The “Happy Relation” Between Black and White Communities in Durham: The Establishment and Development of Public Library Systems, 1890-1930

As excitement over the establishment of a public library system swept the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, many associated free access to a wealth of knowledge to a movement towards a more democratic, progressive society. However, in the Southern region of the United States, regarding the establishment of the public library as progressive would be paradoxical; at the beginning of the twentieth century in the Southern states, nearly every “public” library served only a portion of the population. Most public libraries refused to lend books to African Americans, and in many cases blacks were even forbidden from entering the building. Discrimination and segregation in the public library movement represents only one of many instances of racial injustice in the post-Civil War era, but a close examination of the development of public libraries—both African American and white—leads to a more nuanced understanding of community life within and across racial boundaries. By exploring the public library history of Durham in particular, the similarities and differences in community organizing between African Americans and Whites come into focus. Perhaps most importantly, the history of the public library movement in Durham and across the Southern states provides insight into the challenges the African American community faced and gives testament to their resourcefulness and perseverance in the face of crippling racism and segregation.
Shortly after the United States declared independence from Britain, Americans began to consider establishing libraries in their new homeland. In the early nineteenth century, while citizens started some state libraries and subscription libraries, which required financial contributions from the patrons. However, the public library did not truly enter the public awareness until the last years for the nineteenth century. Conditions during this era, specifically an improving economy, an increase in urbanization, and the rise in industrialization together created an optimal environment for the establishment of a public library system. The exact progression of events in the creation of a public library depended, of course, on the precise culture and demographics of the city, but in most cases the local organizations took it upon themselves to bring these libraries into being with little or no support of the government. In her thesis *The Development of the Public Library Service in the Southeastern States*, Mary Anders notes, “Aside from women’s clubs, the organizations most active in support of library development in the region were related to educational and agricultural interests. The names of associations representing business and industry appeared only infrequently among those working with library organizations. This lack of representation of business interests may be indicative of the predominance of an agricultural economy in the region” (Anders 68). Ironically, as Anders mentions soon after, after the libraries’ establishment, businessmen and lawyers often stepped in to take positions of leadership on the board of directors. (Anders 68) Because specific organizations and prominent members of the community supported and oversaw the establishment of the library and directed its policies, the
public library's approach towards African Americans differed from one city to another.

Nevertheless, specific regions of the United States demonstrated overarching trends in segregation and integration. David Battles notes in his *The History of Public Library Access for African Americans in the South or Leaving Behind the Plow*, that while integration of the public library gained momentum in the North as early as the late 1800s, white Southerners remained unprepared to open integrated public libraries. Whites could barely provide adequate schooling facilities for members of their own racial community, and consequently were far from offering education resources to general public. Furthermore, only about twenty percent of Southern African Americans indicated that they were literate on the 1870 census. Therefore, Battles explains, “White Southerners seized on these two facts, lack of education and lack of funding, to inform their philosophy for creating public libraries for African Americans. After all, why should African Americans need the services of a library if they could not read? Conveniently ignoring the fact that they were responsible for the illiteracy of southern African Americans, southern whites rationalized that it was only logical to build libraries for those who would be able to make use of the, that is, whites” (Battles 20). Southern libraries engaged in public library segregation so consistently that when the American Library Association sent out a public library service in 1921, only two cities in the South—Hagerstown, Maryland and Wheeling, West Virginia—indicated that they offered unrestricted library access to African Americans in their community. (Battles 54) These statistics suggest that public libraries in the Southern United States at the turn of twentieth
century were far from the emblems of democracy they represent for many today. Instead of providing equal resources and access to information for all residents, Southern libraries furthered trends towards racial injustice already deeply ingrained in the region by refusing to allow African Americans access to knowledge that could equip and empower them.

Even decades after the end of the Civil War and the passing of the 13th Amendment in 1865, the effects of slavery still continued to ripple across the social fabric of America, rendering aspects of culture as seemingly positive and edifying as the public library yet another indication of the ills of racism. Racism manifested itself in everything from public library membership to resources for establishing and maintaining public libraries. Among other examples, businessman Andrew Carnegie’s grants to public libraries represent a philanthropic gesture that ironically disregarded fundamental notions of human equality. Carnegie provided grants to libraries across the nation, but did not specify that allowing African Americans access to the newly constructed libraries would be a prerequisite for obtaining funds. Instead, “during the early years of the program, Carnegie funding was rarely used to build African American public libraries, partly because Carnegie believed that the decision to allow African American patronage of libraries should be a local matter” (Battles 25). Carnegie’s grants, among other programs, demonstrate a general lack of concern for racial equity in access to public resources, an attitude that carried over into other public spheres, from education to transportation. In spite of the lack of specifications, by 1910 Carnegie funds had been used to build a total of fifteen libraries for African Americans in the South,” (Battles 31) showing that
African Americans occasionally benefited from philanthropic support in developing libraries despite the glaring inequalities of the social system. Nevertheless, Carnegie’s decision to allow local entities to determine for themselves whether African Americans could become patrons represents one of many instances in which the public libraries supporters perpetuated racism and segregation in the South simply by refusing to prohibit the exclusion of African Americans.

State governments also played a substantial role in dictating African American access to public libraries. Above the Mason-Dixon line, library legislation took on a generally inclusive approach, but in the South, policy often only led to exclusion. In Northern states, not only did nearly every library declare its services available to all citizens regardless of skin color, but also some institutions even hired African Americans as librarians (Battles 29). In the South, however, the white response to African American participation in the public library movement often took on much more hostility. In 1901, the North Carolina Legislature passed a bill reading, “The State Librarian is directed to fit up and maintain a separate place for the use of the colored people who may come to the library for the purpose of reading books or periodicals” (Battles 30, General Statutes, North Carolina, 1901: 125-10). While some Southern libraries interpreted this bill to mean that they should establish a reading room for African Americans within their established library, other cities took the bill as a mandate to create separate libraries for blacks, perpetuating segregation in Southern libraries for decades to come.

Although Durham has held few slaves, if any, as it was only a small town before and during the Civil War, the city presented no exceptions to the prevailing
racism of the South in its development of a public library. Harland-Jacobs notes in her history of the Durham Public Library “like all other libraries and community institutions in the South at this time, the Durham Public Library was open only to whites. “Public” meant the white public” (Harland-Jacobs 11). So, while the white community of Durham began to develop its library system with the substantial support of the community’s wealthy businessmen and tobacconists, the city left African Americans to organize among themselves and pool their own resources to create a library. Some evidence of interaction between Durham County Library and the newly developed Durham Colored Library during the early part of the twentieth-century exists: Griggs mentions the success of the Colored Library in the library’s annual report of 1917, commending the library’s success in securing a full-time librarian and a monthly appropriation, writing, “Good work is being done here. The teachers and children are deriving great benefit from it” (Harland-Jacobs 14). Despite this indication of some communication between the libraries, the extent of interactions between the two institutions and the nature of the white community’s support of the Colored Library remains ambiguous, and likely fairly limited.

While one cannot describe the development of Durham County Library as without obstacles, the generous public support for the endeavor certainly reflects the discrepancy in resources between the white and African American communities. Like many of the nation’s earliest public libraries, the notion of establishing a county library for Durham first took root through the discussion and enthusiasm of small organizations. In 1895, Durham’s Canterbury Club held a debate focusing on avenues by which the clubs members might contribute more meaningfully to their
city. Professor Edward Mimms of Trinity University’s English Department offered up the idea of a public library, a cause also championed by club member Lalla Ruth Carr, the daughter of tobacco manufacturer J.S. Carr. Together, Lalla Carr, Mrs. A.G. Carr, and Dr. Mimms presented the idea to other local civic clubs and the fundraising process began. Citizens stepped forward to support the creation of a public library with enthusiasm. According to The Durham County Library and Its Community, prepared by the staff of the Durham Public Library, at the first fundraising to build the library “$4,318 was subscribed in modest donation. A Ladies Auxiliary headed by a twelve member Board of Lady Managers, organized a house-to-house canvass to raise an additional $1,573.75” (County Library 106). The city’s ability to secure funds surprised even its citizens: In a letter to his mother, George Pegram writes, “I see that Durham is about to get a public library. It took Raleigh three months to get $2,000, while it seems that Durham gave three times that much in one night” (Anderson 202). Soon after the fundraisers, the library opened in 1898, occupying the area between Main Street and Chapel Hill Street called “Five Points”. Many of Durham’s prominent white citizens, like J.S. Carr and James B. Duke, made this rapid construction possible with substantial contributions of money and land.
Furthermore, several of the wives of these prominent citizens stepped into positions of authority in planning library development. These “lady managers” performed a number of tasks. They selected the books, also planned fundraising entertainments, sponsored functions featuring chicken salad and beaten biscuits, and encouraged citizen generosity. Early librarians appear to have served mainly as caretakers” (County Library 106). Other women played a vital role in the development of the public library as well, particular Lillian B. Griggs, the city’s first professional librarian.

Lillian B. Griggs’ path to librarianship began with tragedy; just after the turn of the century, her husband died of a hemorrhage, leaving Griggs a widow with a small child and no means of income. At the encouragement of her friends, Griggs entered library school, hoping that her training would provide enough income for herself and her son upon graduation. (Griggs Memoirs 44-45) However, after becoming the Durham County Library’s first trained librarian in 1911, Griggs accomplished far more than just making ends meet; she poured herself into the development of the library and her enthusiasm rallied support from the community. Shortly after she took up her post as Head Librarian, Griggs convinced the City Board of Alderman to increase the appropriation for the operating expenses of the library from $50 dollars per month to $1,500 annually. Recognizing the new librarian’s knowledge and dedication, the Board even agreed to give Griggs “carte blanche” to organize and direct the library as she saw fit. In her memoirs, Griggs recalls, “Finally, after a good deal of discussion and fencing, Mr. T.F. Fuller made the motion that “the library be turned over to Mrs. Griggs and that all we ask for is
results.” To my very genuine relief the motion carried and I was free to go ahead” (Griggs 48-49). During her time at the Durham County Library, Griggs collaborated with the Board of Trustees, who controlled major decisions in budgeting and programming for the library, and the Lady Managers of the Library, who collected membership dues and put on theatrical performances to raise money. Recognizing the importance of consistent financial support in the development of the library, Griggs continued to seek out funding throughout her time as librarian.

In 1914, Griggs felt that the library should expand its services to the county, and she succeeded in convincing the Board of Trustees to delegate $400 annually to this extension. In her memoirs, Lillian Griggs recounts the process, shedding light on the delicate process of requesting funding from the Board:

“I had wanted to ask for $600, but the Board felt the $400 was all we could expect to get. I've always regretted that I did not ask for the larger amount; I feel sure it would have been given to us, for during my part of the presentation for the request the tears began to roll down my cheeks and I believe the audience was affected enough to have given us the $600. Just was Durham had had the first free public library in the state, so it also had the first contract for library service to the rural area.” (Griggs Memoirs 51-52)

In spite of the risky nature of the proposal process, Griggs did not hesitate to voice her opinion in front of the Board when she deemed it necessary. In 1916, Griggs met with the Board of Trustees again to encourage them to pursue the grants offered by the Carnegie Corporation for library expansion. Interestingly, Griggs met with substantial opposition from the head of the Board, J.S. Carr, who threatened to resign his position as chairman if the Board decided to apply for “Northern Charity” (Anderson 320). Nevertheless, Griggs eventually succeeding in gaining enough support from the Board of Trustees and from the Carnegie Corporation, and
construction soon began. As the library prepared to move its holding to the new building, Griggs sought out a new temporary location for the collection; In 1919, Durham County Library signed an agreement to rent the Malbourne Hotel’s Lochmoor Dining Room for seventy dollars per month in order to secure temporary housing location for the library’s materials. Then, in June of 1921, the new Carnegie Library on Main Street was completed and Griggs oversaw the movement of all materials once again, this time from the Malbourne Hotel to the new location.

Interestingly, General Carr, who had so adamantly opposed the application for a Carnegie Grant, was absent from opening celebration so the board’s vice president Fuller addressed the jovial crowd instead. In the aftermath of the library’s move, announced her resignation as Durham County Library librarian, leaving to be secretary and then director of the North Carolina State Library Commission in 1923. Griggs left the library in the capable hands of Clara Crawford, graduate of Carnegie Library School in Atlanta. Over the next three decades, until her retirement in 1959, Crawford would navigate the library system through the challenges of the Great Depression and the repercussions of World War II.
As Durham County Library took root and began to evolve, Durham’s African American community looked to develop their own library system as well. From the beginning, the Colored Library lacked the resources and support available to County Library. While the County Library pooled funds and land from wealthy white citizens and thrived under the watchful eye of Durham’s elite women, the Colored Library took quite another path to existence. Recognizing the need for a lending library for the African American youth of Durham. Dr. A. M. Moore, the city’s first black physician and owner of a thriving medical practice, set up a small book collection in the basement of White Rock Baptist Church in 1908. After the donations from various community members, the collection held 798 volumes. Unfortunately, as McCants Andrews notes in his biography of John Merrick, a prominent black Durhamite in the early 20th century, “because of the usual denominational rivalries [the collection] remained more the White Rock Sunday School Library than a public institution.” (McCants Andrews 60) Recognizing the White Rock Basement as insufficient to
support the library needs of Durham’s African American population, Moore sought out opportunities for expansion of the provisional library.

The fundraising process for the Colored Library took on a strikingly different tone from that of Durham County Library. While the library came into being primarily through the efforts of Durham’s African American entrepreneurs and churchgoers, white Durhamites also contributes small sums to the development of the library. To initiate the expansion, Moore contacted his network of black businessmen for support. Moore eventually partnered with John Merrick, owner of several barbershops in Durham. Merrick’s biographer explains, “Mr. Merrick had just erected a building to rent as a place of business on a triangular point almost opposite his home of Fayetteville Street. Dr. Moore proposed to rent this building from him for the library, to which Mr. Merrick gladly agreed.” (McCants Andrews 60) McCants Andrews goes on to mention that from among Durham’s white community, Mr. George W. Watts contributed $100 to the support of the library, and Lillian Griggs, Durham County’s Head Librarian, assisted in setting up the library, but records do not document the extent of her contributions. The Colored Library would continue to receive small personal
contributions from both whites and blacks towards its maintenance over the coming decades.

While funding for the Colored Library poured in from a number of sources in the following years, the library still received significantly less government support than the County Library. In fact, in 1916, funds for the library were so limited in 1916 that a group of Durham’s African American school children toured the community with “begging cards”. They succeeded in raising $30 through their efforts, but the library continued to struggle financially. In 1916, Moore wrote in a letter to an audience including Hattie B. Wooten, the Colored Library’s librarian, “The maintenance of this institution is presenting a serious problem to those most interested in its welfare.” (Harland-Jacobs, 14) Happily, as Harland-Jacobs notes, the library experienced some financial relief in 1917, as funds came through from citizens, churches, and James B. Duke. With this influx of funds, Moore was able to purchase the library’s lot from Merrick—who made a substantial contribution himself. McCants Andrews documents these finances: “In June, 1917, the city of Durham began to give a monthly contribution of thirty dollars which it raised in June, 1918, to fifty dollars and which it still continues. The County of Durham began in June, 1918, to supplement this amount by twenty dollars monthly, which it still continues. White Rock Baptist Church has given five dollars monthly since the summer of 1919. Public and private donations of both colored and white friends have kept the institution going” (McCants Andrews 61-62). In Merrick’s biography, McCants Andrews writes of race relations in Durham using the most favorable terms; in fact, he attributes much of the success of the Colored Library to the
contributions of whites. Nevertheless, throughout its existence, Durham’s Colored Library received much less financial support than its white counterpart. Despite this lack of resources, under the leaders of Stanford L. Warren, African American physician and businessman, the Colored Library survived the Depression and even underwent an expansion in 1940.

In his biography of John Merrick, McCants Andrews writes, “The relations between the races in North Carolina have always been cordial and friendly; that is a part of the tradition of the Old North State. This happy relation has been emphasized in previous chapters to show how it has actually contributed to the advancement of the colored people and to the making of John Merrick” (McCants Andrews 129). Because McCants Andrews was an African-American man, one would imagine that his perception of any racism or tense race relations in Durham would be sensitive to differing treatment between the races and nuanced in opinion. However, it is important to remember that the African American experience in the post-Civil War South was far from homogenous. As a graduate of Howard University and Harvard Law School and a practicing attorney in Durham, McCants Andrews likely experienced less racial tension than many of the working-class black Durhamites of the period. (Tomberlin) In chronicling Merrick’s life, Andrews uses the history of the library system in Durham as an example of positive race relations: “The library is at present mainly supported thru the gifts of the white citizens of Durham. All these are evidences of friendliness and many others could be cited” (Andrews 131). Despite Andrew’s optimism about race relations, historical facts tell a more complex story of racial tensions and inequities.
Although both white and black libraries in Durham struggled financially during the Depression, their financial struggles differed drastically. Initially, when the city began appropriating funds to the libraries, they allocated $30 for the Colored Library and $200 for the white library per month. Then, in 1929, the *North Carolina Library Bulletin* notes that Durham’s white library had operating budget of $15,321 while the Colored Library received only $1690 from city and county. Even if relations were generally cordial between libraries, white librarian Clara Crawford refused to let the Colored Library borrow books when they could not procure materials independently. (Harland-Jacobs 23) Such lack of financial support from the city and collaboration with the County Library suggest that in the decades following its establishment Durham’s African American community did not always experience the “happy relation” McCants Andrews describes in his book.

By the time that Durham County Library opened in North Carolina, most libraries in the Northern States were fully integrated. Recognizing this discrepancy, many black Southerners at the turn of the century questioned the lack of equal access to public libraries. Decades later, library segregation continued to spark outrage and advocacy across the nation. In *What Black Librarians Are Saying*, a collection of twenty-seven essays published in 1972, James R. Wright writes, “The public library can and must serve blacks as well as other minorities. It can change and become as vital in serving disadvantaged blacks as it is in serving middle class whites and blacks. It can only do this, however, if we seriously want it to, if we have an honest desire to make libraries relevant to all Americans. We will need to overhaul the entire public library structure and redesign to meet present-day
needs” (Wright 224). In the 1960s, both Durham County Library and the Stanford L. Warren library continued to struggle financially. An outside analyst, Emerson Greenaway, the executive director of the public library system in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, expressed the gravity of the financial situation and pronounced in his report “Library Service in Durham--A Look to the Future” in 1963, “Nothing is adequate about the present arrangement in spite of every effort on the part of the staff and the Board to make do with what they have.” Looking for ways to improve the library’s condition, Greenaway proposed that the two library systems merge and that the Stanford L. Warren library—the replacement for the Durham Colored Library constructed in — become a branch of the main library. Greenaway also recommended hiring a new library director to spearhead the project. In 1964, the city and county hired experienced library director George Linder to guide the merging of the two libraries. Unfortunately, despite the city’s demonstrated willingness to follow Greenaway’s recommendations, Linder experience substantial setbacks in executing the merger and constructing the new library, most notably in the increasing unionization of library workers, controversy over a lack of African-American libraries in the Durham County Library system, a
hesitation on the part of Durham residents to increase property taxes to pay for the library, and multiple failed bond elections to fund construction. (Harland-Jacobs 37)

Nevertheless, Durham's new integrated public library finally materialized in March of 1980, marking the beginning of a new era of racial equity in Durham's library history.
Google Earth Map

This Google Earth Map tracks the development of the public library system in Durham from its establishment in the 1890s until the creation of the integrated public library on Roxboro Road in the 1980s. By chronicling the library's history, one can more fully grasp of the nature of black-white relations in Durham over the last century. Although Durham was only a small town before the Civil War—and held slaves, if any—the discrepancy of funding and resources between the White and African American communities in the city attests to the significant repercussions of slavery in the Southern States. Durham’s library history also introduces some of the city’s most active community members, from tobacco tycoons Washington Duke and J.S. Carr to black entrepreneurs John Merrick and A.T. Moore. The details of fundraising, building construction, and deliberations of the Boards of Trustees also captures Durham’s strong record of community organizing. Perhaps most importantly, the history of the public library shows Durham’s movement toward racial equity and reconciliation, both through support between the black and white public libraries during their period of coexistence to the founding of the integrated Roxboro Road library in 1980.

Among the maps included on this Google Earth Representation is a map of Library Patrons in Durham in 1930. I found this map in a scrapbook in the North Carolina Collection at Durham County Library. In this scrapbook, a large binder filled with laminated documents, held a compilation of newspaper articles, photographs, letters, and legal documents that trace the establishment and early years of Durham County Library's history. Interestingly, this particular map does
not designate an author and only provides the simple title “Map of Library Borrowers”, leaving the origins and precise purpose of the map ambiguous. However, the map's creator does offer a simple legend with the following components: “L” represents library building, dark markings designate “areas where many borrowers live”, crosshatches designate “areas where there is a smattering of borrowers”, and black dots represent “special groups”. Because the cartographer offers no explanation of how he or she gathered this information on the location of library borrowers, the viewer is left to draw her own conclusions about who exactly these patrons are and why they are concentrated in clusters throughout Durham rather than more evenly distributed around the library. Among the most puzzling aspects of the map is the large area with no library patrons located right across from the County Library on the other side of Main Street. Similar clusters of library patrons around the city initially appear haphazard in their locations, with concentrations appear to possess no correlation to their relative locations to the library. Interestingly, when I overlaid the map of library patronage with a 1937 Public Works map demarcating “residential and business streets—white” from those that were “residential and business streets—negro”, the patterns in library patronage shown in the scrapbook map became clearer. The Public Works map marking all black residential areas in black created a nearly flawless negative of the library patronage map, suggesting the creator of the patronage map heavily relied on demographic information about the neighborhoods around the library in drawing the map. Although the lack of information provided by the cartographer of the patronage map or the compiler of the scrapbook render it impossible to
definitely state that the patronage map only represents white residents of Durham, the comparison with the public works map suggests that this approach is a feasible explanation of the cartographer’s methodology.
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The 'British Muslim community' emerged out of the socio-political development which also brought about the rise of New Rail, bus services etc. We will look at the relation between the ideology often join together in self-help groups and female relatives behind the multiculturalist strategy (which we have introduced would try, as much as possible, to live in the same. in the previous part) and its concrete nature as a specific class neighbourhood in order to support each other. Under, by then, extremely tight immigration restrictions, system in which the community was immersed. This would.

Contemporary analyses of public health make much of its globalization and the national and international impact of this. Commentators argue that globalization creates challenges for the governance of global health, including the need to construct international regimes capable of responding to global threats to public health. These problems are not new: the globalization of public health led to the development of international health diplomacy and international regimes for public health beginning in the mid-19th century. This article analyses the first 100 years of international health diploma.