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On the cover: *Fiery sunset* by Kara Roberts, Starkville Public Library.
This tree is located on University Drive in Starkville, at the far edge of Oddfellows Cemetery.

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President's Page

The Mississippi Library Association is pleased to return to Hattiesburg and the University of Southern Mississippi's campus as well. This year's conference theme, **Tell Your Story**, emphasizes the importance of libraries and librarians telling their stories about, not only the services that their libraries offer, but more importantly, how libraries change lives and make a difference in their communities, schools, campuses, and other facilities. Advocacy on behalf of the libraries has been the focus of many of our efforts this year. To continue along that course, we have invited John Chrastka, Executive Director of EveryLibrary, to be our keynote speaker for our opening general session as well as our closing session. Mr. Chrastka brings experiences from the viewpoint of a library trustee, supporter, and advocate and will impart his wisdom to our attendees.

Your Vice-President, Sarah Mangrum, her co-workers at USM, and her conference committees have planned a great schedule of programs and events. As always, there will be a wide range of programs and events that will be of interest to library staff from public, academic, school, or special libraries. There will also be events taking place after hours outside of the conference center, such as "An Evening in the Archives" held at the McCain Library & Archives at USM on Tuesday night and the President's Reception and Scholarship Bash at the historic Powell Ogletree on Wednesday night. Networking with other librarians is an important part of attending conference, and these are just a few examples of the great networking opportunities



that will be available to our attendees during the conference. You can find additional information about the conference in this issue of *Mississippi Libraries* and on our [website](#). If you would like to volunteer to help with this year's conference, contact Sarah Mangrum or check in with the other volunteers at the registration desk during the conference.

The Conference Site Selection Committee is still reviewing proposals and making site visits for our 2018, 2019, and 2020 conferences. The MLA Executive Board will meet at the beginning of conference to hear the committee's recommendations and will let MLA members know as soon as a decision has been made about future conference sites. Sarah Crisler-Ruskey is our MLA Vice President-elect and will be in charge of planning next year's conference. If you would like to help with next year's conference, contact her at sruskey@cplclarksdale.lib.ms.us.

Wishing you a great conference experience,
Jenniffer Stephenson, President

The State of Movement-Based Programs in Mississippi Public Libraries

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ABSTRACT

The study addresses the question: What is the current state of movement-based programs in Mississippi public libraries? The answer to this question comes from a survey-based study in which 1622 public librarians from the U.S. and Canada described what, if any, movement-based programs they offer. The survey was disseminated online in Spring 2017. Fourteen public librarians in Mississippi completed the survey. Like their colleagues across the continent, public librarians in Mississippi increasingly provide opportunities for individuals of different ages and abilities to be active. Nonetheless, this study also finds that Mississippi public libraries lag behind other libraries in the Southeastern region, as well as the nation, in terms of the development of this programming area. More research needs to be done to understand how and why public libraries contribute to fostering active lifestyles.

INTRODUCTION

Among states in the U.S.A., Mississippi has the highest percentage of adults who are physically inactive (Segal, Rayburn and Martin 2016, p. 14). The state's adult obesity rate is currently 35.6 percent, making it

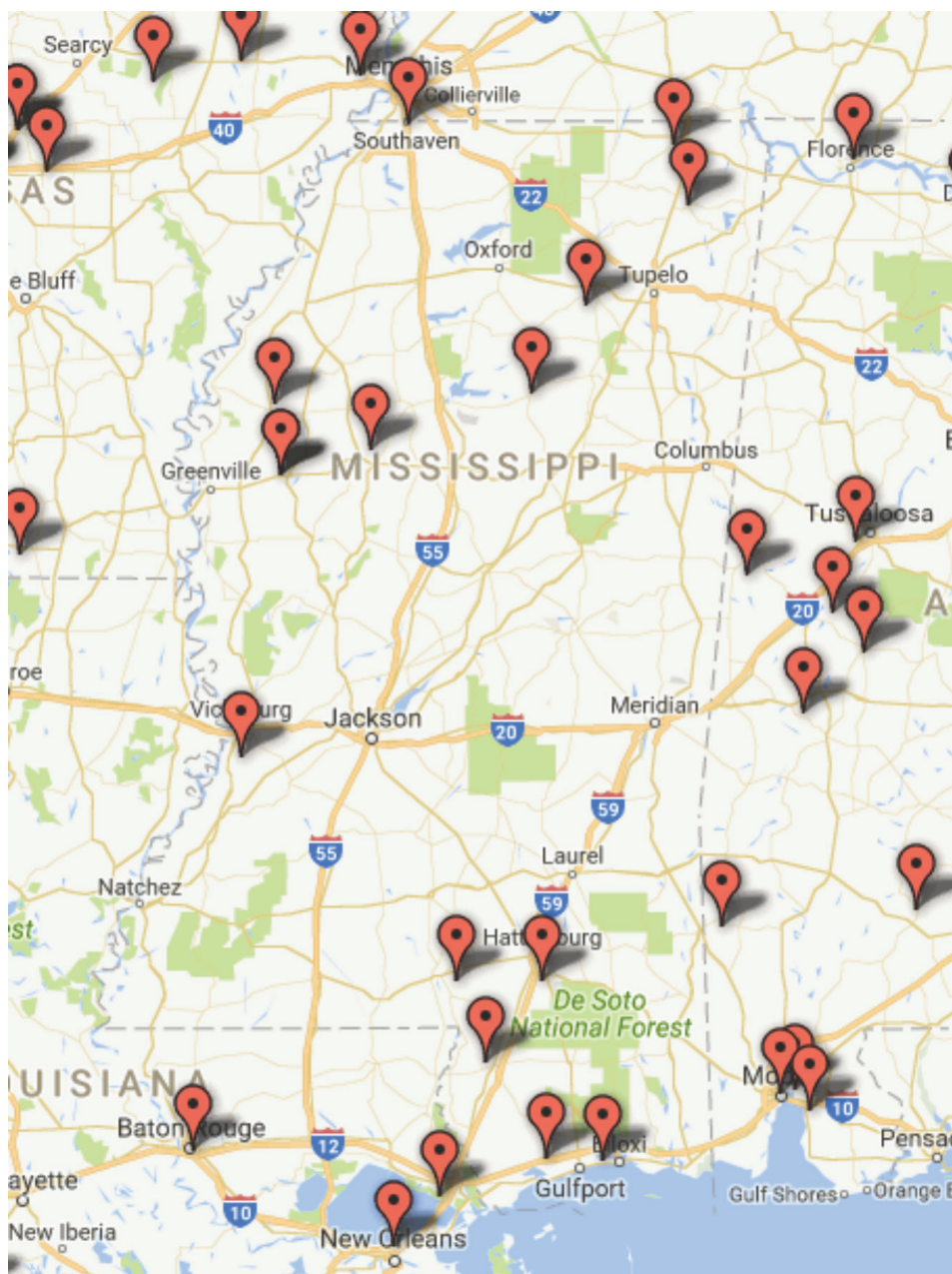


Figure 1: Map of respondents from the State of Mississippi, and from the surrounding region.

the second most obese in the country. This percentage is up from 23.7 percent in 2000, and from 15.0 percent in 1990 (ibid.). This paper considers how librarians, and public librarians in particular, address

this problem. In Spring 2017, 1622 public librarians from the U.S. and Canada completed a survey on the movement-based programs in their libraries. Among respondents were 14 librarians from the state of

Mississippi (Figure 1). Like their colleagues across the continent, public librarians in Mississippi increasingly provide opportunities for individuals of different ages and abilities to be active. Nonetheless, the survey also finds that Mississippi public libraries offer less of these programs than libraries elsewhere in the continent, suggesting that more work is needed to expand this programming area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The 2014 *Digital Inclusion Survey* of public libraries – which included a series of questions on health and wellness – found that 7.6% of Mississippi public libraries offered some sort of fitness classes (such as Zumba, yoga, or tai chi) between Fall 2013 and Fall 2014 (Bertot et al. 2015a, 134). Nationally, that same survey found that 22.7% of all public libraries in the U.S. had offered fitness classes during the preceding year. The presence of fitness classes in public libraries relates to how communities respond to societal challenges related to the increasingly sedentary lifestyles of many in the Western world. Scholars and policy makers have developed new frameworks to nurture “active communities” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] 2017) where everyone has “physical literacy” (Aspen Institute 2015). The National Physical Activity Plan (2016) recommends that “communities should develop new, and enhance existing ... programs that provide and promote healthy physical activity opportunities for diverse users across the lifespan” (n.p.). Policy makers now see physical education as physical literacy as diffuse throughout

society, not restricted to demarcated spaces such as gyms and recreation centers. New institutions are now called upon to become involved in physical education. Museums of all types, for instance, participated in Michelle Obama’s *Let’s Move! Museums and Gardens initiative* (Obama 2011).

Scholars and policy makers have also modified conventional ways of thinking about physical education. Originally developed by British physical education scholar Margaret Whitehead (2010), the concept of “physical literacy” has become a unifying theme in these discussions. The Aspen Institute’s *Project Play* defines physical literacy as “the ability, confidence, and desire to be physically active for life” (n.p.). Physical literacy differs from related concepts, such as health literacy and health information:

Using the same definition and verbiage will also help avoid potential confusion with other terms used in this space, including ... health literacy, which is unrelated to physical activity and the federal [U.S.] government defines as ‘the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.’ (n.p.)

There is a large and robust literature about how public librarians support health literacy through the provision of consumer health information (Rubenstein 2016). Less understood is how public librarians encourage physical literacy and active communities. The few studies that do exist are case studies of experimental programs (e.g. Woodson,

Timm and Jones 2011; Engeszer et al. 2016; Flaherty and Miller 2016). In St. Louis, Missouri, librarians from Washington University partnered with the local public library system to administer a community needs survey on health information needs. The survey found that “exercise” was the topic the public most wanted to see more of at the library (Engeszer et al. 2016, 64). In response, the partners developed a series of programs on yoga, beginning exercise, and Zumba throughout the St. Louis Public Library system.

A similar action research study took place in the rural town of Farmville, North Carolina, where the public library partnered with a library and information science professor to develop programs and services that promote healthy lifestyles (Flaherty and Miller 2016). The library loaned pedometers to patrons, and the researcher interviewed those who participated. Participants reported liking the program, and asked for more movement-based programming at the library. In response, the library organized a 5K race and one-mile fun walk/run in Spring 2015, which has since become an annual library-sponsored program.

Case studies published in the professional literature also highlight public librarians developing movement-based programming, including teen fitness classes (Quatrella and Bloosveren 1994), youth yoga (Durland 2008), adult running groups (Richmond 2012), music and movement for early literacy (Prato 2014), and circulating fitness equipment (Weekes and Longair 2016). This literature shows that movement-based programming exists

not only in North America, but also in Romania (EIFL 2016), and Namibia (Hamwaalwa et al. 2016). Furthermore, the literature suggests these programs are emerging not only in public libraries, but also in academic (e.g. Rose, Godfrey, and Rose 2015) and school (e.g. Barack 2015) libraries.

A major catalyst to the recent expansion of this type of program in public libraries was the 2016 Collaborative Summer Reading Program (CSRP) theme, which focused on sports, exercise, and fitness, in part to connect that year's summer reading to the 2016 Summer Olympics (Lenstra 2017). In Mississippi, like in many other states, the State Library promoted movement-based programs as something public librarians should do during Summer 2016 as part of their summer reading programs. In March 2016, Joy Garretson, the Library Development Director for the Mississippi Library Commission, gave public librarians ideas for their adult summer library programs. Among other ideas, Garretson recommended "a local fitness (or Yoga) instructor to come in to discuss steps you can take to be more active. He or she can lead a 15-minute exercise class during the presentation" (Garretson 2016, p. 14). She also recommended starting "a running group with the library 210 staff and invit[ing] patrons to join," ending "the summer with a 5 k fun run/walk" (p. 16), and developing programs to encourage patrons to "exercise as a family: Make working out together a family ritual" (p. 19).

These examples from the research and practitioner literatures demonstrate that increasingly public

librarians not only provide information about health and wellness, they also actively and directly contribute to physical fitness through programs that create opportunities for individuals of different ages and abilities to be physically active in the library. Nonetheless, despite this evidence, we know very little about the current state of this programming.

METHODS

AIMS AND METHODS

This survey attempted to obtain information on the state of movement-based programs in public libraries in the United States of America and in Canada. Since little is currently known about the state of this programming area in libraries, this basic data is needed to understand this topic. This section first discusses how this survey was carried out.

DATA COLLECTION

Between February 14 and March 23, 2017, the "Let's Move in Libraries Survey" was disseminated to public librarians in the United States and Canada. Data collection was carried out via a questionnaire on the internet using Qualtrics. The URL to the questionnaire was disseminated through state and provincial library electronic mail list, and through announcements sent out by state and provincial libraries to public libraries in their regions. A call for participation was sent on the Mississippi Library Association's electronic mailing list on February 22, and then again on March 15, of 2017. In addition, the survey was disseminated through national electronic mail list used by public librarians (e.g. PUBLIB), as well as

on this project's website. In total, 1828 individuals started the survey. To ensure that a given library only filled out the survey once, respondents were asked to include their zip code (U.S.) or postal code (Canada), which enabled removing redundant responses. After removing redundant responses, and those who ceased the survey before answering question #3 (Has your library ever offered any programs or services that include [movement]?), a sample of 1622 libraries remained. Respondents had no obligation to fill out the entirety of the survey, so the number of libraries that responded to a given question fluctuates. In total, 1415 libraries answered all questions asked in the survey. Partial responses are nonetheless retained in this analysis, as these responses enable a richer portrayal of the state of movement-based programming in public libraries.

In organizing the survey, the author looked to past surveys of public libraries (Bertot et al. 2015), as well as to professional discussions of movement-based programs. In addition, the survey was tested with three public librarians from Illinois, North Carolina, and New Brunswick. These librarians helped inform the language used in the final survey. The survey received approval from the Institutional Review Board of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (IRB # 17-0060).

DATA ANALYSIS

After the data had been collected, they were integrated with the data from the Institute of Museum and Library Services FY 2014 Public Libraries Survey in order to sort the respondents into "urban," "suburban," "town," and "rural" libraries, as

well as to sort the respondents by region. This integration proved to be partially problematic, as it required using both the “Administrative Entity” and “Outlet” datasets, since the survey did not specify whether it should be filled out by library systems or by individual branches. In those cases, the author used the techniques used by the IMLS, which in turn rely on the methodology used to assign locale codes to public schools in the National Center for Education Statistics’ Common Core of Data (IMLS 2016). Using this technique, the remaining 161 respondents were categorized as “urban,” “suburban,” “town,” and “rural.”

Although the call for participation in the survey made clear that the survey was targeted exclusively at public libraries, 10 other libraries also completed the survey (2 state libraries, 3 academic libraries, 1 community college library, 2 K-12 school libraries, and 1 medical library) – all of whom also reported offering movement-based programs to their communities. For instance, a community college librarian in North Carolina reported that:

I offer a ‘Walkin’ and Talkin Tuesday’ for faculty and staff to join me for a 30 minute walk around the campus to discuss what we are up too and what’s going on on campus. In addition, I offer a Films on Demand workout video session every Friday afternoon for anyone faculty, staff, or students to join me.

An academic librarian from Alberta, Canada, noted that “many of us [academic librarians] are addressing some of these same issues” the Let’s Move in Libraries survey

addresses, such as how to encourage physical activity and wellness. An Illinois middle school librarian reports that “Each time I do a lesson, I incorporate movement, usually of the Brain Gym, Body Talk, Rhythmic Movement Training, or other programs I am certified in.” This librarian goes on to note that “we are expanding our maker space to include movement such as juggling, hula hooping and project adventure team building.” A college library in North Carolina reports having a collection of exercise equipment that it checks out to students and staff from its circulation desk. A state librarian plans to develop a gentle movement program for the lawyers that use the space, who are often stressed out. A university librarian notes that “I like the idea of libraries getting involved in promoting movement! Our University’s Wellness Committee might be interested in partnering with us!” These findings suggest more research is needed to examine not only the state of movement-based programs in public libraries, but also in academic, school, and in other types of libraries.

FINDINGS

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

Public librarians from 10 of the 52 library systems in the state of Mississippi completed the survey. Librarians from multiple branches within some of these systems responded to the survey, leading to a sample of 14 public libraries in the state of Mississippi. Based on IMLS data, two of these branches are city libraries, two are suburban libraries, eight are town libraries, and two are rural libraries. To introduce findings on the state of movement-based

programs in the state of Mississippi, this section first briefly describes the 14 libraries that completed the survey:

- Library 1 is located in a city of 45,000 people. It has offered yoga and other movement-based programs for youth.
- Library 2 is located in a city of 40,000 people. It has offered music and movement programs for young children, ages 0-5.
- Library 3 is located in a suburb of 50,000 people. It has offered Yoga, Zumba, Dancing, and Gardening programs, all with adults as the primary audience.
- Library 4 is located in a suburb of 5,000 people. It has offered Yoga, Tai Chi, gardening, and a general exercise class for adults, as well as music and movement programs for young children, ages 0-5.
- Library 5 is located in a town of 15,000. It has offered an all ages dancing program.
- Library 6 is located in a town of 12,000 people. It has offered Yoga, dancing, and gardening programs for all ages.
- Library 7 is located in a town of 10,000 people. It has offered Yoga and dancing programs for adults.
- Library 8 is located in a town of 9,000 people. It has offered music and movement programs for young children, ages 0-5, as well as a youth gardening program.
- Library 9 is located in a town of 7,000 people. It has offered an all ages StoryWalk program.
- Library 10 is located in a town of 6,000. It has offered Tai Chi and Zumba for adults.
- Library 11 is located in a rural community of 1,500 people. It has

offered Tai Chi for adults.

- Libraries 12-14 have not offered any movement-based programs. Library 12 is located in a 12,000 people. Library 13 is located in a town of 16,000. Library 14 is located in a rural community of 2,500 people.

Based on the results from the survey, coupled with a detailed review of the websites for all of the responding libraries, the author determined that at least four of the library systems offer movement-based programs on a recurring, regular basis. As of Summer 2017, programs offered on a recurring basis in the State of Mississippi, include:

- the Central Mississippi Regional Library System offers Zumba classes in the summer and in January or February, as well as Story Time programs that incorporate dancing;
- the Dixie Regional Library System offers Tai Chi on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1 p.m. at the Calhoun City Public Library;
- the Harrison County Library System offers a) Tai Chi on Thursday and Friday mornings at the

Orange Grove Library, b) Yoga at Pass Christian on Wednesday afternoons and Thursday evenings, and c) on Monday and Thursday mornings a group called the Trinity Twirlers does a Mayo Clinic based exercise program at the library;

- the Library of Hattiesburg, Petal, and Forrest County offers what it calls “storytimercize” during its Family Storytimes in which children move to songs and music;
- and the Sunflower County Library System offers Yoga and dance programs on a regular basis.

TRENDS IN PROGRAMMING

The most commonly reported types of movement-based programs in the 14 Mississippi public libraries that responded to the survey: Yoga (36%), Dancing (29%), Gardening (29%), Tai Chi (21%), movement-based programs offered in the context of early literacy initiatives for very young children, ages 0-5 (21%), Zumba (14%), Other (14%), and StoryWalks (7%) (Figure 2). On average, the urban and suburban respondents reported 3 different types

of movement-based programs per library. The town and rural respondents reported on average 1.2 types of programs per library. Twenty-one percent of respondents reported never having movement-based programs at their libraries. In all types of programs, except for Tai Chi, Mississippi librarians reported less movement-based programs than other public libraries in the southeastern U.S. or across the continent.

Among those librarians that reported having offered movement-based programs, 54% said their programs were first offered after January 1, 2016; 36% said their programs were first offered before January 1, 2016; and one librarian did not know when programs were first offered. These findings together suggest that Mississippi public librarians have recently started offering movement-based programs, possibly to coincide with the 2016 summer reading theme. One librarian wrote that “During summer reading programming [we offered] move to learn. This involved exercising the body, then exercising the brain with reading.” A different librarian said that they offered Yoga and Zumba programs because of the “Adult Summer Reading Program.”

Three libraries report offering movement-based programs primarily for youth. Four reported offering programs primarily for adults, and four report offering programs for all ages, with no clear trend towards more programs for youth or adults. All but one of the libraries relied in whole or in part on volunteers to provide their movement-based programs. Three libraries reported that their programs were entirely led by volunteers, while seven reported

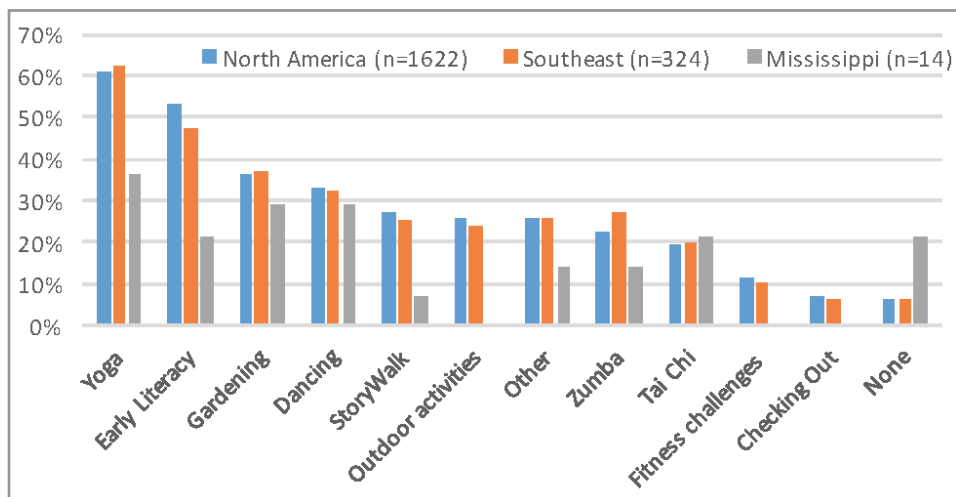


Figure 2. Percentage of MS public libraries that have offered movement-based programs, in the context of continental and regional trends.

librarians and volunteers co-leading these programs. Half of the libraries had no requirements for participation in their programs, but three sometimes required participants sign waivers of liability in case of injury, and two required advanced registration.

ASSESSMENT AND IMPACTS

All but one of the Mississippi librarians that completed the survey said that, on average, participation in their movement-based programs had met or exceeded their expectations. Furthermore, all but one of the librarians said their programs had brought new users into the library. Seven librarians (64%) also said the media had reported on the fact that their libraries were offering these programs. Based on these impacts, all but one of the 11 Mississippi public libraries that have offered movement-based programs in the past report plans to continue offering these types of programs in the future. One librarian wrote that the turn-out was so high for the library's yoga programs that:

Yoga had to move to another location because the meeting room was too small for the amount of participants We were surprised by the amount of patrons who came to the dance and yoga class. It has been very helpful educating the community about other resources at the library besides books.

In general, then, these programs tend to bring new users into libraries, and also tend to receive attention in the media. In the full sample of public libraries in the U.S. and Canada, 81% percent of public librarians reported that participation

in movement-based programs met or exceeded their expectations, 87% said these programs had brought new users into their libraries, and 54% said their movement-based programs had received attention from local media.

Nevertheless, Mississippi librarians also reported doing minimal assessment of the impacts of this programming. Two libraries reported doing no assessment at all of their movement-based programs. Nine reported assessing programs through head counts of participants. Two libraries also surveyed participants, and one library reported interviewing participants to assess the program. Nine libraries said that based on the feedback heard and evidence collected, their programs had contributed to health and wellness. Seven said the programs had contributed to community building. Five said the programs contributed to library outreach. Three said their programs had contributed to literacy (all three primarily offered movement-based programs for youth). One library did not know what, if any, impacts the programs had.

DISCUSSION

This study adds to the current but limited understanding of movement-based programming in public libraries. Past national studies have shown that fitness classes are becoming increasingly common in public libraries (Bertot et al. 2015a), and that the prevalence of these types of classes in Mississippi lags behind the nation, but no study has analyzed in depth the state of movement-based programs. This study has shown that, at a minimum, 11 public libraries in Mississippi have

offered provided movement-based programs. In general, librarians tend to develop these programs through collaborations with volunteers or partner institutions. The results from this survey show that when these programs are offered, they tend to attract new users to public libraries, receive coverage from the local media, and have participation levels that meet or exceed librarians' expectations. These programs positively contribute to population health and wellness, as well as to community building and outreach. Based on these outcomes, it is unsurprising that all but one of the responding libraries that has had movement-based programs in the past has plans to offer these types of programs in the future.

Nevertheless, a major challenge moving forward with movement-based programming in public libraries relates to assessment. Assessment tools like Project Outcome (Anthony 2016) could be productively expanded to include questions on movement and physical literacy (Aspen Institute, 2015). This assessment work is especially important to do since policy makers, and even the library profession itself, struggles to understand the implications of the integration of movement into public library programs and services. For instance, when former First Lady Michelle Obama developed her *Let's Move!* Initiative (Obama 2011), she focused primarily on museums and gardens, and not on public libraries, possibly because those libraries that had already started providing movement-based programming were not prepared to make this programming known and visible to policy makers concerned with physical literacy.

Librarians need to do more to make the work they already do to encourage movement visible locally, nationally, and internationally.

CONCLUSION

Although the survey's recruitment materials specified that all public libraries were invited to complete the survey, a majority of respondents had experience offering movement-based programs in their libraries. The sample is thus biased towards those libraries already invested in movement-based programs. As such, it is impossible to make generalizations about how common, in general, movement-based programming is in Mississippi public libraries. A statistically designed random sample is needed to systematically assess the current state of movement-based programs in Mississippi public libraries. Nonetheless, the large number of respondents does suggest that this type of programming is becoming more common.

Despite these limitations, this study shows that some public libraries throughout Mississippi are offering a wide variety of movement-based programming, and many intend to keep providing movement-based programming in the future. Based on these facts, more research is needed to understand why this programming exists, how it works, and what impacts it has. In addition to more quantitative

data, we also need qualitative studies that look in depth at the impacts of movement-based programming in particular public libraries. This article provides base-line data on this emerging programming area in order to begin these conversations and studies.

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A Separate Space

Remembering Meridian's Segregated Carnegie Library, 1913-74

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the largely undocumented history of Meridian, Mississippi's 13th Street library, a segregated branch library constructed in 1912-13 with funds from Carnegie's famous library program. Although the library no longer stands, it remains an important connection between libraries in Mississippi and the history of race relations. Using archival sources as well as oral history interviews with some of the library's former users, the article considers the library's importance as an early symbol of civic autonomy for Meridian's African Americans and how it became a valued educational support center and community space. The article closes with a call to preservation, not just of historic library buildings but also of their documentary heritage.

The city of Meridian, home to over forty-thousand people, is one of Mississippi's most historic. By the turn of the last century, it was one of the New South's most industrially prosperous centers—poised, in some opinions, to become another Atlanta, Nashville, or Charleston.¹



Meridian's segregated Carnegie branch, which opened on March 29th, 1913, on the corner of 13th Street and 28th Avenue. Reproduced with permission from the Meridian-Lauderdale County Public Library.

Touring it even today reveals much about the past: not just about Meridian's past, but also about the history of race relations in the south.

Meridian, of course, is well associated with the history of race relations, perhaps most specifically with the freedom and Civil Rights movements of the 1960s. It also occupies an important place in the history of libraries and race. When retired steel magnate Andrew Carnegie offered Meridian funds for a public library in 1904, it was Carnegie's first such offer to any town or city in Mississippi.² Meridian built this library on the corner of 7th Street and 25th Avenue and opened it in 1913. Today, it houses the Meridian Museum of Art and remains one of the state's

best-known examples of a Carnegie library building. Less known perhaps is the story of Meridian's other Carnegie library, which was built on the corner of 13th Street and 28th Avenue in the northwest part of town. Known as the "Colored Library" when it opened in 1913, this second Carnegie building was the first free public library for African Americans in Lauderdale County and one of the earliest in the United States.³ But unlike the downtown library, the 13th Street branch no longer stands. It was closed in 1974 and razed in 2008. And for much of the past forty years, information about it has been scarce.

Last year, this author began a

1 For information about Meridian and Lauderdale County's social and economic history, see: June Davis Davidson, *Meridian* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia, 2012); and Richelle Putnam, *Lauderdale County, Mississippi: A Brief History* (Charleston, South Carolina: History Press, 2011).

2 James Bertram to J.C. Fant, letter, 2 December 1904, Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY) Records, Butler Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

3 Several sources claim that Meridian's 13th Street branch was the first public library for African Americans opened in Mississippi, but this is not accurate. Mound Bayou, an exclusively African American town in the delta region, opened its Carnegie library in 1910.

study of the twelve segregated Carnegie libraries that opened across the South between 1908 and 1924. Although we know much already about library services in the age of Jim Crow, and much about the political origins of Carnegie's segregated libraries, no work has yet examined each of the twelve libraries' stories in detail and few studies have considered their roles as community spaces.⁴ Space and place, as historian Ira Berlin explains, held profound meaning for African Americans in the Jim Crow south. In the decades following the Civil War, African Americans found a sense of rootedness through the many organizations, institutions, and community spaces that formed in black neighborhoods. These touchstones of community contributed to a sense of shared identity among African Americans and provided a network of social and educational resources helpful to their survival.⁵

This article examines the story of the 13th Street branch, paying specific attention to the library's importance first as an early symbol of civic autonomy for Meridian's African American community and second as a place for its members to assemble, associate, and learn. In addition

to archival research, the article's sources include recent interviews with some of the library's former users.

CARNEGIE LIBRARIES AND MISSISSIPPI

Andrew Carnegie's library program of the early twentieth century changed the course of public library development in most parts of the country.⁶ His proposal was simple: If local governments agreed to furnish a site and maintain their library through taxation, Carnegie would fund its construction. Because it emphasized free access and local support, Carnegie's program encouraged local governments to abandon many older, membership-based models which had been popular before 1900. And since most smaller towns could seldom afford a purpose-built, modern library relying on only municipal funds, it is unsurprising that, by 1920, Carnegie's program was responsible for the construction of just under 1,700 public libraries across the country. The program remains the single largest financial stimulus in the history of American library development.⁷

Carnegie's program was not as far-reaching in the south, however. While states like Indiana and California opened well over a hundred Carnegie libraries each, states in the

deep south rarely opened more than a dozen. For example, between 1904 and 1917 Carnegie promised a total of fourteen public library grants to thirteen communities in Mississippi. Of these, only ten built libraries: Houston, Mound Bayou, Clarksdale, Greenwood, Jackson, West Point, Okolona, Vicksburg, Gulfport, and Meridian.⁸ Carnegie also funded libraries at Millsaps College and the University of Mississippi.⁹ But since Mississippi was still a predominantly rural state, the Carnegie program's emphasis on city-based control of public libraries discouraged interest from outside urban centers. Bookmobiles and county library models, which Carnegie's original program did not fund, would later become the standard in most rural parts of the state. Still, Carnegie's program introduced some of first modern library facilities in Mississippi, and to some extent broadened acceptance of tax-supported library services within the state.¹⁰

Free library services for Mississippi's African Americans, however, were practically non-existent at the time. Public education for blacks existed, and many segregated schools contained small collections of books for their students. However, most non-school and non-college libraries in the state were still library

4 For general information about the history of segregated library services, see: David M. Battles, *The History of Public Library Access for African Americans in the South* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2009). For information about the origins of Carnegie's segregated libraries, see: Cheryl Knott, *Not Free, Not for All: Public Libraries in the Age of Jim Crow* (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015). For a rare, in-depth examination of any segregated Carnegie library as a community space, see: Julie Hersberger, Lou Sua, and Adam Murray, "The Fruit and Root of the Community: The Greensboro Carnegie Negro Library, 1904-1964," in *The Library as Place: History, Community and Culture*, ed. by John E. Buschman and Gloria J. Leckie (Westport, Connecticut: Libraries Unlimited, 2007), 79-100.

5 Ira Berlin, *The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations* (New York: Penguin, 2014), 25-31.

6 For overviews of Carnegie's library program and its impacts on library development, see: George Bobinski, *Carnegie Libraries: Their History and Impact on American Public Library Development* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1970); Abigail van Slyck, *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries and American Culture, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); and Theodore Jones, *Carnegie Libraries Across America: A Public Legacy* (New York: John Wiley, 1997).

7 For a complete inventory of Carnegie's library philanthropy, see: Florence Anderson, *Carnegie Corporation Library Program 1911-1961* (New York: Carnegie Corporation, 1963).

8 Matthew Griffis, "Searching for Carnegie: A Visit to the World's Oldest Carnegie Library Calls to Mind a Chapter of Mississippi's Library History," *Mississippi Libraries* 78, no. 1 (2015): 4-9. Carnegie also promised library grants to Amory, Greenville, and Laurel, but various setbacks prevented these towns from constructing their Carnegie libraries. For information about Amory and Laurel's cases, see the CCNY records, series II.A.a, reels 2 and 16, respectively; for information about Greenville's case, see "Greenville Offered Carnegie Library," *The Delta Democrat-Times* (Greenville, Mississippi), 3 January 1912.

9 Anderson, 79. Contrary to some accounts, Carnegie did not grant library funds to Mississippi Industrial College in Holly Springs.

10 Griffis, 7-8.

associations or literary societies. These private, membership-based organizations had for years allowed whites to deny equal library access to African Americans. But after 1900, as tax-supported public libraries began appearing across the south, white civic leaders grew increasingly worried over questions of “equal” library access for both races. Their efforts to prevent blacks from sharing libraries with whites was ongoing. Some opened “colored” reading rooms in the basements of their otherwise whites-only public libraries. In some cases, African Americans took it upon themselves to open small libraries in the backrooms of black schools or in local churches, but many of these lasted no longer than a few years.¹¹

In other cases, local white leaders opened segregated branch libraries for the African Americans in their town and agreed to support these branches with an annual tax appropriation. For some whites, this solution probably seemed the most convenient for, while it provided some degree of “equal” access between races, it also appeared to satisfy demand from blacks for free library services. Carnegie’s library program funded the construction of twelve of these segregated branches. And from an historical perspective, each library’s story reveals much about the state of race relations in that town at the turn of the century.

MERIDIAN AND CARNEGIE LIBRARIES

In most southern towns, the mere suggestion of equal library access for blacks made white civic leaders nervous. Their fears and complaints



Meridian’s main Carnegie library, which also opened in 1913, was built on the corner of 7th Street and 25th Avenue originally for whites only. S.H. Kress & Co. postcard manufactured ca. 1913. From the author’s personal collection.

ran the gamut from theories of possible revolt to the belief that African Americans were incapable of appreciating libraries. The latter view was the case in Meridian—at least in the opinion of the city’s Library Committee chairman, J.C. Fant. “To open a library building equally to whites and blacks would defeat the purpose of the library,” wrote Fant to James Bertram in the summer of 1909.¹² Bertram was the sole manager of Carnegie’s library program, which was headquartered in New York. Fant, one of Meridian’s most prominent civic leaders, was also Superintendent of Meridian’s Public Schools.¹³ The suggestion that Meridian provide library access to both races had been Bertram’s, not Fant’s, and the latter’s response was unequivocal. “Few blacks would patronize it and no whites at all,” Fant insisted, “the negroes failing to do so

because of lack of qualification and appreciation and the whites because of an unwillingness to associate with the other race.”¹⁴

Although Meridian was only fifty years old at the time, libraries were not new to the city. It had opened a circulating library as early as 1869, and in 1884 the local Literary and Library Association received its charter.¹⁵ By 1904, this Library Association had formed a sizable collection of books and occupied the second floor of the city’s Board of Trade building. But in his earliest letters to James Bertram, J.C. Fant described his beloved city as one rapidly outgrowing its amenities: “Although Meridian has grown up since the war and might be styled by some as a new town,” he explained, “it is a community of churches and schools and the morals of the people

12 J.C. Fant to James Bertram, letter, 9 July 1909, CCNY records.

13 John Clayton Fant would later co-author a textbook, *A History of Mississippi: A School Reader*, which was published in 1920 and used in Mississippi public schools well into the midcentury.

14 J.C. Fant to James Bertram, letter, 9 July 1909, CCNY records.

15 Jeanne Broach, *The Meridian Public Libraries: An Informal History, 1913-74* (Meridian, Mississippi: Meridian Public Library, 1974), 3; and the *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), 2 September 1884.

are of a high order.”¹⁶ A new public library, Fant insisted, would “prove a most potent factor in the intellectual and moral advancement of the community.”¹⁷

But when Carnegie offered Meridian \$15,000 in late 1904, the city did not readily accept the offer.¹⁸ In fact, Fant ceased his correspondence with Bertram and Meridian’s application sat for nearly four years. The city renewed its interest, however, in the fall of 1908 when the secretary of the Library Association asked for \$20,000.¹⁹ Fant followed with a letter of his own, requesting an even higher sum—this time \$40,000, which he based on an estimated population of 30,000.²⁰ Bertram once again shook his head: Fant offered no credible basis for his calculations, nor did he account for how his projected population accounted for both races.²¹ In fact, he made no mention at all of library services for Meridian’s African Americans—something that caught Bertram’s eye.²²

16 J.C. Fant to James Bertram, letter, 16 March 1904, CCNY records.

17 J.C. Fant to James Bertram, letter, 25 February 1904, CCNY records.

18 J.C. Fant to James Bertram, letter, 12 December 1904, CCNY records. In this letter, Fant expresses appreciation for Carnegie’s offer and explains to Bertram that further agreement will be required from the city’s Board of Trade, the Library Association, and the Mayor, among others. But Fant would not write Bertram again until 7 June 1909. His explanation for the five-year silence: “I wish to say that in our opinion no opportune time has presented itself to bring the matter officially before the City Government until now.”

19 Mrs. Collins to Andrew Carnegie, letter, 14 October 1908, CCNY records. Bertram responded by asking why Meridian had not accepted the offer from 1904.

20 J.C. Fant to James Bertram, letter, 7 June 1909, CCNY records.

21 See: James Bertram to J.C. Fant, letters, 22 June 1909 and 2 December 1909, CCNY records. In the latter, Bertram wrote: “You said in your letter ... that you did not know definitely [the black and white populations of Meridian]. If you don’t know definitely, it ought not to be a very great work to find out.”

22 Bertram to Fant, 22 June 1909. “[A]re they

Interestingly, Carnegie’s library program neither condoned nor actively contradicted the south’s segregation laws. It simply left local governments to determine their own access policies. But if a city based its application for a library grant on both white and black population figures, it was obligated, in Carnegie’s opinion, to open its library to both groups. But while some southern communities responded by simply abandoning their applications, others used combined population figures to secure larger building grants—only to ban blacks from their completed libraries.²³ Bertram was therefore wise to confront the issue.²⁴ In his response, Fant claimed that Meridian’s whites outnumbered blacks by almost two to one. He also dismissed the suggestion of equal access between races. There was, he insisted, “absolutely ... no call for such a thing and not likely to be for some time to come.”²⁵

But whether Fant knew it or not, both his claims were unfounded. Meridian’s population had been 14,050 at last census, 5,800 of which were African Americans.²⁶ Moreover, at least some of Meridian’s African Americans were indeed interested in obtaining a library. Several

[blacks] to use the Library Building equally with whites,” Bertram asked, “or are they to have a Library Building erected for them?”

23 Jones, 32-36, 93. The specific case Jones examines is the Carnegie library of Clarksdale, Mississippi, which included a “colored” reading room in its basement but closed it soon after the library opened, because its users “overwhelmed the two white librarians.” Clarksdale eventually opened a segregated branch in 1930. For the correspondence between Clarksdale and the Carnegie program, see the CCNY records, series IIA.a., reel 6.

24 James Bertram to J.C. Fant, 22 June 1909, CCNY records.

25 Fant to Bertram, 9 July 1909. Fant based his ratio on enrollment of the two races in the city’s public schools.

26 J.C. Fant to James Bertram, letter, 15 December 1909, CCNY records.

teachers from the Haven Institute, a black college located on 13th Street between 27th and 28th avenues, inquired at some point during the city’s correspondence with Bertram about a Carnegie grant for the college’s library. It is unclear, however, precisely when this group made its inquiry.²⁷

Though still unsatisfied with Meridian’s calculations, Bertram reluctantly offered the city \$25,000 that December.²⁸ But the city council, which wasted no time commissioning plans for the new building, remained unsatisfied. J.C. Fant spent another year pressing Bertram for more funds for a whites-only library, at one point asking for as much as \$50,000.²⁹ He also enlisted the help of Isaac Marks, one of the city’s most prominent businessman and a member of the Library Association, who took up the cause on the city’s behalf. Even the library’s architect,

27 Broach, 6. Although her work focuses little on the segregated branch, Broach explains how “a group of Negroes ... approached the city fathers about such a library for their Methodist-supported Haven Institute.” But their request was rejected, per Broach’s account, “since school libraries were not in the Carnegie [library] program.” Broach, however, does not indicate precisely when or to whom the Institute made its request, or at least when the city became aware of it. The issue is an important one since it sheds further light on the city’s relationship with Meridian’s African American community at the time. Contrary to Broach’s claim, Carnegie did offer library grants to colleges and, after 1906, even increased his focus on small black colleges specifically. Had the Haven Institute made its request directly to Carnegie, their application would likely have been approved. However, the CCNY records contain no record of such an application, and Bertram saved all applications regardless of outcome. Therefore, if the Haven Institute did show interest in a college library grant, it likely brought its request directly to the city. But nowhere in the entirety of its correspondence with Carnegie’s offices does the city mention interest from the black community in obtaining any library of their own, let alone a college library. The omission would strongly suggest that Meridian’s civic leaders deliberately avoided bringing the issue to Bertram’s attention.

28 James Bertram to J.C. Fant, letter, 24 December 1909.

29 J.C. Fant to James Bertram, letter, 8 January 1910, CCNY records.

Edward Tilton, insisted that more money was necessary to complete the building.³⁰

To settle the matter, in the fall of 1910 Bertram requested current population figures directly from the Bureau of the Census in Washington. Although the Bureau would not send its report until the following June, Bertram's initiative seemed to change something in Meridian.³¹ In January of 1911, after telling Marks about the Bureau's forthcoming report, Bertram once more pressed Meridian to clarify its intentions for equal access.³² Marks, who surely realized that the city had already approved a \$30,000 library with only \$25,000 to spend, acquiesced. He asked for a small raise to cover the balance due on the building, whose construction was soon to begin—and "the intention," Marks finally added, "is to make provisions for a colored library."³³

Satisfied, Bertram raised Carnegie's final offer to \$38,000, \$8,000 of which was intended for a "colored" branch.³⁴ Mayor J.W. Parker, who personally wrote Bertram to thank Carnegie for the grant, described how all municipal boards and community groups had enthusiastically and "unanimously accepted" the two-library plan.³⁵ Still, in

December of 1912 when the *Meridian Dispatch* praised the newly completed main library as "one of the handsomest" library buildings in the south, it commented little about the branch building in progress. It did proclaim, as if to Meridian's credit, that "the colored population of Meridian was not overlooked" in the city's campaign for a Carnegie grant.³⁶

THE SEGREGATED BRANCH, 1913-74

Meridian's "colored" neighborhoods were located principally in the city's northwest. And just as black Atlanta had Auburn Avenue and New Orleans had Dryades Street, Meridian's northwest part of town had its "negro main streets," which contained many black-operated businesses, churches, and community organizations. Private black schools like St. Joseph's existed, yet segregated public schools taught most of Meridian's African-American youth. But while segregated schools often contained libraries, these were quite small and their collections inadequate by public library standards.³⁷ The 13th Street library

was therefore badly needed, and not just for young people.

But when the segregated branch opened in March of 1913, it may have seemed underwhelming in some ways. A one-story, red-brick rectangle, the building was unremarkable in its appearance. While Edward Tilton had given the two-story, downtown library an elaborate, Italianate style with arched windows, the branch's only nod to architectural sophistication was a stepped front entrance with a pair of windows on either side.³⁸ The other difference was its size. Although the 13th Street building was designed as a branch, its users accounted for nearly two-fifths of Meridian's 1910 population. While the main library housed a cavernous reading room on its first level, and a large auditorium plus several program rooms on its upper level, the branch's only operable floor was divided between adult and children's sections with a desk in the middle. Its raised basement may have offered additional space for storage and perhaps even a meeting room, but this is unclear.³⁹

libraries could potentially take up the slack. This may help to explain African Americans' interest in free public libraries and the collections that could be used to supplement school libraries or to serve in their place where school libraries did not exist" (52).

38 As he explains to James Bertram in his letter of June 1910, Tilton modeled Meridian's main library after Hornell, New York's Carnegie library, which Tilton had designed in 1908. Edward Lippincott Tilton, who is also remembered for the Ellis Island buildings of 1900-01, was one of the most prolific and influential library architects of the period. In his early years, he apprenticed with McKim, Mead, and White, the architects of the Boston Public Library of 1894. Tilton's libraries often mimicked the Boston library's shape and style, the best example being the Carpenter Memorial Library in New Hampshire, which opened in 1914. Tilton also designed Vicksburg, Mississippi's Carnegie library of 1916. Interestingly, though it appears Tilton was the only architect Meridian hired to design its libraries, nothing in the CCNY records directly links the 13th Street branch's design to him.

39 The model building plans that Bertram regularly sent architects show that raised basements were mandatory in nearly all Carnegie libraries of

30 Edward Tilton to James Bertram, letter, 27 June 1910, CCNY records. Tilton claimed that to finish the library as designed would cost \$29,900.

31 When the Bureau's report finally arrived in June of 1911, it supported what Bertram had suspected all along. While Meridian had indeed grown since 1900, per 1910 figures it contained only 23,285 people, 9,321 of which were African American. See: Bureau of the Census (Washington, DC) to James Bertram, letter, 15 June 1911, CCNY records.

32 James Bertram to Isaac Marks, letter, 12 January 1911, CCNY records.

33 Isaac Marks to James Bertram, letter, 18 January 1911, CCNY records.

34 James Bertram to J.W. Parker, letter, 18 March 1911, CCNY records.

35 J.W. Parker to James Bertram, 15 March 1911,

CCNY records. Parker then asked for \$35,000 for the main library and \$10,000 for the segregated branch. Bertram's response (if he responded at all) does not survive in the CCNY records.

36 "Mrs. J.S. Hamm is Librarian," *Meridian Dispatch* (Meridian, Mississippi), 13 December 1912. Even in his letter to Bertram the following June, in which he praises the success of the main library, Isaac Marks does not mention the 13th Street library. His only subsequent reference to the branch occurs in a letter from late 1912, in which he refers to the branch simply as "Library #2."

37 See: Lana Lumumba and Ann Branton, "Historical Survey of Library Services for Blacks in Mississippi: 1866 to 1954," *Mississippi Libraries*, 66, no. 2 (2002): 37-38. The earliest school libraries for blacks in Mississippi date to the late nineteenth century. However, since they were established primarily to supplement classroom learning, they were often small and poorly maintained. As Cheryl Knott remarks in *Not Free, Not for All*: "As schools failed to serve the needs of African Americans, public

Either way, these differences were obvious for decades afterward. Even in 1958, when a teenager named Jerome Wilson sneaked into the whites-only library one summer afternoon, the differences were clear to him: “It was *much* larger than our library,” Wilson remembers. “It had the usual stacks, but it was twice, maybe even three times as large.”⁴⁰ Just as striking was the branch’s conspicuous lack of a sign. While the main library’s builders had engraved “PUBLIC LIBRARY” in marble overtop the building’s front entrance, no such sign identified the segregated branch as a public or cultural building of any kind. For all appearances, the branch could have housed the neighborhood waterworks.⁴¹

The 13th Street library’s users were nevertheless grateful for their new branch. Its plainness made it a kind of blank canvas, ready for transformation into a community institution. In some ways, the prospect of a segregated library made the building valuable even before its construction. While the conditions of the Carnegie grant guaranteed the branch annual support from the city, its governance was left almost entirely to the newly formed Colored Library Advisory Board, which consisted of some of Meridian’s “leading members of

the colored race.”⁴² These were: Dr. J. Beverly Shaw and Dr. Triplett, both college professors; physician Dr. E.E. Howard; Jeff Wilson; John Harris; and Frank Berry and Henry Strayhorn, co-owners of the local black funeral home.⁴³ The board’s nucleus had actually formed two years earlier, in 1911, when the city made Shaw, Howard, and Strayhorn the library’s Cooperation Committee to serve as liaisons between the city and the black community.⁴⁴ When the branch was completed in 1913, the other leaders joined, and newly formed board chose Dr. Shaw as its chairman. Shaw, a graduate of Rust College in Holly Springs, had moved to Meridian in 1906 to serve as President of the Haven Institute.⁴⁵ Shaw’s wife, Lizzie, was the Institute’s librarian. Haven Institute was affiliated with one of Meridian’s oldest black churches, St. Paul’s Methodist, which stood on the corner of 13th Street and 26th Avenue. Both institutions operated through the African Methodist Episcopal Churches; and the Haven Institute, whose campus occupied land on 13th Street between 27th and 28th avenues, had donated the site for the branch.⁴⁶

Indeed, the branch’s location was one of its assets. Several black churches were within walking distance, as were many black schools. The offices of several community organizations and groups, including

the Masonic Temple, were also nearby. Even the 13th Street library’s first librarian, Mary Rayford Collins, lived across the street at the Haven Institute. Collins, whom the Colored Library Board selected as its first librarian in 1913, remained at the branch until 1916, when the board replaced her with Helen Strayhorn.⁴⁷ Although Collins’s tenure was brief, it was the beginning of what appears to have been a long career in education. Decades later, Atlanta University would open the Mary Rayford Collins Library and in 1983 establish a scholarship in her name.⁴⁸

THE 13TH STREET LIBRARY REMEMBERED

Archival traces of the 13th Street library’s operations are scarce. It remained a segregated branch governed by a separate board until July of 1964, when Meridian integrated its public libraries just a month after the Freedom Summer murders in nearby Neshoba County.⁴⁹ But even after its desegregation (which was peaceful, according to at least one librarian’s account), the 13th Street branch continued to serve Meridian’s northwest community.⁵⁰ Meridian no longer referred to it as “the colored library” but simply as “the branch.” The city nevertheless closed it in September 1974, claiming that changes in building code

this period. These basements usually contained storage rooms and at least one lecture room. (For reproductions of these model plans, see the Bobinski, van Slyck, or Jones books listed in note number 4.) However, since no original building plans for the 13th Street library could be located, it is unclear whether the 13th Street branch’s basement included these spaces. Former library users interviewed for this project could not recall visiting the basement.

40 Interview with Jerome Wilson, November 2016.

41 Other cities, among them Louisville, Kentucky and Houston, Texas, opened segregated Carnegie branches in noticeably elegant buildings.

42 “Mrs. J.S. Hamm is Librarian,” *Meridian Dispatch* (Meridian, Mississippi), 13 December 1912.

43 Ibid.

44 Broach, “Advisory Board” (appendix).

45 “Central Alabama Institute, Birmingham, Alabama. President J.B.F. Shaw, PhD,” *The Christian Educator* 27, no. 3 (1916): 6. Also see Meridian’s city directories for this period.

46 Broach, 6. See also: Beth L. Savage, *African American Historic Places: National Register of Historic Places* (New York: Preservation Press), 308.

47 City directories show that the Collinses (Mary and her husband Malachi) departed Meridian by 1917. Some sources (see next note) also indicate that they moved to Hattiesburg, Mississippi, where Mary’s husband managed a funeral home.

48 The finding aids for the Collins Family Papers (1889-1988), created by the Amistad Research Center in New Orleans, contain much biographical information about Mary Augusta Rayford Collins, Malachi C. Collins, and Emma Claire Collins Harvey.

49 Broach, 45.

50 Ibid, 44.



Mary Rayford Collins, the 13th Street library's first librarian. Collins Family papers, 1889-1988, Amistad Research Center, New Orleans, LA. Reproduced with permission.

requirements made it unsuitable for public use. All the branch library's collections, as well as its last librarian, Gracie Clayton, were transferred to the Meridian-Lauderdale Public Library building, which had opened downtown in 1967.⁵¹

The 13th Street branch survives in the memories of several of its former users, however. Their recollections show that by the 1950s and 60s the library had grown into a valued and well-used community institution. "My parents couldn't afford encyclopedias or lots of books," says Jerome Wilson, recalling the role the branch played in his early life. Many of the branch's users had no comparable access to collections like the branch's. "So, I spent a lot of time reading. And often, I stayed there until the library closed."⁵² Maxine Turner, who also grew up in Meridian, began using the branch as

a young girl. "I would go to the library and spend a few hours there, a few days a week," she recalls. The library was a popular spot for Meridian's black youth: "Everybody knew it was there," Turner says.⁵³

For Wilson and Turner, memories of Meridian during that period are vivid. "It was staunch segregation," Wilson recalls. "There were signs with 'colored' and 'white' and, of course, you had to ride in the back of the bus."⁵⁴ Segregation was taken for granted and often unquestioned, at least by many of Meridian's younger blacks: "It was automatic," Turner says.⁵⁵ "For the most part, the black community lived separately," adds Wilson. "We had all the things contained in the black community that we needed."⁵⁶

Both Wilson and Turner recall the African American community's central business district, concentrated along the southwest part of 5th Street. Black-owned businesses included E.F. Young's Hotel, the Star Theatre, a shoe and a watch repair, and at least two florists. There were also black-operated barbershops, pharmacies, restaurants like Bill's Café, and funeral homes. But while social injustice surrounded them - "You weren't respected, really, as a full human being," reflects Wilson⁵⁷ - neither Wilson nor Turner remembers Meridian as an entirely "bad" place for black children in later days of Jim Crow. "It was a segregated city, but we were exposed to quite a bit of culture," explains Turner, who attended music recitals at the nearby Wechsler Junior

High School.⁵⁸ Leontyne Price and Philippa Schulyer also performed in Meridian: events that "would be rather unheard of in a number of other smaller places in Mississippi," says Wilson. "If I look at the state of Mississippi and my growing up," he adds, "Meridian was rather progressive with respect to how the black community dealt with segregation."⁵⁹ Turner agrees: "I feel very fortunate to have been raised in Meridian," she says. "We were exposed to a great deal as black children that others were not in other cities in Mississippi."⁶⁰

The 13th Street library occupied a special place within this social and informational landscape. In some ways, many of its users remember the library as no different than any "real" (white) public library: "I remember when we went to the library, we had to be really quiet, like you do in all libraries," recalls Rellie Mae Williams, who visited the branch as a child.⁶¹ But while the branch was much smaller than the white library downtown, it was nevertheless always "full of books, from top to bottom" says Turner, who also remembers the librarian's many displays and reading centers. "There were books on tables, where Mrs. Mathis had displays set up. She always had different little sections for special things, holidays or events."⁶² The branch was open six days a week, late on weeknights. "It closed at 8pm," Wilson recalls, "and I was there when Mrs. Mathis

51 "Meridian Public Library's Two Major Facilities to Merge October 1," *The Meridian Star* (Meridian, Mississippi), 25 August 1974.

52 Wilson interview.

53 Interview with Maxine Turner, January 2017.

54 Wilson interview.

55 Turner interview.

56 Wilson interview.

57 Ibid.

58 Turner interview.

59 Wilson interview.

60 Turner interview.

61 Cheryl Owens, "Study stirs memories of segregated library in Meridian," *The Meridian Star* (Meridian, Mississippi), 4 March 2017.

62 Turner interview.

locked up.”⁶³

Most of the branch’s younger users visited for school-related research or to explore their personal interests. “I read at that library for many summers,” recalls Cassandra Lewis Sloan, who, with her brother, regularly walked the full eight blocks to the library and back. “We came from a family that required us to read, so we utilized the library card.”⁶⁴ The branch’s collections and programs were designed primarily for children and teenagers, not just to supplement school curricula but also to offer resources those schools’ libraries did not: “The public library had more,” claims Turner—whose mother, a local English teacher, supplied her daughter with summer reading lists.⁶⁵ The branch maintained strong ties with local black schools as well as vacation bible schools run by neighborhood churches. Even the youngest visitors learned how to navigate the library independently, since its librarian at the time, Mrs. Katherine Mathis, regularly taught the Dewey Decimal System to users. “At first, I didn’t know how to use a catalog,” recalls Rellie Mae Williams, “but soon I learned how to use the library for research and enjoyment.”⁶⁶

Many younger members of Meridian’s African American community remember Katherine Mathis, the branch’s librarian in the 1950s and 60s. “She was very giving of her time,” says Jerome Wilson.⁶⁷ “Mrs. Mathis always had something interesting for us to read, or something for us to do,” Turner adds. “She

always made everything interesting.”⁶⁸ When the branch began children’s story hours in the mid-1950s, the new program attracted many young attendees.⁶⁹ “[Mrs. Mathis] would read stories to us and then ask us questions about it, and how we could relate to it,” Turner remembers. “She had a very special talent at drawing you in. You were just fascinated with her reading a story to you.”⁷⁰ Sometimes Mathis’s assistant, Ruby Yarbrough, would conduct the story hour. But this did not make it any less memorable for the young Cassandra Lewis Sloan: “Story time at the library was one of my favorite things,” she says.⁷¹

The branch’s collections were clearly an important part of its allure. Maxine Turner, who as a girl studied dance, recalls pursuing some of her early interests at the library. “I knew it was a place where I could go and read about travel and explore music books,” she says.⁷² Jerome Wilson recalls pursuing his early interests in mathematics and history: “I was curious about the slaves and how that all came about,” he says. “And of course, at 9 years-old, I didn’t fully understand. It was Ms. Mathis who helped expand and give me a better understanding. In fact, I learned more about African American history in that library.”⁷³

The last years of Jim Crow were among the era’s most dangerous, and the social tensions that floated through Meridian often reminded Wilson of the place the 13th Street branch occupied in his life. He recalls

one afternoon in 1955, not long after the murder of Emmett Till, walking through a white neighborhood on his way home. Stopping at the curb, Wilson noticed “there were *National Geographic* and *Life* magazines on the trash, and I stopped to pick some of them up.” But when a white woman emerged from the house, Wilson promptly dropped them.⁷⁴ Another time, when the teenaged Wilson needed a book available only at the main library, he boldly slipped into the building through a side door. He was spotted, of course, and promptly reported to the librarian on duty. “She grabbed me by the arm and took me into her office,” he remembers. “She admonished me that I was not to come back, and that if I needed anything I was supposed to go to Katherine. And of course, she addressed Ms. Mathis as ‘Katherine,’ not as ‘Ms. Mathis.’”⁷⁵

More than an educational support center, the 13th Street branch was also a meeting place for its users. Meridian’s black youth had many places to go for fun: churches often organized special programming; some of the neighborhood’s housing projects had recreational centers; and St. Paul’s church, which by the 1950s had relocated to the Haven Institute’s former site on 13th Street, maintained a well-used basketball court. But even when it seemed the branch’s users were doing nothing more than reading, they were still among their peers, and often

74 As Wilson explained in his interview, this woman was not angry and encouraged him to take the magazines. In fact, she also offered him a job doing yardwork. But Wilson’s mother, concerned with growing racial tensions from the Emmett Till case of 1955, advised against it.

75 Wilson interview. Wilson claims his motivations were practical, not political: “I didn’t go in with any real sense that ‘I’m going to integrate the library’.... I figured that library contained what I needed, so I went there and got it.”

63 Wilson interview.

64 Owens, “Study stirs.”

65 Turner interview.

66 Owens, “Study stirs.”

67 Wilson interview.

68 Turner interview.

69 Broach, 42.

70 Turner interview.

71 Owens, “Study stirs.”

72 Turner interview.

73 Wilson interview.

visited the library with friends or with siblings. “It was a well-used library,” Maxine Turner remembers.⁷⁶ Wilson agrees: “There were young people, my age and younger,” he recalls, adding that older teenagers and adults were also among the library’s clientele. Both Wilson and Turner were involved with youth organizations, including the Boy and Girl Scouts of America (which, under Jim Crow laws, were also segregated). “You recognized people from different communities,” says Wilson, who recalls bumping into some acquaintances from his Boy Scout troop and others from church, school, and playing basketball.⁷⁷

CONCLUSION

Although available information about the 13th Street library is scarce, what does survive suggests that the branch, while a last-minute addition to Meridian’s Carnegie grant, was an important place nevertheless for the city’s African Americans. For while the surviving correspondence between the city and Carnegie’s offices suggests that Meridian’s civic leaders accepted Bertram’s two-library proposal simply to obtain a larger grant for the white library, the 13th Street branch, though smaller, was left to the supervision of a separate, “colored” board, something which helped make the branch an early symbol of civic autonomy for Meridian’s African Americans.

Moreover, while it appears the 13th Street library’s collections and programs were intended primarily for educational support, the library’s existence as a place for quiet reading and reflection made it a



Children arrive for the 13th Street library’s first story hour, February 1956. Reproduced with permission from the Meridian-Lauderdale County Public Library.

valuable community space at a time when few other such places would have existed for Meridian’s African Americans. Recalling his childhood visits to Louisville, Kentucky’s segregated Carnegie library, the Western Colored Branch, Houston A. Baker suggests that reading at the library as a public act helped nurture a broader sense of community and shared identity among its users. “Since I was in public, the seemingly infinite variety of my reading was complemented by an endless variety of library occupants, who were young and old, able-bodied and physically challenged,” he reflects. “Naturally, all of the library’s patrons were black, or, as we then called ourselves: colored.” This made a difference in his life, and not just when he was young: “What was so clearly in-ferrable at [the library] were not only general, democratic vistas of American reading,” Baker continues, “but also specifically African American

diasporic valuations of literacy, the library, the habits of public reading as a certain path—in the designation of the great black orator and writer Frederick Douglass—from *slavery to freedom*.⁷⁸ Baker, now a professor at Vanderbilt, is a decorated writer and one of the country’s preeminent scholars of African American studies.

Meridian’s 13th Street library undoubtedly had similar effects on some of its users. At least for Maxine Turner and Jerome Wilson, both of whom would leave Meridian for college, the branch provided them with early opportunities to explore interests that later blossomed into successful careers away from home. Turner, whose primary interests as a child were music and dance, later attended Tougaloo College and Jackson State University,

⁷⁶ Turner interview.

⁷⁷ Wilson interview.

⁷⁸ Houston A. Baker, *I Don’t Hate the South: Reflections on Faulkner, Family, and the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 25-6. Italics in original.

eventually earning her master's in music education.⁷⁹ Jerome Wilson would earn a PhD in the sciences and, more recently, become a published historian.⁸⁰ After leaving for college, Wilson would occasionally visit Meridian during the summers. He remembers returning to the 13th Street library at least once, not to borrow books but instead to see Mrs. Mathis and, as he puts it, "express to her the values that she helped me develop at the library."⁸¹

Although the former 13th Street branch was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, it was razed in 2008. Only a piece of its front walkway remains. Two years earlier, the Lauderdale County Human Relations Commission had announced a plan to convert the empty building into a center for arts education.⁸² The project ended, however, when the former branch, which had not been used as a public building since 1974, was determined structurally unfit for preservation. Its demolition was a disappointment to many hopeful civic officials and to the locals who remember using it as a library. Though not all historic libraries can be saved, it is nevertheless crucial that researchers, archivists, and librarians preserve the documentary heritage these libraries have left, and if possible record the recollections of their former users.



The 13th Street library's former site. Photograph by author.

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79 Turner interview.

80 Wilson interview. See also: Ethel E. Young and Jerome Wilson, *African American Children and Missionary Nuns and Priests in Mississippi: Achievement Against Jim Crow Odds* (Bloomington, Indiana: Author House, 2010).

81 Wilson interview.

82 Owens, "Study stirs". See also: "Architectural Design Competition," *Clarion-Ledger* (Jackson, Mississippi), 7 December 2005.

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Searching for Answers

Using Student Searches to Determine Engagement

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ABSTRACT

Over the past several years, library instructors at a large research university have built a comprehensive first year instruction initiative. The initiative provides instruction to ten different first year courses which include hundreds of library sessions and thousands of students. With such a large number of students involved, library instructors have assessed the courses in multiple ways. For this paper, instructors focused on student engagement during guided library sessions and factors that affected engagement such as search phrase, day of session, and time of session.

INTRODUCTION

For a number of years, librarians have used one-shot library instruction sessions to assist in student learning. Library instruction can be challenging due to timing, subject matter, and the need to assess each session, even more so when first-year students are the intended audience. One-shot library instruction for first-year students requires preparation, attention to detail, and time management like any other session; however, the added challenge with freshman instruction is that students are unfamiliar with academic libraries. According to Dennis and Dees (2015) navigating the physical space of the library, faculty involvement, and student motivation to engage in library research all contribute to the difficulties of first-year one-shot instruction. Although students are used to finding information online, the academic research process is unfamiliar and requires additional skills, including critical thinking. Online information is infinite and it is often hard for students to determine the difference between reliable information and unreliable information. Walker and

Pierce (2014) stress that making students familiar with library resources in narrow time frames of 50-75 minute one-shot sessions is not ideal. One solution to the one-shot problem is embedded librarianship; however it has not yet become the norm in most academic institutions, thus librarians must teach students in a limited time frame. (Walker & Pierce).

In 2005, library instructors at the University of Mississippi began building a comprehensive first-year instruction initiative. The first-year initiative has grown to provide instruction to ten different first-year courses which include hundreds of library sessions and thousands of students. With such a large number of students involved, library instructors have worked to assess these courses in multiple ways. Library sessions for the First-year Experience (EDHE 105) courses are designed to introduce first-year students to both the library's physical and virtual space. The learning outcomes for these sessions are finding an article, using the library's discovery service, and locating a book on the library shelf using the library's

catalog. Locating a book on the shelf, in particular, is typically seen as a daunting task to many first-year students as most have never visited an academic library and are unfamiliar with the Library of Congress Classification system. This paper focuses on how the authors analyzed student search behavior from the EDHE 105 courses to measure first-year student engagement during guided library instruction sessions. Engagement for this study is defined as students following along with the library instructor and performing the search as it was defined on their session handout.

LITERATURE REVIEW

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN LIBRARY INSTRUCTION

Many librarians question the efficacy of one-shot library instruction sessions, particularly those not associated with a specific student research need. The question of how engaged can students actually be in a single 60- or 75-minute one-shot is of importance due to the high number of one-shot sessions. This question has led librarians to research different factors or teaching methods that can impact student participation, including the incorporation of problem-based learning (Kennedy, 2008), flipping the classroom (Rodriguez, 2016), and the use of clickers (Walker and Pearce, 2014). Walker and Pearce used a learner-centered approach for library instruction which did not result in a statistically significant difference compared to a traditional approach. However, they did raise an interesting concern related to student engagement in one-shots "It seems reasonable that either engagement

cannot occur, or that it cannot produce a lasting effect, over such a short span of time" (p. 287). Klipfel (2014) suggests that increasing student engagement with assigned coursework during the library instruction session can have a positive impact on how much students learn during the session.

Recognizing the potential limitation surrounding student engagement with library instruction, it may be just as important to understand the impact of more fundamental factors such as the number of students or time and day of instruction. By and large, library researchers have not investigated the impact of time of day/or time on student participation; Avery and Tracy (2012) noted this gap in their study on the topic. They also speculated that the gap in the literature in library and education scholarship may be due to the fact that teachers are often unable to control the day and time of instruction. Despite that, they maintain it is important to build broader understanding of what variables affect student engagement in order to develop methods for limiting their effect.

TRANSACTION LOG ANALYSIS

Transaction log analysis, the "study of electronically recorded interactions between online information retrieval systems and the persons who search for the information found in those systems" is not a new concept (Peters, Kurth, Flaherty, Sandore, & Kaske, 1993). Within the last few years, librarians have begun using this method of analysis to specifically study user search behavior with discovery services in the context of information literacy classroom sessions. One advantage of using transaction log

analysis is the ability to study student behavior unobtrusively while gathering useful data (Covey, 2002). This was important for the current study as librarians were able to analyze data from 147 classes without any impediment to the students or instructors.

Researchers commonly use transaction log analysis to examine the frequency of searches, use of interface features, such as facets, and the quality of user searches (Lown, Sierra, and Boyer (2012). Dempsey and Valenti (2016) reviewed transaction logs in order to evaluate student's use of filters and effective keywords. Avery and Tracy's study (2014) is unique in that it used transaction logs to evaluate student engagement in library instruction similarly to this study. In addition to other findings, Avery and Tracy found that engagement was lower in post-morning classes and slightly lower in Tuesday/Thursday classes which are longer than Monday/Wednesday/Friday classes.

METHODOLOGY

A team of ten library instructors comprised of librarians, library staff, and a library graduate assistant taught 147 first-year experience library instruction classes during the 2016-2017 fall semester. Three unique search phrases were used in conjunction with three different time slots: *college intramural sports* for 8am-10am, *college tailgating* for 11am-1pm, and *college textbook cost* for 2pm-6pm. As part of each session, students were provided a worksheet to complete. The worksheets were color-coded based on the time slots so that instructors would know which sheet should

be distributed throughout the day. Summon, the discovery service used by the University of Mississippi Libraries, provided search logs through an administrative interface. The logs were downloaded into an Excel workbook and analyzed to determine if factors such as time, day of the week, or search phrase influenced student engagement.

Frequent misspellings presented an issue when analyzing the data. Initially, all searches were counted, however, this resulted in some days of the week and times equaling over 100%. For the final data analysis the authors calculated student engagement by comparing the student enrollment of each section to the number of correct searches.

FINDINGS

The 8am-10am search phrase, *college intramural sports*, had the highest student engagement, that is, it had the highest average percentage at 74.3% and median percentage at 78.49% of students actively searching the search phrase. Although the 11am-1pm time period had the largest number of overall students (see Table 1), students in these sections had the second highest engagement with an average of 69.86% and of median 77.94%. The 2pm-6pm time slot had the lowest percent of student engagement with an average of 55.34% participation and a median of 63.74% as seen in Table 2.

Sessions on Tuesdays resulted in the highest average, 73.66%, while sessions on Wednesdays resulted in the highest median, 77.24%. All other days had lower percentages of engagement (see Table 3), with Fridays having the lowest engagement.

DAY	8AM-10AM	11AM-1PM	2PM-6PM
MONDAY	254	276	227
TUESDAY	283	321	335
WEDNESDAY	199	200	265
THURSDAY	180	220	205
FRIDAY	220	296	24
TOTAL	1127	1313	1056

Table 1. Number of students by day and time

	8AM-10AM	11AM-1PM	2PM-6PM
AVERAGE	74.39%	69.86%	55.34%
MEDIAN	78.49%	77.94%	63.74%

Table 2. Student engagement by class start time

DAY	AVERAGE	MEDIAN
MONDAY	58.91%	68.00%
TUESDAY	73.66%	75.57%
WEDNESDAY	72.59%	77.24%
THURSDAY	71.59%	75.00%
FRIDAY	50.31%	66.62%

Table 3. Student engagement by day

DISCUSSION

Few studies in library literature have included time and day as variables when studying student engagement. A higher rate of student engagement during the morning sessions supports Avery and Tracy's (2014) findings. The earliest time slots had higher engagement in both this study and Avery and Tracy's study. This study divided class time slots into three periods, whereas Avery and Tracy divided their time slots into two, making the findings from the two studies unsuitable for

direct comparison.

In their study, Avery and Tracy combined all data for Monday, Wednesday, and Friday classes. Likewise, they combined the data for Tuesday and Thursday classes. After combining the present study's data in a similar manner by weighting the averages based on number of student participants, the two studies did not align as to student engagement by day of the week. Avery and Tracy found that 50-minute Monday/Wednesday/Friday classes had higher student engagement (defined

in their study as nonparticipation rate), whereas this study found that Tuesday/Thursday classes had higher engagement. Not enough data exists to properly draw a conclusion. One possible explanation for the two studies not conforming are the low rates of student engagement found in this study on Mondays and Fridays relative to other days of the week. A second possible explanation is that Avery and Tracy included 170-minute evening classes along with traditional 75- to 80-minute classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

An influencing factor could also have been that students often misspelled search phrases even though the phrases were on their worksheet. Other researchers have noted that first-year students frequently misspell search terms when conducting non-guided searches (e.g., Holman, 2011). The 8am-10am phrase, *college intramural sports*, had the highest number of misspelled searches. Students also commonly mistyped the 2pm-6pm phrase, *college textbook cost*, as *college text book cost*. In the future, library instructors will attempt to choose more easily spelled phrases.

A limitation of this study was that the study did not record which member of the library instruction team taught each session. The instructor was an uncaptured variable

that could have influenced student engagement more than the day or time of the instruction session. While each instructor taught from the same script, it is expected that their respective personalities would affect how often they conducted demonstration searches.

CONCLUSION

The authors agree with Avery and Tracy (2014) that if factors such as time and/or day of the week impact student engagement, librarians should be cognizant of how they approach instruction during times of decreased attention. More research is needed to understand just how much those two variables impact student participation. Based on this study's findings, the authors recommend that future researchers include three time slots when studying time as a factor instead of limiting the evaluation to a morning/post-morning dichotomy.

Future research should also include librarians as a variable to better understand if day and/or time are the actual factors influencing student engagement. If factors such as day, time, and librarian do indeed influence student engagement, then future research needs to account for those variables when collecting data associated with instruction and engagement. For example, when

studying the impact of changes in library instruction delivery, researchers may want to limit mitigating factors by controlling for those variables by including only classes taught on the same day, at the same time, and by same librarian.

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tellyourstory

**MLA Annual Conference
October 17–20, 2017
Lake Terrace Convention Center
Hattiesburg, MS**

Keynote Speaker John Chrastka

John Chrastka is executive director of [EveryLibrary](#), the first nationwide political action committee for libraries. Since 2013, EveryLibrary has helped 62 library communities with ballot measures for funding, operations, and buildings, winning 46 and securing over \$220 million in funding on Election Days. A long-time library trustee, supporter and advocate, Mr. Chrastka is a former president of the Board of Trustees for the Berwyn (IL) Public Library (2006 –2015) and is a former president of the Reaching Across Illinois Libraries System (RAILS), a multi-type library system. Prior to his work on EveryLibrary, he was a partner in AssociaDirect, a Chicago-based consultancy focused on supporting associations in membership recruitment, conference, and governance activities, and was Director for Membership Development at the American Library Association (ALA). He is a current member of ALA, the Illinois Library Association (ILA), and the American Political Sciences Association (APSA). He was named a 2014 Mover & Shaker by Library Journal for his work with EveryLibrary. He tweets at @mrchrastka.



2017 SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2017

- 1 - 4 p.m. **Early Registration** - Entrance, Lake Terrace Convention Center
- 1:30 - 4 p.m. **Featured Speaker: Dr. Becky Smith - The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Community Education Project** - Garden Room
- 4 - 5 p.m. **MLA Executive Board Meeting** - Executive Conference Room
- 6 - 8:30 p.m. **An Evening in the Archives** - McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2017

7:30 - 9 a.m.

Morning Coffee
Call! - Central
Pre-function
Area

8:30 - 9:30 a.m.

Southern Miss SLIS Alumni Breakfast - Garden Room
Good Morning, How Are You? - *Forrest I*
The Power of Story - *Forrest II*
Sharing Faculty Collaboration Success Stories - *Lamar I*
Tabletop Gaming: Building and Sharing Stories with the Popular Trend - *Lamar II*

9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Free Online Tools to Make Telling Your Story Easy and Effective - *Forrest II*
The Cooks, the Recipes, the Librarian and the Historian: Preserving Local History Through Cookbooks - *Lamar II*
Talking Book Services for Kids and Young Adults - *Lamar I*
New Members Round Table - *Forrest I*

10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Featured Speakers: Technical Services Round Table - Tell Your Community's Story Through Your Collection - *Lamar I*
Poster Session Lightning Round I - *Forrest II*
Accentuate the Positive: A Method for Valuing Library Marketing Efforts - *Forrest I*
Beehive Resource Sharing Update - *Lamar II*
Finding Your Story to Write Your Story: Amateur Genealogy Research and Collection Access Through Digitization - Garden Room

9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Featured Speaker:
Lauren Coats - The Digital Turn in/and the Library - *Hattiesburg Hall C*
MCJCLDD Group Meeting - Executive Conference Room

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Networking Lunch: Enjoy lunch on your own, or pick up pre-ordered boxed lunches in the Exhibit Hall. - *Hattiesburg Hall A*

12:30 - 2 p.m.

Keynote Speaker: John Chrastka - MLA Business Meeting and Opening General Session - *Hattiesburg Hall C*

2 - 3 p.m.

Outreach Matters! Connecting the Library with Students and Faculty Through Fun Activities - *Lamar II*
A New Kind of Academic Freedom - *Forrest I*
Librarianship 101 Reunion: Advocate! - Garden Room
Using a Consultant to Bid Out E-Rate Services: One Year Later - *Lamar I*
Long-Range Planning Committee Meeting - Executive Conference Room

3 - 4 p.m.

Featured Speaker: Shelby Parsons - Stories from Behind Bars and How Friends Can Help! - *Lamar I*
Friends of Library Book Sales: Ideas You Can Use - *Forrest I*
Mississippi SirsiDynix User Group Meeting - *Forrest II*

4 - 5 p.m.

Southern Miss School of Library and Information Science Focus Group - *Forrest I*
Librarians Matter! - *Forrest II*
UNDISCLOSED: Secrets of a Sommelier - *Red Lion Inn and Suites*
Poem Your Story - *Lamar II*

6 - 9 p.m.

President's Reception and Scholarship Bash - *Ogletree Alumni House, The University of Southern Mississippi*

2:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Afternoon Snack Break - *Hattiesburg Hall A*

3 - 5 p.m.

Librarian as Candidate/Library as Cause - Garden Room

11:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Posters on Display - *Hattiesburg Hall A*

11:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. - Exhibit Hall Grand Opening
Exhibits and Silent Auction - *Hattiesburg Hall A*

8 a.m. - 4 p.m. — Registration

2017 SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2017

8 a.m. - 4 p.m. — Registration

7:30 - 9 a.m.

Morning Coffee Call!
Central Pre-function
Area

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.

Rise and Shine Yoga with Southern Miss SLIS - *Terrace*

8:30 - 9:30 a.m.

Aquila Rising: Stories of Impact from an Institutional Repository - *Forrest II*
Friends of the Festival Forum - *Lamar II*
Same Story, Different Format: Programming for Children with Autism Spectrum - *Lamar I*
Enhancing and Promoting the Love of Reading in School - *Forrest I*

9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Past Presidents Brunch - *Black Sheep's Cafe*
MAGNOLIA Steering Committee Meeting - *Executive Conference Room*
K-6 Library Skills - *Forrest II*
Reading for Pleasure in the School Setting - *Lamar I*
Remembering and Writing in Black and White - *Lamar II*
Storytelling Panel - *Garden Room*

10:30 a.m. - Noon

Featured Speaker: Julie Stivers - Promoting School Libraries in the Community
Hattiesburg Hall C

10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Poster Session Lightning Round II - *Forrest II*
University Directors Council Meeting - *Executive Conference Room*
Best Practices for Using Government Information in ALL Libraries - *Lamar II*
Using Stories and Statistics to Advocate for Support - *Lamar I*
Allen Eugene Cox and the Citizen's Council: A Collection in Defiance - *Forrest I*

11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Networking Lunch: Enjoy lunch on your own, or pick up pre-ordered boxed lunches in the Exhibit Hall. - *Hattiesburg Hall A*

Noon - 2 p.m.

Featured Speaker: Corabel Shofner - Young People's Services Round Table Luncheon - *Lakeview*
Featured Speakers: Black Caucus Round Table - Lunch with Retirees: The Value of Libraries and Librarians
Hattiesburg Hall B

1 - 2 p.m.

Everything You Need to Know About Being a School Librarian (But Were Afraid to Ask) - *Forrest I*
Bringing It All Together: Using Technology to Engage Your User Community - *Lamar II*
Everyone Loves Free Stuff! Open Educational Resources for K-12 - *Lamar I*
Useful and Usable: Usability Testing for Library Website Redesign - *Forrest II*

2 - 3 p.m.

Keynote Speaker: John Chrastka - Closing General Session - *Hattiesburg Hall C*

3 - 4 p.m.

Mother Goose Theater - *Forrest I*
Academic Writing Groups: Can Peer Pressure Help You Tell Your Story? - *Forrest II*
Mining Your Memories to Retell the Stories They Told - *Lamar I*
MAGNOLIA Information Session - *Lamar II*

4 - 5 p.m.

Digital Bookplates: Old Technology and New Applications - *Forrest I*
Why Digital Preservation Matters? Digital Preservation Readiness: Access and Sustainability - *Forrest II*
Mississippi Children's Choice Award: The Magnolia Award - *Lamar I*
Virtual Librarianship: Engaging Your User Community with Creative Technology - *Lamar II*

5 - 6 p.m.

Pre-Dinner Reception - *Central Prefunction Area and Terrace*

6 - 8 p.m.

Mississippi Authors' Awards Dinner - *Lakeview*

11:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Posters on Display - *Hattiesburg Hall A*

9 a.m. - 3 p.m. - Exhibits and Silent Auction - *Hattiesburg Hall A*

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2017

9 - 11 a.m.

MLA Awards Breakfast - *Lakeview*

Mississippi Authors Awards

Greg Iles: Winner for Fiction – *Natchez Burning*

Greg Iles was born in Germany in 1960, where his father ran the US Embassy Medical Clinic during the height of the Cold War. Iles spent his youth in Natchez, Mississippi, and graduated from the University of Mississippi in 1983. While attending Ole Miss, Greg lived in the cabin where William Faulkner and his brothers listened to countless stories told by Mammy Callie, their beloved nanny, who had been born a slave. Iles wrote his first novel in 1993, a thriller about Nazi war criminal Rudolf Hess, *Spandau Phoenix*, which became the first of thirteen New York Times bestsellers. Iles's novels have been made into films, translated into more than twenty languages, and published in more than thirty-five countries worldwide. His new epic trilogy continues the story of Penn Cage, protagonist of *The Quiet Game*, *Turning Angel*, and New York Times #1 bestseller, *The Devil's Punchbowl*. Iles is a member of the legendary lit-rock group The Rock Bottom Remainders. Like bandmate Stephen King, Greg returned to the musical stage after recovering from his injuries, and joined the band for their final two shows in Los Angeles in 2012. A nonfiction memoir by the band, titled *Hard Listening*, will be published this summer. Iles lives in Natchez, Mississippi. He has two children, at least one of whom aspires to both literary and film endeavors.



Richard Grant: Winner for Non-Fiction - *Dispatches from Pluto: Lost and Found in the Mississippi Delta*

Richard Grant is an author, journalist and television host. He grew up in London, England, and now lives in Jackson, Mississippi. He writes for *Smithsonian Magazine*, *New York Times*, *Garden and Gun*, and many other publications. His last book, *Dispatches From Pluto: Lost and Found in the Mississippi Delta* was a New York Times bestseller, and a number one bestseller in Mississippi.

Matthew Clark Smith: Winner for Juvenile - *Small Wonders: Jean Henri Fabre and his World of Insects*

Matthew Clark Smith grew up in Jackson, Mississippi and received an MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts. He is the author of two childrens biographies, *Small Wonders: Jean-Henri Fabre and His World of Insects* and *Lighter than Air: Sophie Blanchard, the First Woman Pilot*, and lives in Jackson with his family.



Featured Speakers

Pre-Conference Speaker: Dr. Becky Smith

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) wants to help make libraries the go-to source for unbiased financial education and resources in every community. This pre-conference session will demonstrate CFPB's easy-to-understand, behaviorally informed financial education resources available to libraries; provide program ideas, resources, and tools, and help libraries connect with local partners.

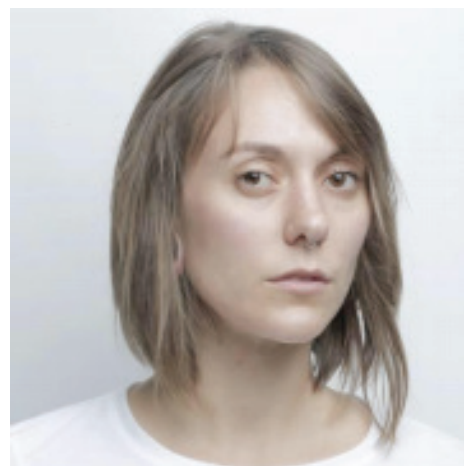
Dr. Becky Smith is an Assistant Extension Professor in the department of Agricultural Economics at Mississippi State University and the director of the MSU Extension Center for Economic Education and Financial Literacy. Becky is an economist who works in the area of helping individuals, families, firms, and communities to build assets through economic education and financial coaching.



Friends of Mississippi Libraries, Inc.: Shelby Parsons

The Friends of Mississippi Libraries Inc. will be joined by Big House books to discuss their mission of getting books into the hands of incarcerated Mississippians. Big House Books is a non-profit organization based in Jackson, MS. Attendees will learn how their local Friends of the Library group can support incarcerated Mississippians and ways to support Big House Books. This program is also hosting a book drive of new/gently used paperback books for Big House Books. These books will be sent to Mississippi prisoners.

Shelby Parsons is a volunteer and founding board member of Big House Books, a nonprofit organization that sends books to prisoners in Mississippi correctional facilities in order to promote literacy and be a vehicle of change for prison reform. Big House Books doesn't judge a book by its cover. We believe in literacy for all—even for those in our correctional facilities. That's why we've set out to provide books to Mississippians in prisons and juvenile detention centers. Every person has the right to educate themselves, and it's our goal to make that a reality. For more information about Big House Books, visit us on Facebook or at <https://bighousebooksms.org>.



Black Caucus Roundtable: Panel Discussion

The MLA-Black Caucus Roundtable session will consist of a luncheon panel discussion entitled: *Lunch with retirees: the value of libraries and librarians*. Each panelist will have 15 minutes to speak and question and answer will be afterwards.

Panelists:

Ms. Mary Harris, former Reference Librarian Alcorn State University, 30+ Years

Mrs. Eva L. Smith, former Catalog Librarian Alcorn State University, 30+ Years

Mrs. Jessie B. Arnold, former Dean of Libraries Alcorn State University, 40+ Years

School Library Section: Julie Stivers

Julie Stivers, an award-winning school librarian from Raleigh, NC, will present on promoting school libraries within the school community. A brief School Library Section meeting will be held after Mrs. Stivers' presentation.

Julie Stivers is the librarian at Mount Vernon Middle School, an alternative public school in Raleigh, North Carolina and recipient of AASL's 2017 Frances Henne Award. She has presented on diverse youth literature at YALSA's Young Adult Services Symposium and the National Conference of African American Libraries and Librarianship. Her work has been published in journals such as *School Libraries Worldwide*, *Knowledge Quest*, and *YALS*, and she is currently serving as the Taskforce Chair for the YALSA Presidential Theme: Youth Activism through Community Engagement. She believes in culturally relevant librarianship and pedagogy, inclusive library spaces, and finding creative ways to dismantle the traditional literary canon.

**Young People's Services Roundtable (YPSRT): Corabel Shofner**

Join the Young People's Services Round Table for a luncheon with Southern author Corabel Shofner. Shofner is the author of the debut middle grade novel *Almost Paradise*, published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, an imprint of Macmillan.

Corabel Shofner is a wife, mother, attorney, and author. She graduated magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Columbia University with a degree in English literature, and was on Law Review at Vanderbilt University School of Law. Her first novel *Almost Paradise* was published last July by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, and her shorter works have appeared or are forthcoming in *Willow Review*, *Word Riot*, *Habersham Review*, *Hawaii Review*, *Souwester*, *South Carolina Review*, *South Dakota Review*, and *Xavier Review*.

**Association of College and Research Libraries Section: Lauren Coats**

When asked if they have ever been to their institution's library, some college students will say no, having never checked out a book from the stacks or even entered the building often at the heart of campus. Yet push further and you'll find they have checked out ebooks, downloaded a journal article in a database, or looked at old yearbooks online. That is, they have been to the library, one that exists in bytes and computer screens rather than bricks and mortar. The digital turn is evident in the library--whether in physical spaces or resources or professional positions: computer labs, data services, institutional repositories, digital scholarship centers, web librarians. What are some of the possibilities, and limitations, that this digital turn opens for academic libraries? Coats will discuss the library as an engine for research and teaching in the digital age.

Lauren Coats is Director of the Digital Scholarship Lab (DSL) and Associate Professor of English at Louisiana State University. As director of the DSL, established by and housed in the LSU Libraries, she collaborates with staff, faculty, and students at LSU and beyond to support and develop



digital scholarship and pedagogy. Lauren founded and edits *Archive Journal*, an interdisciplinary, cross-professional journal on the theory and use of archives and special collections. A former Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) Postdoctoral Fellow, she continues to work with the Postdoctoral Fellowship Program as its Associate Dean. At the heart of these various positions is the library: her interest in the structure of and access to information has developed through her work in and for libraries. This interest animates her research and teaching in early American literature. Lauren is completing a book manuscript, *Archives of Discovery: Mapping North America 1728-1900*, about the creation, publication, and dissemination of discovery and exploration narratives in early America. She directs a collaborative digital humanities project on nineteenth-century newspapers, and has published work in *J19*, *PMLA*, *CLIR reports*, *Lehigh University Press Digital Scholarly Editions*, and more.

Technical Services Roundtable: Panel Discussion

Libraries are expanding their collections to more than just books. This panel discussion will tell you what and how libraries across the state are cataloging, from cake pans to iPads to tools! Come find out how you can tell the story of your community through your catalog! The program will be followed by a Technical Services Roundtable business meeting.

Panelists:

Jim Thompson is an academic librarian for the Goodman campus of Holmes Community College. He teaches technology outreach classes to the community through CTE and is Vice President of the Holmes County Chamber of Commerce. He is currently writing a book about career exploration with shadowing opportunities in early academic careers.

Terry Lajaunie began his career at The University of Southern Mississippi in the Acquisitions unit of the University Libraries. He completed his MLIS in December 2001 and went to work as Technical Services Librarian for the Lamar County Library System. Today, he is Head of Technical Services for LCLS overseeing acquisitions, cataloging, inter-library loan and systems administration.

Judy Hilkert is the Technical Services Coordinator and Acquisition Librarian at Hinds Community College in Raymond. She received a BA in Anthropology from Mississippi State University in 1995, and a Masters in Library and Information Science in 2003 from the University of Southern Mississippi. Judy also teaches math at HCC as an adjunct instructor.

Nicole Minor is a 2016 graduate of the Master of Library and Information Science program from the University of Southern Mississippi. She had the privilege to be published in USMs scholarly digital repository, Aquila, titled *Assessing the High School Graphic Novel Collections in Northeast Mississippi High Schools: A Collection Analysis*. You may visit her ePortfolio at <http://nmino0.wixsite.com/eportfolio> to read more about it. Currently, she is the Acquisitions & Cataloging Coordinator for the Columbus-Lowndes Public Library System



Special Libraries Section: Panel Discussion

Our panel discussion is entitled: *Retirement: Your Story Continues...*

Panelists:

Becky Cade, Immediate Past President - Mississippi Retired Public Employees' Association

Wynona Winfield, District Director - Mississippi Retired Public Employees' Association

Shannon Dyse, State Director - Mississippi Deferred Compensation Plan Black Caucus Roundtable



News Briefs

Anne Hudson

*Arts and Letters Librarian
University of Southern Mississippi*

ROTARY DISTRICT 6840 AND ROTARY CLUB OF OCEAN SPRINGS HELP LIBRARY WORKERS WITH FLOOD RECOVERY

On June 23, Rotary District 6840 Assistant Governor and Head of the Gunter Library at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, Joyce M. Shaw, presented \$400 Home Depot gift cards to ten employees of the Livingston Parish Libraries who were affected by the August 2016 flooding in the Baton Rouge area. The workers are in the process of repairing their flood impacted homes. This recovery project directly helps 21 people. The August flooding in and around Baton Rouge is considered the worst natural disaster to impact the United States in 2016. This is the second disaster recovery effort



Photograph by Jennifer Seneca

involving the Livingston Parish Library led by Shaw and the Rotary. In April, the library was presented with a check for \$2,000 to assist with flood recovery needs.

*Submitted by
Joyce M. Shaw
Head Librarian & Professor
Gunter Library, Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, University of Southern Mississippi*

SAVE THE DATES OF AUGUST 1ST THROUGH 3RD FOR THE 2018 SCIENCE BOOT CAMP!

The 2018 Science Boot Camp for

Librarians Southeast will be held in beautiful Ocean Springs, Mississippi at the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast Research Laboratory. The registration fee will include meals and housing on-site. A conference rate has been secured on rooms at the nearby Gulf Hills Hotel for those who prefer to stay off campus. For more information follow <https://www.facebook.com/2018BootcampSoutheast/>

*Submitted by
Joyce M. Shaw
Head Librarian & Professor
Gunter Library, Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, University of Southern Mississippi*

FIRST OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE TEXTBOOK DEPOSITED INTO AQUILA

The University of Southern Mississippi Libraries are excited to share the first Open Educational Resource textbook deposited into

our Institutional Repository, Aquila. [“An Introduction to Police Operations and Methods: The Connection to Law and History”](#), is the result of Dr. R. Alan Thompson’s successful application to participate in the University of Southern Mississippi’s Open Textbook Initiative, supported by the Office of the Provost and the University Libraries. Dr. Thompson, an Associate Professor for the School of Criminal Justice, worked extensively this summer to



draft a new textbook for use in his classes. Dr. Thompson met and corresponded frequently with his co-author, Anne Hudson, librarian for the College of Arts and Letters in order to incorporate USM library and other authoritative resources into his text related to the complex and evolving role of law enforcement.

Anne will represent the pair at the upcoming Mississippi Library Association conference in Hattiesburg on October 18th where she will discuss their successful faculty-librarian collaboration.

*Submitted by
Anne Hudson
Assistant Professor, and Librarian for the
College of Arts and Letters
University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg Campus*

People in the News

Anne Hudson

*Arts and Letters Librarian
University of Southern Mississippi*



It is with great sadness that we inform you of the death of **Dr. Bernice Ray**, a lifetime member of MLA. Dr. Ray was born April 22, 1946, in Acton

TN, and died June 6, 2017 at Sanctuary Hospice in Tupelo, MS. She attended Jackson State University in Jackson, MS and in 1968 she graduated Cum Laude with B. A. Degree, majoring in English and Library

Science. Dr. Ray earned a Master’s Degree, MA in Library Science from Rutgers University. Later at the same university, she received her Doctoral degree of Philosophy in Communication, Information and University Librarians. Dr. Ray’s chosen career was as a librarian and English instructor. For many years she was employed by several universities on the East Coast, before returning to her home state of Mississippi in 1999. She became a librarian in the Bolivar County School District until she retired in 2015.

Ernest Lowery started at the University of Mississippi Libraries

in July as a library specialist with responsibility for supervising JD Williams Library during evening hours. Originally from Yazoo City, MS, Ernest received his BBA from Mississippi College and has extensive experience performing research of legal and medical publications.

—◆—
Zack Robinson is the new Program Coordinator at the University of Mississippi Libraries. Originally from Asheville, North Carolina, Zack is a 2017 graduate of East Carolina University, where he majored in Interpersonal and Organizational Communications.



To join MLA, or to renew your membership:

<http://misslib.org/membership>

2017 MLA Executive Board Minutes:

<http://misslib.org/Meeting-Minutes-2017>

Book Reviews

Michele Frasier-Robinson

*Librarian for
Education & Psychology
University of Southern Mississippi*

**Cash, Jean W., and Keith Perry,
eds.**

Rough South, Rural South: Region and Class in Recent Southern Literature.

Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2016. 250 pp. \$65.00 (hardcover)

Rough South, Rural South: Region and Class in Recent Southern Literature delves into class, poverty, and stereotypes in southern literature. Twenty-two essays provide glimpses into the lives of these southern authors and the often-complicated context of their work. The essays serve as a useful introduction to each of these selected twentieth and twenty-first century writers. The volume presents an analysis of southern writers connected through the "Rough South" from the 1980s through the present day.

The influence of southern literary giants on these writers is felt throughout the essays, but their own experiences shaped this new southern literature. Writers discussed in this volume had varied backgrounds with some from a rural and lower class upbringing, and a few were the first generation to attend college in their families. Others came from middle-class backgrounds. The themes of violence, alcoholism, religion, sex, class, race, poverty, and manual labor weave through their works. In particular, there is

a concentration on the lower class. The view is often either from a character's first-person perspective or seen from a middle or upper class lens.

Citations provided at the end of each essay serve as a launch to further reading about the authors studied. A thorough index is included. Brief contributor biographies are included in the "Notes on Contributors" section. This book is highly recommended for academic libraries. It is also recommended for any library with a contemporary southern literature collection, as it would serve as a useful companion to the collection.

*Jamie Bounds Wilson
College Librarian
Millsaps College*



**Downing, Johnette (adapted from
traditional song); illustrations by
Katherine Zecca.**

Down in Mississippi.

Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 2016. 24 pp. \$16.99 (Hardcover)

Good picture books featuring the state of Mississippi are hard to find, so this creation by professional singer and songwriter, Johnette Downing, is a welcome addition to our elementary school libraries. Katharine Zecca's gentle watercolor depictions of well-known Mississippi flora and fauna are accurately executed but also reflect the whimsy of open-mouthed baby mockingbirds, non-conformist wood

duck children, and a humorously ugly mother catfish. The artist's use of negative space in several of the spreads is a subtle visual treat for readers.

Downing places the aforementioned creatures (as well as dolphins, white-tailed deer, black bass, red foxes, and honeybees) in the "Over in the Meadow" traditional song structure. Along the way, the settings reflect Mississippi's rich and varied landscape, including "the surf and the sun," "the Delta blue," magnolia trees, the lakeshore, and pine forests. The "fast facts" section at the end of the book provides basic information about Mississippi's plants and animals, citing the state insect, the state flower, the state bird, the state water mammal, and the state land mammals. Downing also includes musical notation for help with the melody.

One strong feature of the text is Downing's strategic use of creative vocabulary. Her creatures splash, prance, flutter, snap, thrive, and leap, in habitats such as wetlands, glens, and a "swampland haven." Chorus-like lines repeat the verbs in ways that help young listeners remember what may be new vocabulary: "'Prance,' said the mother. 'We prance,' said the two, and they pranced all day in the Delta blue."

Reading this rhyming text aloud may present some difficulties, at least the first time. Perhaps because it is an adaptation, the scansion is unfamiliar, and the book's typography--the words as prose in paragraph form rather than indented in verse form--contributes to this

difficulty. For example, “Down in Mississippi in the coreopsis lived a mother swallowtail and her swallowtails six” would have tripped off the tongue better as:

Down in Mississippi in the
co-re-op-SIS

Lived a mother swallowtail and
her swallowtails six.

As a read-aloud, the text requires some rehearsing. However, that rehearsing will be worth the effort. *Down in Mississippi* has everything an elementary school librarian would want: the state’s natural history, counting practice, a sing-able text, a sprightly vocabulary, and thoughtful illustrations. The author’s website includes a [book activity packet](#) with matching games, a verb tense quiz, and animal math taken from the book’s text.

Debbie Allen
Librarian
Sudduth Elementary School



Nicholas, Denise.

Freshwater Road: A Novel.

Evanston, ILL: Agate Publishing,
2016. 333 pp. \$15 (Paperback)

The focus of this novel is Freedom Summer in Mississippi. The heroine, Celeste, is a college student at the University of Michigan who decides to spend the summer helping to register African-Americans to vote in Mississippi. She is greeted at the Mississippi train station by her first “Whites Only” signs. Another major character is Celeste’s father, Shuck, who runs a bar in Detroit, and we follow his sorrow and frustration during Celeste’s trip.

Even after civil rights workers,

Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner disappear, Celeste continues to provide voter registration invitations in Jackson. The book details the harassment of her and her colleagues by local police officers: Celeste is detained for littering while a male friend is assaulted for participating in Freedom Summer activities.

While in Mississippi, Celeste resides in Pineyville at the home of Mrs. Owens, who has no running water and an outhouse for a bathroom. Celeste begins working with a local pastor to encourage attendance at voter registration classes. In addition, she encourages the children to attend the freedom school. This results in a violent retaliation from the local Ku Klux Klan.

Celeste takes several local African-Americans to the clerk’s office to register to vote but they are removed at gun point. Despite being arrested, assaulted, and witnessing the burning of their beloved church, they are determined to register. They are eventually allowed to take the test to register and some of them pass. Celeste’s supporters throw a party to celebrate the registrations and to say goodbye to her as the summer is ending. Celeste is tempted to stay in Mississippi, but Mrs. Owens convinces her that her father needs her and that the town needs to stand on its own, so Celeste returns home to be reunited with her father.

I enjoyed this book. It seems historically accurate but at the same time is told as a story that develops easily. My only concern in recommending it to libraries other than academic libraries, is that some of the language and situations in the book may be offensive to certain readers.

Anne Hudson
Assistant Professor and Librarian for the
College of Arts and Letters
University of Southern Mississippi



Spillers, Charlie.

Confessions on an Undercover Agent: Adventures, Close Calls, and the Toll of a Double Life.

Jackson, MS: University Press of
Mississippi, 2016. 244 pp. \$35.00
(Hardcover)

Well-written and fast-paced, the story opens with an especially intense prologue detailing a dangerous “buy-and-arrest” with a very twitchy, drug-addled drug dealer that puts the author’s life in danger. Why would anyone want to be an undercover agent? After reading Spillers’ excellent account, one can only conclude that individuals drawn to a career as an undercover agent are of a different breed than the rest of us: risk-takers who have, as Spillers admits, “an attraction to excitement and danger.”

Spillers opines that his early life helped prepare him for his future profession. While frequent moves forced him to develop coping skills to combat being “the new student, the outsider, the stranger” in each new school, the Marine Corps and a tour in Vietnam instilled self-discipline, self-confidence, leadership skills, and dedication to one’s mission. Following a year at the telephone company, the lure of excitement led to law enforcement, working for the Baton Rouge Police Department where his undercover life began and later at the Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics (MBN).

As the title promises, Spillers “confesses” his – and some of his

fellow agents' – adventures and close calls while working undercover. He details the difficulties of maintaining a credible cover, including working as a cab driver in Gulfport, while hanging out with violent, often paranoid criminals and the resulting bad situations he often found himself in. In addition to working solo, he tells of the pizza parlor that MBN agents ran as a front for sting operations. He also talks candidly about the toll of working undercover on him and his family, from the long hours, the stress associated with danger, and bringing his work home (talking to criminals on his home phone), to putting his family at risk, hiding his true profession from neighbors and friends, and having to be careful that he was not being "tailed" when driving home.

Spillers tells his exciting story with style, grace, wit, introspection, and compassion. While the book details the often ruthless criminals and the crimes that Spillers encountered, he neither panders to his readers, nor glamorizes the criminal life. The author generously includes photos from his undercover years and sting operations. The book will appeal to a wide audience, especially those who like true crime stories, and is appropriate for both mature young adults and adults. *Confessions of an Undercover Agent* is recommended for all public libraries.

Tamara D. Blackwell
Reference Services Librarian
Bolívar County Library System