause of learning (McCrossen 2006, pp. 169–170). In addition, McCrossen (2006) noted that nineteenth-century public libraries provided a rare public space to use free time in healthy pursuits. Much of this same rationale is used to defend libraries today from attacks of various kinds, both fiscal and philosophical.

However, for others the library was also seen as a tool for social control. This aspect of the founding of the Boston Public Library has been examined most notably by Michael Harris (1973), whose "revisionist" interpretation provides a different perspective on the motivations of the founders. Although few of the facts are disputed, Harris challenged the notion that the founding of the public library was humanitarian, idealistic, or democratic. Rather, he reminded us that the founders were among the Boston Brahmins, a highly privileged, politically conservative, and aristocratic class that dominated the social, economic, and political life of the city. He argued that the founders were far less concerned with making educated democrats than with socializing the unruly immigrants who were subject to undue influence by political demagogues and other unscrupulous politicians who could foment political and social instability. In other words, Harris suggested that the creation of the Boston Public Library was another strategy of elitist aristocrats to maintain class stratification and ensure the social order that benefited them. If the aristocrats controlled what was taught about the social and political institutions of American society, the immigrants would accept those institutions, which were controlled and shaped by the elites. In this conceptualization, the library and librarians were seen as agents of authority and social control, implementing restrictive rules, and generally unfriendly to the *hoi polloi*. How could they be otherwise, run by board members appointed by elites, who were themselves elites? Further, Harris suggested that the public library collection was not designed for the common person, but catered to the educated and upper classes. He argued that this pattern has been repeated time and again, as evidenced by the fact that public libraries then and today are run by elites and attended by a disproportionately large number of upper- and middle-class patrons.

Harris's position has been challenged by other library historians. Dain (1975), for example, noted that there is insufficient historical evidence for some of Harris's strongest assertions. Further, she pointed out that just because elites created the first public library does not mean that other classes were not well served by them. She noted that the authoritarian nature of early public libraries reflected all public institutions of the time. She argued that public libraries made earnest efforts to attract a

variety of users. Today, such efforts are evident in extended hours of operation on Sundays and evenings, information services, open stacks, classification systems, branches, children's rooms and services, meeting rooms for community groups, cooperative activities with schools, interlibrary loan, and special services for immigrants.

Although Harris's position is controversial, it reminds us that history is shaped most often by the victors and that historical interpretation varies by the position of the teller. It is true that the history of public libraries has multiple philosophical underpinnings, some of them countervailing and incompatible. Certainly, a consciousness of class was very much a part of the era from which the Boston Public Library emerged. For example, in an 1874 article titled, "Public Libraries and Fiction," the author begins with the observation: "It is worth considering that, practically, public libraries are for the benefit of and directly influence the least cultivated classes, who do not possess private collections of books" (p. 169). Consistent with Harris's notion of control, the author goes on to observe:

> [Public libraries] operate upon the very part of society where improvement is most needed. . . . The legitimate office of public libraries seems to be to aid directly in the intellectual improvement of these masses, to help them to approach the standard that is fixed above and beyond them. (p. 169)

Today, many might find such language offensive, although it was not intended as such. It reflects both a notion of noblesse oblige and a sincere belief in the improvability of one's intellectual condition.

2. The Historical Struggle over Popular Materials

If public libraries were viewed as part of a "cultural hierarchy" (McCrossen 2006, p. 173) whose primary function was the diffusion of knowledge and learning, they also were seen as purveyors of a wide range of materials, many of which were clearly not learned. From the beginning, the public library was challenged by the mission of satisfying popular tastes. Their holdings of popular novels, newspapers, and magazines were of concern to some because these materials tended to attract a clientele who were more inclined to lounge than to read—the "loafers and bummers" (McCrossen 2006). Newspapers and magazines were particularly troublesome because they potentially diverted the attention of readers away from books. Nonetheless, from the beginning, Charles Ticknor advocated that popular materials should be part of the Boston Public Library's collection for the entertainment of readers. Interestingly, the library put its newspapers and light fiction in its lower hall,

with more serious reading placed in its upper hall (McCrossen 2006). The pattern of separating reading rooms in this manner still exists today. It also remains a concern that reading rooms are sometimes the source of lounging, rather than reading.

Popular fiction has a long tradition of raising concerns about lowering morals. Wiegand (1989) called this the "ideology of reading" (p. 100), the idea that there was good reading and bad reading; the former led to good conduct, the latter to unacceptable behaviors. The implication, of course, was that librarians were to buy only the "good" reading materials. It was even suggested by some that reading too much bad fiction might cause insanity. These concerns were raised soon after the creation of the Boston Public Library. In an article titled "Free Fiction" that appeared in *The Nation* in 1866, the writer expressed concern over the "light literature" available at the Boston Public Library and other circulating libraries. He admitted that there was a demand for this type of material and noted that the "leading idea of those who manage these institutions seems to be that any reading is better than no reading at all—an axiom at once false and full of mischief. . . . The value of lending libraries, if we might indulge in a truism, depends very much on the quality of the books which are lent" ("Free Fiction," p. 139). His chief concern seemed to be that such materials would deleteriously affect young minds. This is an excellent example of a certain way of thinking that seems to persist through the ages:

> Read at an age when the taste is unformed, when the passions are just developing, when the will is feeble, principles are unfixed, and resistance to temptation is difficult, if they do not utterly spoil the inquisitive minds which are attracted by their glittering mediocrity, it will be because nature is stronger than education, and original vigor more than a match for enfeebling moral influences. (p. 139)

Should library collections include such diversions? What is their effect on young people? Some early public librarians felt that popular fiction might bring less-educated readers into the library where they would then be exposed to a better quality of literature. Even among librarians with serious misgivings, most had at least some popular novels on their shelves. They realized that if they wanted library users, they would need popular fiction. Generally, their collections were not overly stocked with "cheap" novels, but offered works by Flaubert, Zola, Fielding, and Balzac. This did not protect libraries, however, from censorship attacks as the works of these masters were perceived as scandalous at the time. McCrossen (2006) nicely summarized the double edge of public library service:

> Public Libraries thus stood in the middle ground between the serious and popular—their mandate was to meet the public's demands, but their goal was to improve,

> indeed to shape, its tastes. . . . Due to their inclusion of fiction, newspapers, and marginalized members of the public, public libraries occupied an ambiguous place with the hierarchy of cultural institutions. (pp. 174, 178)

The need to preserve and promote the values of literary culture while at the same time recognizing the genuine and legitimate interests of those who enjoy more common fare remains a contemporary tension with roots firmly planted in the nineteenth century.

3. Andrew Carnegie

In many ways Andrew Carnegie personified this tension. Carnegie was a Scottish immigrant who, through hard work and ingenuity, prospered in the iron and steel industry. He amassed a fortune exceeding $330 million, 90 percent of which went into charitable trusts. Carnegie's philosophy of stewardship certainly marked him as a prominent exponent of noblesse oblige, but his philanthropy served many.

From 1886 to 1919 Carnegie donated $56 million to construct more than 2,000 library buildings, many of them public libraries, in more than 1,400 communities, large and small. The communities that requested Carnegie's money viewed a library as a source of civic pride. The libraries built with Carnegie's largesse were their libraries, not his, and their shelves were stocked with materials of local interest, not his.

In fact, the specifically local character of today's public library collections and services might be a direct result of the special conditions and restrictions that Carnegie required with every donation. First, the money was for building construction only, not for the purchase and maintenance of library materials or for staff. This, in essence, guaranteed the local character of library collections. Second, all recipients had to contribute an annual sum equal to 10 percent of the money donated to build collections and hire staff. This created a tradition of shared government support of public libraries and defined local governance. The town, through its appointed board, was in control, not Carnegie. The inevitable result was that the Carnegie public library was shaped by local interest: library collections reflected the local community and popular taste. Thus one of the fundamental missions of public libraries, to meet the needs of the local community, was promoted by the Carnegie model of local taxation and local governmental control. Indeed, Carnegie might well have done more to establish this model than the Boston Public Library.

4. The Role of Women's Clubs

One cannot leave the discussion of the forces that shaped American public libraries without noting the significant contributions of women's volunteer organizations,

most notably women's clubs. Such clubs became commonplace following the Civil War when it became more acceptable for women to seek an education, especially self-education. Some of these clubs were local, while others were affiliated nationally with the General Federation of Women's Clubs. Like similar organizations devoted to education, "the members were imbued with the idea of the importance of books in improving the quality of life" (Watson 1994, p. 235). Their support for improving women's education extended to developing libraries for use by members of their local community. Watson (1994) suggested that women's clubs contributed in significant ways to the development of more than 470 public libraries between 1870 and 1930. Similarly, in the same period, a large majority of public libraries in Kansas, Oklahoma, Virginia, Florida, and North Dakota were founded by them (Kevane and Sundstrom 2014). Although the exact percentage of public libraries established through the efforts of women's clubs in the early part of the twentieth century is unclear, Watson estimates that it might have ranged between 50 percent and 75 percent of the total. In some instances the clubs provided support for additional materials and club members volunteered as librarians. Some women's clubs were influential at the state level, lobbying for library legislation and the need for state library commissions (Watson 1994). Although many of the club members were aristocrats, or at least middle class, and therefore potentially subject to Harris's criticisms, their contributions to advancing the public library are substantial. Their stated mission of self-education and improvement is firmly in line with the history and values of their era, and the results were salutary.

5. A Mission of Inclusiveness

Throughout the nineteenth century American cities and towns experienced major immigrations of people from many countries, particularly from Europe. Amid this influx of polyglot peoples, there were legitimate concerns regarding education and socialization. The progressive philosophy of the times viewed the function of educational institutions, including libraries, as improving society and advancing the democratic tradition (Du Mont et al. 1994). For many, this meant that immigrant groups needed to be assimilated into the American mainstream. Because of their numbers, Europeans were considered to be a particularly difficult challenge (Stern 1991). Libraries were "to furnish fuel for the fires beneath the great melting pot" (Roberts 1912, p. 169). What better group to serve this function than libraries? Many librarians took this responsibility quite seriously and numerous articles in professional periodicals offered advice on providing services and understanding the needs of immigrants. Some librarians exhibited an almost missionary zeal in their efforts to bring the benefits of reading to the general public.

Nonetheless, it is true that the public library of the nineteenth century was used primarily by white middle and upper classes. Ethnic minorities were largely excluded from the benefits of library service (Trujillo and Cuesta 1989). Aside from the segregationist practices related to African-Americans, there is relatively limited evidence to determine whether public libraries intentionally excluded other ethnic groups, or whether librarians and trustees were simply uninformed as to how to serve them effectively.

It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that libraries began a systematic effort to serve ethnic groups. Immigration continued, with more than 20 million arriving in the first quarter of the twentieth century (Stern 1991). Although a few librarians recognized that each ethnic group had its own literature and culture worth preserving and transmitting, the primary emphasis was on integration and assimilation. Nonetheless, library collections and services included books and newspapers written in native languages; programs on U.S. citizenship; classes in English; story hours in native languages; programs on American history and culture; supplementary materials to support school curricula; and help for immigrants in reading letters, sending messages to social service agencies, writing checks, and completing citizenship forms (Stern 1991; Du Mont et al. 1994). In 1917 ALA created a Committee on Work with the Foreign Born that collected and disseminated information on how to help educate immigrants about American values and the English language (Stern 1991). The committee produced numerous guides to assist in this process.

Perhaps the most notable service to ethnic groups and minorities was the creation of branch libraries in urban areas. Branches provided extension services that could reach special populations, especially industrial workers and those who did not speak English (Ditzion 1947). These branches also offered special services to children. By 1900 many public libraries had a separate room for children's books and services. What better place to educate the first generation of immigrant children in the ways of American life (Du Mont et al. 1994)?

Sadly, some minorities and ethnic groups did not receive much attention from librarians, most notably African-Americans and Hispanics. Although Pura Belpré provided services to Hispanics at the New York Public Library as early as 1921, this was clearly an exception (Guerena and Erazo 2000). In his study of library services to Hispanics, Haro (1981) found that libraries were often perceived as one of many Anglo institutions designed and controlled by Anglos to serve Anglos:

> While most Mexican Americans, even the poor and illiterate, aspire to better education, the public library is not seen as a vehicle to attain it. The public library is

> viewed by far too many Mexican Americans, particularly within the lower classes, as an Anglo institution which has never cared about their needs, which does not hire their people, and which engages in the disproportionate distribution of resources to satisfy first the demands of an Anglo society. (p. 86)

Before the Civil War, blacks in the South were forbidden to read and it was unlawful to teach them. Illiteracy was a means to maintain the subordination of slaves; those who could read did it in secret. Nonetheless, there was, even before the Civil War, a class of well-educated African-Americans including merchants, ministers, printers, shipbuilders, physicians, and others who placed great value on education and possessed strong literary interests, living mostly in the North. In the absence of access to libraries or formal education, they created literary societies in the first part of the nineteenth century, which served as "important entry points to a literary and intellectual world otherwise inaccessible to their membership" (McHenry 1998, p. 152). Pre–Civil War societies included the Philadelphia Library Company of Colored Persons, founded by Robert Purvis, and the Female Library Association of Philadelphia (Wheeler and Johnson-Houston 2004; McHenry 1998). McHenry (1998) observed, "These societies offered a protected, collective environment in which to develop a literary background as well as the oral and written skills needed to represent themselves with confidence" (p. 157).

Throughout the nineteenth century, these societies played a vital role, especially for black women. They could read fine literature and discuss ideas that promoted eloquence and critical thinking. The societies represented a source of both intellectual challenge and emotional support (McHenry 1998).

After the Civil War, although there was a concerted push for public schooling in the South, the development of public libraries for both blacks and whites lagged by about fifty years (Fultz 2006). What libraries there were provided severely restricted or no service to African-Americans (Trujillo and Cuesta 1989). By 1900, it is estimated that 90 percent of African-Americans in the South still could not read. The first two public libraries for African-Americans followed a combined school/library pattern. In 1903, the LeMoyne Institute, a black normal school, provided space for a library and made the collection available to the citizens as well as the students. In 1904, Galveston, Texas, opened a branch of the Rosenberg Library for African-Americans as an addition to a local black high school. In 1905, two segregated reading rooms for blacks were established in the public libraries of Lexington, Kentucky, and Jacksonville, Florida.

Other early efforts by public libraries to serve African-Americans began in rented spaces, in private homes, or churches. For example, in 1905 the Western

Colored Branch in Louisville, Kentucky, opened in three rented rooms in a private home (Fultz 2006). This branch served the new, growing black middle class and was headed by a critical figure in the development of libraries for African-Americans, Thomas Fountain Blue. Blue was a graduate of the prestigious Hampton Institute and Richmond Theological Seminary. The Louisville branch was the first public library branch serving African-Americans in any American city (Josey 1994). Blue's services and library training programs for African-Americans were considered a national model (Josey 1970). His Colored Department in Louisville not only provided direct service, but also established "deposit stations" and classroom collections at various sites throughout the city and surrounding counties (Fultz 2006). Similarly, the Negro Public Library in Nashville, Tennessee, which opened in 1916 as a branch of Nashville's Carnegie Library, focused on service to children. Under the leadership of the African-American branch librarian, Marian Hadley, who studied under Blue, and the librarian of the Carnegie Library, Margaret Kercheval, a solid children's collection was developed and services such as story hours were also offered (Malone 2000). Between 1930 and 1950, Vivian Harsh, the African-American Director of the Hall Library, a branch of the Chicago Public Library, developed a rich collection of African-American resources, created a book review and lecture forum, and established the library as a community center for the African-American neighborhood. Harsh created a place for discussion of important issues to African-Americans, including their civil rights, and promoted African-American cultural history (Burt 2009).

Despite these notable exceptions, in general, public library service to people of color was poor or nonexistent. Under the "separate but equal" doctrine in operation throughout the first half of the twentieth century, services for African-Americans remained seriously deficient. In the South, there was considerable evidence that funding for library services to African-Americans was not commensurate to the proportion of African-Americans in the community (Gleason 1941).

By 1926, nationally there were perhaps forty-five public libraries providing segregated library services to African-Americans; by 1935 the number had increased to seventy-five (Du Mont et al. 1994). The establishment of branches to serve African-Americans was usually funded by the philanthropy of whites, the Carnegie Corporation, or the activities of churches or civic organizations (both black and white) (Cresswell 1996; Wheeler and Johnson-Houston 2004).

By the late 1930s, the main libraries of sixteen southern cities claimed to provide services to African-Americans. However, in reality there were few services, often offered only in segregated circumstances: separate branches, poorly funded school libraries, and restricted hours of operation, bookmobile service, and limited privileges at main libraries. Sometimes the same library served both blacks and whites

but had separate entrances, collections, and reading areas. By the late 1940s, there were no more than seventeen independent black libraries in the South (Fultz 2006).

Prior to the 1960s, library service to ethnic groups and minorities was based on the perception of these communities as disadvantaged. The 1960s brought significant changes, a time of ethnic self-determination (Stern 1991). Many African-Americans and Hispanics argued for equal opportunity and equal access to the advantages that American society had to offer. The concept of a melting pot was replaced by the concept of a multicultural society.

It was during the 1960s when activist movements sponsored demonstrations, sit-ins, and "read-ins" that library services became widely available to African-Americans, especially in the South (Graham 2001). The first sit-in in Mississippi took place at the Jackson Public Library in 1961. Even then, African-Americans often paid a high price, including being beaten for attempting to apply for a library card (Wheeler and Johnson-Houston 2004). In 1963, two black ministers in Anniston, Alabama, were brutally beaten for attempting to desegregate the city's library. Nonetheless, by 1963, seventy-one of seventy-six cities in the South with populations of 50,000 or more had integrated main library facilities. Yet, the existence of integrated facilities did not mean that blacks received equal treatment. Separate restrooms, checkout desks, entrances, and age restrictions were still commonplace (Fultz 2006).

Interestingly, the desegregation of public libraries came more quickly than that of the schools, and the process began prior to the 1960s. Fultz (2006) argued that this might be because "some southerners during this period held that racial interactions in libraries were less threatening than the possibilities of social contact among children in schools or even, seemingly among strangers on buses" (p. 348). He also noted that African-American library users were perceived as predominantly middle class and therefore more acceptable.

Graham (2001) observed that even in the 1960s, white librarians in the South were ambivalent about the segregation of public libraries; they were attempting to balance their professional ethos of service to all with the powerful mores of racial segregation that permeated their communities. The end of segregated libraries in the South was much more attributable to black activists than to librarians.

This is not to say that there weren't some notable heroes among librarians. Juliette Hampton Morgan, for example, was a white reference librarian at the Montgomery, Alabama, Carnegie Library, who vocally supported the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955. The community reaction was so intense and vituperative that it probably contributed to her subsequent suicide. Similarly, Emily Wheelock Reed, director of Alabama's Public Library Service Division, in 1957 courageously defended the children's book, *The Rabbits' Wedding*, which had illustrations depicting the marriage of a black rabbit to a white rabbit. Notable politicians accused Reed

of promoting anti-segregationist literature and race mixing. She kept the book on the shelves and was subjected to intense questioning and scrutiny by state politicians. Later, Reed was again criticized for pro-integrationist attitudes because she included the works of Martin Luther King in her collection (Graham 2001). Although Reed left public service in 1960, her fortitude was a measure of the conviction of some librarians to overcome the prejudices of the times. There was, in fact, a segment of southern librarians who endorsed the concept of racial accommodation, but who seldom confronted the powerful segregationist forces directly (Carmichael 2005).

These problems, of course, did not exist only in the South. Evidence that northern libraries also discriminated was generally overlooked. For example, communities that received Carnegie dollars often spent the money on the provision of service to whites but not to African-Americans; or far less money was spent, resulting in inferior service. As the historian John Hope Franklin (1977) observed, "one searches in vain for an indignant outcry on the part of the professional librarians against this profanation of their sacred profession and this subversion of their cherished institutions" (p. 13).

Regrettably, ALA was not outspoken on the issue of library service to African-Americans until the 1960s, when the civil rights movement made it impossible to ignore (Du Mont et al. 1994). Generally, until the 1960s the association viewed itself as representing a national constituency of librarians, including those in the South who favored segregation. ALA did not want to be perceived as judging the political or social beliefs of its members. It viewed segregationist policies as a local matter. There was also concern that too much agitation would create more resistance in the South and bring unfavorable publicity to those public libraries that were desegregating quietly (Cresswell 1996; Josey 1994). By the 1960s, a considerable number of ALA members expressed concern that the association had done little to secure open access for all citizens and to address issues of equality and social justice. In 1961 the ALA took a firm stand regarding service to African-Americans as well as all other citizens, advocating equal library service to all.

At its midwinter meeting, the association passed an amendment to the Library Bill of Rights that made clear that an individual's library use "should not be denied or abridged because of his race, religion, national origins or political views." Regrettably, many communities mounted disappointingly strong opposition. In Virginia, for example, the citizens of Danville and Petersburg voted to close their public libraries rather than to desegregate them (Cresswell 1996).

Nonetheless, the civil rights movement of the 1960s was a critical turning point in ensuring minority access. It also produced several pieces of progressive legislation affecting libraries. Most notable was the passage of the Library Services and Construction Act in 1964, a major force in developing library services and collections for ethnic, disadvantaged, and underserved groups. Similar funding was provided

with the passage of the Higher Education Act for Colleges and Universities (Trujillo and Cuesta 1989). Libraries responded to these initiatives by hiring individuals from ethnic groups, collecting reference resources on ethnic cultures and experiences, creating criteria to make library collections inclusive of all members of the community, developing outreach programs to attract minorities, offering information and referral programs for minorities, and building collections that were more responsive to the needs of various ethnic groups.

In 1970 the ALA created the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT). Among SRRT's purposes was "to act as a stimulus to the association and its various units in making libraries more responsive to current social needs" (American Library Association [ALA] 2009, p. 149). SRRT has been very active over the years in addressing a variety of issues, including advocating for international human rights, racial minorities and gays, and the poor and homeless, as well as promoting equal rights for women. Their focus has been both on the library profession and on policies and practices of society as a whole.

Additional organizations were established as a result of the turmoil and activities of the 1960s. One such ALA-affiliated advocacy group was REFORMA (The National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking), which was established in 1971. REFORMA's purpose was and is to foster the development of library collections that included materials written in Spanish as well as materials of interest to Hispanics, to encourage the recruitment of bilingual librarians and staff, to develop services and programs for Latinos, to educate Latinos about libraries, and to advocate for the information needs of the Latino community (REFORMA 2014).

Similar to REFORMA, the Black Caucus of ALA (BCALA) has worked since 1970 on behalf of African-American librarians and the African-American community. BCALA "serves as an advocate for the development, promotion, and improvement of library services and resources to the nation's African American community; and provides leadership for the recruitment and professional development of African American librarians" (BCALA 2014). BACLA became formally affiliated with ALA in 1992 and held its first National Conference of African American Librarians (NCAAL) in 1995.

The public library mission to serve all members of the community continued to grow and evolve. The 1991 White House Conference on Library and Information Services reaffirmed the need to respond to the needs of an increasingly multicultural society. Its recommendations included providing financial and technical assistance to promote service to multicultural populations and populations with disabilities, promoting outreach services to traditionally underserved populations, and encouraging support for training professionals to serve multicultural needs (White House Conference 1991).

Today, ALA has a variety of committees and round tables that monitor minority issues in addition to the ones noted above. These include the Minority Concerns and Cultural Diversity Committee, the ALA Office for Literacy and Outreach Services, the Library and Information Technology Association (LITA)/LSSI (Library Systems & Services) Minority Scholarship in Library and Information Technology Subcommittee; LITA/OCLC Minority Scholarship Subcommittee, and the Minorities Recruitment Committee of the New Members Round Table (ALA 1997).

Despite these efforts, few would argue that the problems of unequal service have vanished. Prominent issues remain, including the need for recruitment and retention of a diverse library workforce, concern for the reduction in federal funding for library services to ethnic communities, and the need for good research on the impact of the programs and services that have been developed to serve these communities (Trujillo and Cuesta 1989). In addition, new issues have arisen with the growth of computer networks, wireless communications, and mobile devices. A digital divide persists (which will be discussed in subsequent chapters) in terms of access to the digital world only part of which deals with technological access itself. Another key part is the disproportionate availability of education and training in the use and exploitation of these systems.

V. ONGOING EVOLUTION: From Information Provision to Engagement

Traditionally libraries were recognized as a physical and cultural center for the acquisition, organization, storage, and dissemination of knowledge; they were bulwarks of books and other materials—a well-defined institution in a well-defined physical and cultural space. Over the last few decades, the world of information and the technologies that enable our access to it has changed dramatically. Since the latter quarter of the twentieth century, as the new information technologies were developing, libraries responded by promoting themselves as the "information place." This seemed appropriate at the time. The new technologies were often difficult to navigate and many information seekers and library users were unfamiliar with their design and use. Most people, including librarians, were digital immigrants, slowly, sometimes hesitantly, making the migration to the new virtual information world. The library was a needed and important intermediary—a comforting and comfortable place, assisting users to find the information they needed in a complex, but increasingly rich, virtual information environment. Although some librarians were resistant,

many became enthusiastic supporters of the new virtual information environment, and libraries focused on and promoted themselves as effective navigators on the information superhighway. Soon however, important and disconcerting questions arose: if libraries defined themselves primarily as information providers, what will happen when the information technologies become so easy to use that intermediation is not needed or desired? What about the growing generation of young people, digital natives, who were quite comfortable and skilled at getting information on the Internet without help? Will they need or want us?

Today, libraries are still a respected cultural institution and a powerful physical presence, but their monopoly on knowledge is gone. The library's competitors occupy a virtual space and their products are not physical, but digital and as the Internet and digital content have grown, the role of the library has diminished as an information provider. This transition has been difficult to accept. In many ways, libraries are struggling to maintain a new equilibrium balancing their traditional missions with an environment that is placing new demands on the libraries' infrastructure and purpose. With the advent of powerful search engines and a continuous and dramatic increase in the available resources on the Internet, the questions noted above have at least in part been answered. People still come to the library for information, but in smaller numbers, students still come to do assignments, but many others find their sources on the Internet at home; people still come for books, but increasing numbers read e-books on e-readers and obtain them elsewhere or demand that libraries supply them. As a result, the library is transforming: but to what?

By the first decade of the twenty-first century, libraries, aware that their significance was being questioned, began a concerted campaign to their constituencies to remind them of all the services that they provide. In fact, it was a self-realization that the library is much more than information provision—it was a *place* in which many important things happened: informational, recreational, educational, cultural, and civic. It was a place where people met, learned, and exchanged ideas. It was a place where people got help to solve important health and other social problems. It was a place to create. In recognition of these many contributions, American Library Association created a public awareness and advocacy campaign called "'@ your library'—The Campaign for America's Libraries." The campaign was launched in 2001 with the support of then–First Lady Laura Bush. ALA characterized the underlying impetus for the program in the following way: "While libraries are popular, they are often taken for granted. While libraries are ubiquitous, they are not often visible. And, while libraries are unique, they are facing new challenges" (ALA 2014). But this was more than a PR campaign; it attempted to target specific audiences

with the message that "libraries are dynamic, modern community centers for learning, information, and entertainment (ALA 2014). It was an attempt to reinvigorate interest and participation in libraries.

Although ALA focuses primarily on public libraries, the theme was taken up by other types of libraries: an Academic and Research Library Campaign was launched in 2002, and a School Library Campaign in 2003. The "@ your library" campaign emphasized that a central mission of the public library was as a "community" center, not just a place for individuals in the community to receive service. In essence, it was sending the message that the library was an integral part *of* the community, not just an entity that provides service *to* the community. Ultimately, this campaign generated a new initiative with even stronger emphasis on community-orientation: the Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC) initiative. This initiative "seeks to strengthen librarians' roles as core community leaders and change-agents" (ALA 2014). ALA describes the goal of LTC as follows:

> LTC will help libraries become more reflective of and connected to their communities and achieve a domino effect of positive results, including stronger relationships with local civic agencies, non-profits, funders and corporations, and greater community investment in civility, collaboration, education, health and well-being. ALA also hopes to shift public discourse away from past themes about libraries in crisis and toward talk of libraries as agents of positive community change. (ALA 2014a)

Such roles require much broader and deeper engagement and entanglement in the community than the traditional mission of the library requires. Indeed, LTC takes as a fundamental theme, "Turning Outward" in which the orientation of the library is expected to change from being "library–focused" to "community-focused" (ALA 2014a).

The issue of engagement with the community will be discussed further in subsequent chapters, but suffice it to say that although the library's potential power to "transform" communities has been recognized historically since Andrew Carnegie's time, in practice, such a mission was supposed to be accomplished by the mere existence of the library as an available collection of books and services to interested individuals. In the more recent sense, the library is not transforming the community individual-by-individual, but helping to transform the community itself and in doing so, affecting the individuals within it. Certainly, many types of libraries, public, school, academic and special, are focusing more and more on understanding the needs of their communities, embedding themselves in user communities outside the walls of the library and engaging many more people, agencies, and institutions,

as partners and collaborators in library activities. It is unclear what the ultimate impact of this transition will be, but that this change of orientation in mission is of historical significance is undeniable.

VI. SUMMARY

Libraries over the centuries have had many missions: archival, religious, scholarship and education, self-aggrandizement, and entertainment. In each case, the library was deeply embedded in the culture that created it. It began, grew, changed, and declined in consort with the culture that produced it. That is the library's nature; it does not exist in a vacuum and its vigor grows, ebbs, and flows with its society.

It was not until the nineteenth century that libraries began to serve the broader population and developed a democratic ethic and vision. U.S. libraries (also British and Canadian ones) led the way in this regard. The significance of libraries as a democratic institution is only slightly less important than the development of the printing press. The printing press made it possible for ideas to reach many people in concrete form; democracy created the expectation that those ideas should be available to the many rather than the few; libraries in democracies helped make those expectations a reality.

The dramatic changes that have occurred in the past three decades have in some senses radically changed the way information and knowledge are acquired. But to date, it has not radically changed the modern library's mission: to inform, to educate, to entertain. What has changed in all types of libraries is the means by which libraries accomplish their missions. Perhaps the mission of the library has not changed, because people still need to be informed, educated, and entertained and although they might use other channels as well, people still see the library as a source of knowledge for themselves and their children. But if libraries are truly reflections of their societies, then the modern library's missions might well change soon, because our society is changing with each technological advance, and we see the future shape of our society only through a glass darkly.

Going forward, it is fair to ask: Will we have a mission, and what will it be?

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