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## Ernestine Rose and the Harlem Public Library: Theory Testing Using Historical Sources

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ERNESTINE ROSE AND THE HARLEM PUBLIC LIBRARY:  
THEORY TESTING USING HISTORICAL SOURCES

By  
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A Dissertation submitted to the  
School of Information  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

2015

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This manuscript is dedicated to my family and friends who loved and supported me throughout its writing.

In particular, it is dedicated to five people I love very much who passed away during my doctoral program: William B. Skinner, Margery Skinner, Julian Huntley, Nick Rahn, and Emily Palmer. Thank you all for inspiring and believing in me; I wouldn't be here without you.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It takes a village to support any serious research undertaking, and this project is no exception. The obvious place to start in giving thanks is to my dissertation committee, who provided support, encouragement, and advice throughout the process. Each member of my committee gave incredibly helpful feedback, and was vital to the dissertation writing process. I feel incredibly fortunate to have the advisor and committee members I do.

My department has also been an important provider of many different kinds of support, from the encouragement and thoughtful questions from peers in classes and at my defense, to the support of graduate assistantships and scholarships that gave me the ability to finance my education. Florida State University is home to some of the greatest scholars I know, and through my time at the School of Information, is now home to many treasured friends as well. My colleagues elsewhere, including faculty, students, and librarians, deserve praise as well, for continued encouragement and for the valuable insights they have shared throughout the research process. I also would like to thank the various libraries I consulted during my research (the New York Public Library system, Municipal Archives, Columbia University Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst) and the Florida State University libraries, and the wonderful people who work at them, who were a pivotal part of this project's success.

Many (many!) people beyond my professional life have also supported my work. My family has been a constant source of encouragement throughout my doctoral

program, and without a lifetime of their love, support, and belief in me, there is absolutely no way I would have grown into the person who believed in herself enough to begin a doctoral program in the first place. My friends have been instrumental in this program and in my life as well, giving me places to stay while I was in New York, plus lots of love and encouragement, and pulling me away from my computer once in a while to do something fun and to remind me that there is a world outside my dissertation. I feel incredibly fortunate to be surrounded by so many talented, loving, and amazing people. Thanks is due to Written?Kitten!, the program that motivated me to write through the promise of cat pictures. Finally, thanks is due to my pets, who puzzlingly love me no matter what state of disarray my person or my home might be in.

The following people deserve a special mention here, as well as my eternal gratitude: Melissa Gross, Richard Urban, Gary Burnett, Jennifer Koslow, Wayne Wiegand, Michelle Kazmer, Christie Koontz, Don Latham, Warren Allen, Paul Marty, Kathy Burnett, Marcia Mardis, Elaine Howard, Linda Ross, Shonda Sampson, Kimberly Amos-Tata, Jade Stagg, Cathy Branton, Pam Doffek, Leila Gibradze, Abby Philips, Jonathan Hollister, Jisue Lee, Wonchan Choi, Jongwook Lee, Jihei Kang, Lenese Colson, Dave Skinner, Margaret Meints, Jan Horton, Jean Sibbald, Tim Meints, Jonathan Horton, Jameson Horton, Jeremy Horton, William Skinner, Margery Skinner, Julian Huntley, Lauren Bradley, Elisa Rojas, Annie Pho, Nicole Fonsh, J. P. Porcaro, Micah Vandegrift, Mick O'Dwyer, Emily Drabinski, Dylan Norden, Liz Shores, Elizabeth Holdsworth, Jacob Engelsman,

Anne Marsh, Michael Mahoney, Justin Haines, Katie Lapp, Joe Urban, Ellen Ireland, Lake Emmerson, Mikki Smith, Jordan Wagner, Bethany Bennitt, Lauren Shay Harris, Lauren Barreiro, Ian Mott, Lauren Everett, Jaime Hampton, Adam Hanley, Queequeg, Gir, Mouse, and Eleanor.

I am sure I have left more than a few names off this list. If I have overlooked yours, it is less a reflection of your level of support than a reflection of the state of my brain after writing this dissertation.

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation focused on the 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch of the New York Public Library, located in the Harlem neighborhood. It focused on the library under the leadership of Ernestine Rose, who was the head librarian from 1920-1942. During this time, the library became a community center with diverse and vibrant programming, and an important influence on the Harlem Renaissance. This study focuses on a longer time period than has been examined previously, and also introduces theory testing to the document analysis, which is an underused method of historical analysis in Information Studies currently. This study uses the theory of Information Worlds, which contextualizes information behaviors within the social worlds individuals inhabit, and introduces the Change in Historic Institutions model, which provides a framework for describing change events.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

Ernestine Rose (1880-1961) was librarian at Harlem Public Library from 1920-1942 (Jenkins, 1990), and helped make the library into an innovative community space (Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1990). Prior to her time in Harlem, she worked with Chinese and Jewish immigrant communities at other branches in Manhattan (Chatham Square Branch Records; Seward Park Branch Records; Sinnette, 1989). According to the secondary literature, Rose was a well-known and admired figure in the Harlem community (e.g. Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1990). When Langston Hughes arrived in Harlem in 1921, one of his first stops was the library. Reminiscing about this visit later, he remarked, “There was a warm and wonderful librarian, Miss Ernestine Rose, white, made newcomers feel welcome...” (Hughes, 1963, as quoted in Sinnette, 1989).

Rose’s prominent role in the library is clear, whether she is described as a force for positive change (Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1990), or as a part of controversy within the library system (e.g. Whitmire, 2007, 2014). However, none of these authors have looked at Rose with the depth of this project, which examined her work throughout her career in Harlem, and contextualized it within the broader New York Public Library system. This study also used the source documents as the basis to explore to application of two theories, thus answering Wiegand’s (1999) call to incorporate theoretical work more centrally into library history research.

## Significance

### Practitioners

Studying Rose's work offers several potential benefits to the discourse in library and information science, both for researchers and practitioners. First, looking at what was successful (and unsuccessful) about her work with diverse populations may help practitioners and researchers think about how to successfully engage with patrons from a variety of backgrounds. Rose's experience, and the story of the Harlem library, may speak to librarians who already have considerable experience in the field, and who are adapting their own practices and their institutions to serve changing user bases. Recent government statistics show that the foreign-born population in the United States has increased dramatically since the 1970s, and as a result many communities where new Americans are settling are experiencing rapid change as groups of people from many different backgrounds bring in their traditions and experiences (see Congressional Budget Office, 2013). Our current increases in immigration and continuously changing cities make flexible and responsive library services as important as they would have been back in Rose's day. Finally, this project may help inform the development of library practice over time.

### Researchers

There are also considerable implications for researchers. Very little historical work in library and information science engages with theory in much depth (Wiegand, 2000), instead focusing on an objective recounting of events ordered chronologically (e.g. Woodford, 1965) or thematically (e.g. Seavey, 2003). This study seeks to move beyond that approach, by recounting the events described within the source documents while also applying theory to the content of those documents. The goal of this approach is to potentially offer new insights and interpretations of the content, and to explore the

applicability of the Information Worlds and Change in Historic Institutions (CHI) theories when applied to historical contexts.

Research on modern-day libraries (OCLC, 2008) has shown that the most significant factor that impacts people's perception of the library, and their likelihood to vote for library funding, is their perception of the librarian. This has significant implications for an in-depth study of a librarian, as the perceptions and influence of her work can offer insight about what improves (or degrades) the library's status in a community.

Additionally, looking at her work through the lens of the Information Worlds and CHI theories can contextualize historical activities in potentially useful ways, and help researchers understand some of the interpersonal dynamics and myriad contexts that surrounded and influenced the work that she did. In the existing library history literature, only a few contexts are described and theory is largely absent (Williams, 1981), particularly in early studies. This makes the application of contextually-aware theory to this focus area important, in order to avoid oversimplification and to lay the groundwork for visiting other historical topics using more complex theoretical approaches. More recently, Wiegand (1999) also found a lack of firm theoretical grounding in historical literature, and urged library historians to draw on social science theory more heavily in future work, although a body of theoretically driven historical analyses is still lacking.

Finally, the secondary literature points to Rose's work as being innovative, and highlights examples of new programs she was involved with to serve her patrons more effectively (Anderson, 2003; Sinnett, 1989). Studying examples of innovation in library settings may offer inspiration for future library work. It may also help researchers describe what innovation looks like and how it is fostered in these spaces, which could benefit research and practice alike.

## **Scope**

This dissertation is focused on the Harlem Public Library under Ernestine Rose's leadership. As a historical, qualitative study, it necessarily requires some discussion of the context in which Rose and her library were situated, in order to understand how those contexts might have influenced her, the library itself, and the users who visited it. However, these contexts (such as the NYPL system as a whole, City politics, or national politics) will only be examined as they relate to the subject under study. The scope of the research materials to be examined include those held in repositories in New York City that deal with Ernestine Rose or the Harlem Public Library, as well as secondary source materials related to these topics (e.g. Anderson, 2003, Dain, 1972; Jenkins, 1990; Sinnette, 1989).

## **Harlem and the New York Public Library**

### **The Harlem Neighborhood**

The Harlem neighborhood is located in the northern part of Manhattan, and is one that has changed drastically over time. Harlem began as a separate township from New York City, and began as a small, rural community (Lydenberg, 1972). Improvements in mass transit in the mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup> century encouraged movement by middle-class New Yorkers to neighborhoods on the outskirts of the city, including Harlem (Plunz, 1990), although the community still remained somewhat small (Lydenberg, 1972). By the early 1900s, Harlem was a middle-class Jewish community. By 1920, the demographics changed considerably because of the Great Migration, with African-American children comprising ninety percent of the local elementary school population (Sinnette, 1989). Other groups began to settle in the neighborhood as well. By 1922, a Spanish-speaking community began to form in Harlem alongside the African-American community (Sinnette, 1989).

## The Great Migration

The Great Migration refers to the large-scale relocation of African-Americans from the South to cities around the northern United States between 1915 and 1970, when the South began to change (Wilkerson, 2010). About 6 million individuals migrated north during this time, looking to escape the dangerous and restricting world of the Jim Crow South (Wilkerson, 2010)<sup>1</sup>. Jim Crow laws refer to state and local laws passed in the South after Reconstruction that legally enforced racial segregation. These laws were formally in place until 1965 (Pilgrim, 2012). By 1930, roughly 165,000 African-American residents lived in Harlem, sometimes in conditions so crowded that people slept in shifts (where one person would sleep in a bed while the other was at work, then that person would take the bed when they returned home), and people continued to stream into Harlem even during the Great Depression (Wilkerson, 2010). The Great Depression is often used by scholars to demarcate the end of the Harlem Renaissance, as the number of publishers and opportunities to sell visual works decreased (e.g. Jones, 2002). While the creative movements of the neighborhood may have subsided during this time, it still appeared to be an attractive place to relocate to, according to Wilkerson's (2010) work.

Residents quickly found that the city was not any more welcoming than the South, and faced a good deal of hostility and racial discrimination. One of the ways these hostilities manifested themselves was through housing discrimination. White Harlem residents formed organizations like the Save-Harlem Committee and the Harlem Property Owners Improvement Corporation, in order to fight what they referred to as "a growing

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<sup>1</sup> Later on in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, this trend reversed as African-Americans began moving away from Northern cities and settling in the rural South. This trend began in the 1970s, surprising scholars who had envisioned the Great Migration and other large population migrations as one-way, permanent moves. For more information, see Stack (1996), who interviewed hundreds of individuals who returned to the South in order to understand the reasons behind their relocation.

menace” (Wilkerson, 2010, p 249). This kind of discriminatory behavior is not unique to the Harlem neighborhood. Hesslink (1968) points out that places not previously known for legitimizing discrimination may begin doing so during large-scale migrations to the area, particularly when visible racial differences are present that longer-term residents can point to as a mark of one’s outsider or newcomer status, as well as a mark of difference often responded to with fear and uncertainty.)

As more people moved to the neighborhood, landlords who might rent to African-Americans faced organized threats, as well as the firebombing of residences where African Americans were set to move in. Property owners drafted restrictive covenants banning non-white residents, and some local businesses segregated themselves or restricted the number of people of color who they were willing to employ (the Lafayette Theatre on 7<sup>th</sup> avenue, for example, only permitted African Americans to sit in the balcony) (Wilkerson, 2010).<sup>2</sup>

Efforts to keep African Americans out of Harlem ended up failing, not because discriminatory residents became more accepting, but for economic reasons. Many white property owners were worried they would lose money by renting to whites in a neighborhood where whites were fleeing, and so they began to rent to African Americans. Even still, they engaged in discriminatory housing practices as they charged the new residents higher prices than white tenants (often 40-60% more), which meant many black boarders had to work multiple jobs to make ends meet, while landlords pulled in higher profits (Wilkerson, 2010).

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<sup>2</sup> Wilkerson (2010) parallels the experiences of African Americans in Harlem to the South where they had just left: “The South, totalitarian and unyielding, was at that very moment succeeding at what white Harlem leaders were so desperately trying to do, that is, controlling the movements of blacks by controlling the minds of whites.” (p 253-54).

As a response to poor housing conditions, riots broke out in 1935, resulting in extensive property damage and four deaths, but also resulting in housing reforms and new construction to improve housing conditions<sup>3</sup> (Lipsky, 1970). The impact of the library is not mentioned, but newspapers do discuss the riot within the community as a whole. In one African-American newspaper, racial inequality was cited as the reason for the uprising. Hubert T. Delaney, who was appointed to investigate the causes of the riots, spoke in Kansas City, and described a variety of injustices that triggered the outcry (Wynadotte Echo, July 1935). These concerns included white retailers and utility companies taking African-Americans' money but refusing to hire African-American employees, police brutality against African-American residents, lack of adequate housing, and injustice in the legal system.

The 1920s also saw an increase in the Latino population of Harlem, as East Harlem (also called Spanish Harlem) was settled by immigrants from Puerto Rico and Cuba. Like their African-American neighbors, many were working class individuals who came north for a better life (Gill, 2011). There was also an outpouring of creative energy in the neighborhood's Latino community, including a vibrant theater scene in the 1920s and 1930s (Remeseira, 2010), although this is not emphasized in the records maintained by the library, suggesting that this particular branch was not involved in cultural activities specifically for the Latino population of Harlem.<sup>4</sup> This steady influx of new residents to a

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<sup>3</sup> While the actions in the 1930s did result in change, inequality and poor housing conditions persisted, as evidenced by Lipsky's (1970) research. Lipsky found that, based on 1960 data, "Accommodation of minority groups in substandard dwellings is *not* a function of lower incomes alone. Minority group members live in housing substantially inferior to whites of similar incomes" (p. 44; emphasis in original).

<sup>4</sup> It is known that Rose hired a Puerto Rican librarian to serve the newly-developed Spanish Harlem community (Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1990), although it is possible that the other Harlem branch, or another NYPL branch outside the scope of this study, provided the majority of service to that community.



changing neighborhood would have impacted the library, as it continuously engaged with meeting the needs of a changing user base.

### **The Harlem Renaissance**

The Harlem Renaissance refers to the cultural movement that took place in the 1920s in the Harlem neighborhood, as African-American artists and intellectuals created work to describe and appreciate the experience of being black in America (see for example Huggins, 2007 for a discussion of the movement). As Schneider (2006) says, “Novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald called the 1920s the ‘Jazz Age,’ marking the first time that an African American contribution to the national culture had defined an era” (p 1), and this speaks to the influence the movement had on the history of the city and the country. A variety of institutions expanded their services during the Harlem Renaissance, in order to best serve an expanding African-American population while facilitating the community’s flowering interests in the arts (Schneider, 2006). These included different churches and nonprofits, as well as the Harlem library.

Many sources point to the centrality of the 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch of the New York Public Library in the Harlem Renaissance movement (e.g. Anderson, 2003; Calo, 2007; Jenkins, 1990). The library’s specific involvement in the movement will be addressed later on in the dissertation, particularly in the chapter on Ernestine Rose and the history of that institution.

### **The Harlem Library**

The Harlem Library has been known by a number of names during its history, including the Harlem Library (when it was a subscription library), the Harlem Free Library, and also interchangeably as The Harlem Public Library, the Harlem Branch, the 135<sup>th</sup> Street Branch, or the Harlem Branch of the New York Public Library (after it was incorporated

into the New York Public Library system) (Dain, 1972; Lyndenberg, 1972; Sinnette, 1989). For this study, it will be referred to as the Harlem Public Library.

The library began in 1825 as a subscription library, serving a small community comprised of middle-class patrons (Dain, 1972; Lyndenberg, 1972). In 1871, the Harlem School was consolidated with the library, and kept the Harlem Library name. During this same time, concern arose in the community about whether or not the subscription library was benefiting the public, but the trustees staunchly opposed those concerns, saying that as a subscription library it was not within its stated purpose to serve anyone unless they purchased a subscription (Lyndenberg, 1972).

The library moved multiple times during this period in an effort to find affordable and visible space in an increasingly more urban environment. The library also faced financial strain as they continuously advertised to the public to purchase subscriptions, only to find that not enough people were willing to subscribe, and that they were not able to receive any financial assistance from the city or state if they remained a subscription library. In addition, a Carnegie branch of the New York Public Library (or New York Free Circulating Library, as it was called at the time), opened nearby in 1825, further reducing the purchase of subscriptions (Lyndenberg, 1972). Finally, the Harlem library could not maintain itself relying solely on subscriptions, particularly when a Carnegie branch of the New York Public Library was set to open nearby. In 1903, the library was consolidated with the New York Public Library system (Dain, 1972; Lyndenberg, 1972).

The Harlem Public Library opened as a branch of the New York Public Library system on January 14, 1905, at a time when the community was largely Jewish, but would transition to being largely African-American within the next twenty years. In the mid-1920s, the branch served a twenty-block area in central Harlem with a population of roughly 125,000 (Sinnette, 1989). However, the reach of some of the library's programming

went beyond its immediate vicinity as special exhibits and activities drew in white and black patrons from around the city (see for example the 1925 “Negro exhibit” described in Sinnette, 1989).

Ernestine Rose’s work in the Harlem community was unique because she was working with a community comprised of US-born individuals who came to the City recently (Sinnette, 1989), but who were ostracized because of the color of their skin rather than their country of origin. According to Sinnette (1989): “Although Harlem was not an immigrant community in the traditional sense, it displayed many of the characteristics and problems of the city’s foreign enclaves and could benefit from library services similar to those provided to the typical immigrant communities” (p. 132). Rose had worked at other branch libraries with large immigrant populations before her time in Harlem, and she was heavily involved in efforts by the American Library Association to address the needs of immigrant communities (Sinnette, 1989). She also had an influence on other librarians in New York City and beyond, including Louis Shores (who later came to Florida State University), who admired Rose and made trips up to Harlem to see her and meet with Arthur Schomburg during his time as a reference librarian in the NYPL’s central building (Sinnette, 1989).

A local elementary school principal suggested to Ernestine Rose that hiring African-American library assistants might assist her in working with the community, and several women were brought on board who, according to the secondary literature, seemed to have a considerable amount of influence on library programming (Anderson, 2003; Sinnette, 1989). African-Americans were not the only patrons in the community, however, and in 1922 Ernestine Rose hired the branch’s first Puerto Rican librarian to help the Spanish-speaking community that developed near the library (Sinnette, 1989).

One of the most frequently mentioned aspects of the Harlem branch’s history was its involvement in the Harlem Renaissance as a gathering place for artists and authors, an

occasional display or presentation space, and a resource for materials on African-American history and culture (e.g. Anderson, 2003; Sinnette, 1989). In the late 1920s, the branch became home to the materials of esteemed collector Arthur A. Schomburg, for whom the collection (and later the branch itself after its conversion to a research center) was named (New York Public Library, 2014; Sinnette, 1989).

## **The New York Public Library System**

The New York Public Library began as a series of smaller public libraries given initial funding by wealthy patrons. The first of these was the Astor library in 1848, followed by the Lenox library and Tilden trust, which were consolidated into the beginnings of the New York Public Library in 1894-1895, and the central building came into use in 1897 (Lydenberg, 1972). Unlike some of the smaller libraries it acquired later on, the three libraries that formed the basis of the New York Public Library had always been free to the public. However, much like today, they experienced issues with funding and maintaining collections over a long period, which encouraged the consolidation of the libraries and the pooling of each trust's resources along with external resources, such as those from the Carnegie Corporation (Lyndenberg, 1972).

The New York Public Library system continued to expand through the consolidation of existing libraries, such as the Harlem library, as well as the creation of new branches throughout the city. Each branch served very different populations, such as the city's clustered immigrant communities. In addition, each experienced different challenges and engaged in a variety of approaches to patron services, in an effort to meet the needs of users within the landscape of changing communities and sometimes uncertain resources (Dain, 1972; Lydenberg, 1972).

## **American Society**

The library and city were situated within a dynamic society, which had financial impacts, as well as impacts on race and gender relations. Financially, the United States experienced growth and prosperity during the 1920s, followed by the stock market crash in 1929, which signaled the beginning of the Great Depression, which lasted until the outbreak of World War II (Bernstein, 1987). Race relations continued to develop during this time, as groups such as the N.A.A.C.P. and Urban League worked to improve opportunities for African-Americans, while others (such as the white Harlem residents mentioned above) tried to limit those opportunities (e.g. Hutchinson, 1995; Wilkerson, 2010). Finally, women's suffrage had been debated for some time, and women were allowed to vote nationwide in 1920 with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment (McConnaughy, 2013), the same year that Rose began working at the Harlem library (Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1990).

### **Research Question**

As a historical project, this study began with only a very broad research question to guide it. This allowed trends to emerge from the records without imposing an overly harsh structure upon them that might overshadow or skew the information that is present. The question guiding this project was: How did the Harlem Public Library develop under Rose's leadership?

This broad research question provides the flexibility to explore the records in depth and allow trends to emerge, rather than imposing an overly strict set of expectations on the work that might push it towards certain findings and obscure others. In the discussion of the guiding frameworks (below), there are examples of some of the ways in which Rose's leadership might be described in the archival records. The elements of the theory of Information Worlds will be used to describe Rose and the other actors present in the

records, and to situate them within their information contexts. The Change in Historic Institutions model will be used to conceptualize activities within the institution as a whole.

## **Guiding Frameworks**

### **Information Worlds**

In addition to the research question, there are two major frameworks informing my approach to the records. The first is the theory of Information Worlds, and the second is the Change in Historic Institutions framework (CHI). The theory of Information Worlds (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010) provides an intuitive framework for understanding social contexts, and the way individuals move within and between them. The theory is based upon Habermas' (1992) concept of the lifeworld and Chatman's theories of small worlds and normative behavior (Burnett, Besant, & Chatman, 2001; Chatman, 1991; Chatman, 1999). The theory combines Chatman's conceptualization of information behavior at the individual or small community level with Habermas' broad focus on the public sphere in order to create a theory that could be applied across a variety of contexts. The theory consists of five factors that describe social contexts and information behavior in those contexts.

### **The Five Factors of Information Worlds**

*Social Norms:* Social norms refer to a "shared sense of appropriateness" related to observable behaviors and social appearances in the context of an information world, whether or not the agreement between members of that world is articulated or implied (Burnett & Jaeger, 2010, p. 8). Appropriateness in this instance refers to perceptions of "rightness or wrongness" (Burnett & Jaeger, 2010, p. 22), and these norms provide members a common understanding of what is expected of them in terms of the visible social aspects of that world, and how acceptable (or unacceptable) it is to step outside of these norms (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010).

For example, in a library history study, there may be certain social norms surrounding censorship, but these might also change based upon changes in the shared sense of appropriateness surrounding that activity (e.g. strict censorship by libraries was expected during World War I, but a shift toward intellectual freedom and access began to take place with the adoption of the Library Bill of Rights in the following decades. See Robbins, 1996; Skinner, 2013; Wiegand, 1989).

*Social Types:* Social types refer to the roles that actors play within a world, and how others perceive them as they play those roles. One's role serves as the basis for their "type," or the way in which others define them within the world. Typing takes place at multiple levels: individuals are subject to social typing at the level of the information world, and the members of the information world are also subject to social typing by the larger society of which that world is part. This typing informs how individuals understand and describe others, which can serve as either an avenue for facilitating trust or for inhibiting interaction (Burnett & Jaeger, 2010).

For example, in organized labor activities in libraries, a union leader may be thought of as a trusted and knowledgeable information source among union members and supporters, but within the broader society or among library administration may be seen as biased or disruptive because of their outspoken ties to a particular viewpoint or movement. This is seen in Shanley (1995), who described tension between library staff and administrators, as each group was suspicious of the other and their goals (e.g. staff aligning their cause with municipal workers versus administrators' call for "professionalization").

*Information Value:* Information value refers to a world's "shared sense of a scale of the importance of information" (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010, p. 8), and is described as a web of interrelated issues. These include information content (what the information is about and the extent to which it meets the needs of groups and individuals), perception (the impact of

normative views or individual interpretation, e.g. the perception of one format being more valuable or authoritative than another), control (constraints imposed by a world based on a piece of information's perceived value, in order to manage its beneficial or detrimental effects), and information economies (the worth of information, either monetary, as in the case of a corporation selling information, or social, such as the potential of the information to benefit members of an information world).

While the different components of information value might be viewed as a web, in each setting and valuing activity it can also be viewed as a “continuum of attitudes and perceptions concerning the access to and the exchange and use of information across the range of social contexts” (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010, p. 43). This means that while there are many different ways of valuing information, those ways are heavily context-dependent, and rely upon the individual and the information worlds they navigate to influence that valuing activity.

As information worlds exist at various levels, this means they also exist within and alongside others, and so the perception of, access to, and evaluation of information is complex and based upon a variety of influences. In library history, this might appear in the study of a particular community, such as the Czech and German immigrant population of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Iowa, where native languages were still widely used and information presented in that language was preferred for access reasons (as not all immigrants spoke English) as well as perceptions of value (Czech and German immigrants were reported to have asked for Bohemian and German-language newspapers in part because they trusted the news contained therein and felt these sources were less biased than American news sources). While the librarian working in this information world might have helped blur the boundaries between the primarily English-speaking library world and the immigrant worlds, those worlds also existed within the larger information world of U.S. culture, and it



became increasingly harder (and eventually illegal in Iowa) for the librarian to locate and provide foreign-language materials, putting non-English speakers at a disadvantage (Skinner, 2010, 2013; Wiegand, 1989).

*Information behavior:* This term refers to all the information-related activities and behaviors within a world. This is different from valuing and norms, as these are what guide conduct and evaluative practices, while information behavior refers to the interactions with information itself (this deals with the information *available* to members of an information world, as not all information is available or accessible to every individual). It includes informal information exchange, information avoidance, and information seeking in a more formalized sense.

Like the subjective nature of “appropriateness” within social norms, members do not operate with an objective sense of the usefulness or value of information. Instead, information behaviors and evaluation practices are informed by community practices (Jaeger & Burnett, 2010). For example, within a certain information world, it may be most commonplace to engage in seeking behaviors by first consulting friends and family before turning to formal sources or receiving reference assistance from a librarian. For a library historian who is interested in looking at this information world, it would be important to be aware of this community practice prior to drawing any conclusions about library use.

*Boundaries:* These are the places where information worlds touch, and information exchange can take place. However, just because the possibility for this exchange exists, it does not mean it will occur. Jaeger and Burnett (2010) employ a very useful metaphor to describe this concept: a sink full of soap bubbles. In this metaphor, the bubbles each represent an information world, and where those bubbles come into contact is a boundary. Two worlds are touching, and can potentially pass information through the thin membrane

of soap that separates them, but the space within those bubbles is still separate, even if information moves between them.

For example, the information world a librarian inhabits during the day-to-day running of the reference desk at a library may be very different from the information world that individual inhabits at a professional conference, but there may be overlap and information exchange. In this instance, the librarian's role in relation to others changes from knowledgeable professional within a workplace interacting with those engaged in information seeking, to a peer engaged in professional development and networking with fellow peers. There is the opportunity for information to be brought from one bubble to the other as the librarian moves between them (e.g. after the librarian returns from the conference, some of the things that individual learned may be incorporated into library activities and services).

For a library historian studying a librarian's professional activities and looking at the librarian's reports, they might notice differences in the depth and tone of writing related to the conference versus the routine operation of the library (which is less novel, and thus perhaps less detail is included), or they might notice the major take-aways the librarian brought back from the conference, such as new ideas about controlling the spread of disease with circulating materials (Skinner, 2012). A world can also exist within the context of another world, and that has an impact on that smaller world and the actors within it. For example, The Harlem branch was an institution serving a specific community, but also existed within a broader institution (the New York Public Library) and broader city culture, and both of these would have impacted what happened in that individual branch.

Yu (2011) argues that Information Worlds does not allow researchers to separate an individual's information world from the social information worlds they inhabit. A key

difference she argues for is that, at the individual level, the information world is defined by that individual's information behaviors rather than by the social norms that inform those behaviors within larger information worlds. In biographical library history research, this may be an obstacle if one is trying to understand the information behavior of one historical figure (e.g. a librarian or researcher who left information about these behaviors in notes or diaries). However, this could possibly be mitigated by employing Yu's (2011) suggestions to help make Information Worlds scalable at the individual level, or by bringing in some of the concepts of constructivism that appeared in Talja, Tuominen, and Savolainen (2005).

### **Information Worlds and Library History Research**

Information Worlds has not been used in library history research previously, but has the potential to be incredibly valuable for this area of inquiry. One of the greatest strengths of Information Worlds is its ability to describe information contexts at a variety of levels, and to envision how those contexts interact and share (or do not share) information. This allows for the study information behavior in micro-contexts (e.g. the library's supervisory staff), meso-contexts (e.g. the library), and macro-contexts (the society in which that institution exists). It also acknowledges the complexity and contextually dependent nature of information behavior, meaning that researchers can describe the full and rich information landscapes in which the subject(s) of their study operate.

In library history, this is particularly useful as it is vital to completely and vividly describe a context that is unfamiliar. For example, "censorship" as we think of it today was not as taboo during World War I, which is part of why librarians did not protest censorship efforts with the same vigor they might today (Skinner, 2013). Clearly, walking readers through the context in which the librarians and patrons under study lived is important in fostering understanding of the decisions that were made and in learning how those

individuals might have navigated and experienced their world. Information Worlds offers an intuitive way for conceptualizing information behavior that can be applied across many contexts and is not inherently bound to a certain time period (unlike other theories that might rely upon the discussion of a specific activity or development, such as the use of digital technology).

### **Change in Historic Institutions (CHI)**

One of the keys to thinking about Rose's influence on the library is to think about changes that occurred during her time there. In order to do this, a model of change has been constructed that will help researchers think about different kinds of changes and how they influence library development. The CHI framework was created for this study to describe the institutional context in which the individuals and groups that perform the information behaviors outlined in Information Worlds operate. It recognizes that the institution itself might be subject to influences outside of information behaviors (e.g. funding constraints), while still being open enough to work alongside Information Worlds or similar theories to offer a discussion of the different contexts as well as the information behaviors associated with them.

The CHI framework will work particularly well alongside Information Worlds as both examine contexts and their potential impacts. While Information Worlds examines information behaviors, CHI describes institutional behaviors, envisioned here as institution-wide activities, rather than simply the activities of one staff member whose actions do not directly result in some degree of change at the institutional level. This will serve as a valuable counterpoint to discussions of change at the individual level, as may become evident when coding for Information Worlds.

In their work on institutional change, Mahoney and Thelen (2010) advocate for the need to look at ongoing change, arguing that many social science theories focus only on abrupt and transformative change. This model tries to account for both, and focuses on the process of change and its outcomes in a way that accounts for all different time spans.

The author was unable to find a theory in our field that addresses change within the context of a historical institution. Many of the theories of change in our field that deal with modern-day institutions look at their response to a certain trend (e.g. blended learning, see Garrison & Vaughan, 2013) or to networked technologies (Dresang & Koh, 2009), how change is evaluated by administrators (Yi, 2013), and comparisons of changes in different organizations (Regazzi, 2012). What is lacking is a way to think about institutional change that considers the institution's context and the pressures that context places upon it, and the ways in which the institution's changes interplay with the context (e.g. public perception). We also lack a theory of change that considers innovative and adaptive approaches, and that can account for changes that are sustained over a period of time, or ones that are more quick and transformative.

An examination of this literature uncovers two main themes in how libraries engage with change, which can be conceptualized as innovation (a more proactive and anticipatory approach to change) and adaptation (a response to societal change, economic pressures, or other external forces). These themes are conceptualized in a variety of ways, and using a variety of terminology, within the literature. These themes, as well as the others associated with CHI, are operationalized below.

## **Change**

Before impact or type of change can be considered, it first must be established that a change occurred. The Oxford English Dictionary defines change as to "make or become

different." (Oxford University Press, 2014). Therefore, the goal of identifying change begins with locating differences described in the records. For example, an entry in the library's meeting minutes might state that they began a new program to have local authors do readings at the library. This new activity is one that was not currently being engaged in at the time of the record's creation, and so would be considered a change.

Change, as defined here, can include large-scale changes (e.g. adding a new department) and small-scale changes (e.g. staying open an hour later), as both kinds of change would have been a part of Rose's influence on the library and both have the potential to have an impact on the community and the institution. Importantly, the concept of change does not necessarily imply positive or negative effects. After a change has been identified, it can be classified as innovative or adaptive, and the impact of the change and how it was perceived can be evaluated.

### **Innovation**

This refers to changes that are internally motivated in that they are responses to needs that have not been addressed in the past, but are identified through reflection and engagement rather than through external pressures. Innovative changes are proactive—they are changes that respond to a perceived need in the community or to a desire to try something new.<sup>5</sup>

There are several ways to try to identify innovation when working with source documents. One clue is evidence of a push to serve an underserved group or community. In another study, the librarian at Cedar Rapids Public Library left documents that enthusiastically advocated for improving access to foreign language materials and reference

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<sup>5</sup> Garcia and Calantone (2002), say “We espouse the 1991 OECD definition of innovation as: ‘an iterative process initiated by the perception of a new market and/or service opportunity for a technology-based invention which leads to development, production and marketing tasks striving for the commercial success of the invention’.” (p. 112).

services for immigrants in the community, along with detailed descriptions of what was being done or planned to offer these materials and services. Importantly, the librarian also took ownership of these activities. This is in contrast to the sometimes less enthusiastic tone of source documents outlining adaptive changes (defined below). In those documents, such as those left behind by the Burlington Public Library, the tone is more reserved and resigned, and it is indicated that the library staff or Board was being asked to enact a given change and felt pressured to do so (see Skinner, 2010; Skinner, 2013).

In the innovative library activities found in that study's sources, the justification for a proposed change would center around presenting a new idea and indicating its value, rather than presenting a simple request (e.g. to order a new encyclopedia set), or offering solutions to a situation that were focused on addressing the situation itself (e.g. funds being requested for repairs, with the solution being locating or reallocating funds to address this). In innovative practice, the focus is on describing the value of a solution to the community and to the library in a more holistic sense. To use the same libraries as examples, the librarian at the Cedar Rapids Public Library suggested ways to connect returning veterans with community resources, arguing that they had unique needs and the library could serve as a place to help meet those needs. The Burlington Public Library, on the other hand, presented concerns about their financial state of affairs during a Board meeting, and the group discussed possible solutions to improve that situation (e.g. delaying repairs) (Skinner, 2010, 2013).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Dumont's (1977) work discusses change as happening within the bounds of reform and reaction, which loosely align with the definitions of innovation and adaptation here. While she sees many researchers and library professionals as being innovative or focusing on innovation in their work, she points to Harris (1972, 1973) as being outside what she sees as the norm, arguing that he sees the library as a stabilizing force rather than one that

## Adaptation

Adaptation refers to changes that are reactive rather than proactive. It is a response to a condition that is placing pressure upon the library, and the adaptive response is a way for the library to account for and respond to that change. Importantly, adaptive changes tend to be those that allow the library to address an issue and then continue on in a similar manner as before. While not all innovative changes are earth-shattering, they are more likely to be ones that require a shift in thinking or approach in an effort to do something new.

In primary materials, adaptation is most easily identified in instances where there is the presence of external demand (e.g. reduced funding, a nationwide push for censorship) or acceptance of outside resources (e.g. engaging in a certain program or activity because the library is given funding for it). For example, in the Great Depression, there is evidence of widespread acceptance of Works Progress Administration (WPA) support (e.g. Stanford, 1944). Dickson (1986) argues that WPA programs were valued by the library community, making accepting WPA assistance something that was considered appropriate and largely non-controversial within the field. In this instance, the funds were used within the parameters of the funder's expectations (such as for staffing or building improvements), and working within these parameters may, in some cases, serve as a hindrance to using funds for experimenting with new programs and services. Elsewhere, Woodford (1965) describes the impact of the Depression on the Detroit Public Library, but most of the records he describes point to responses to drastically reduced budgets. These activities are adaptations to a broader social phenomenon in which a change occurs (economic depression) and the

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promotes and embraces change. The changes Harris describes are reactionary changes, rather than proactive changes.



library responds to this significant shift in its social context.

In this instance, it is important to note that referring to an activity as adaptive rather than innovative does not place a value judgment on the activity, or imply that libraries have total control over every aspect of their operation and community engagement. Instead, using these two definitions is a way to conceptualize how change in libraries operates as a complex and contextually-dependent activity, and to focus on the possible motivations and impacts of change events with the recognition that a single library may incorporate many adaptive and innovative practices in tandem or sequence in response to different aspects of the social context in which it functions.

### **Impact**

Impact refers to the results of change, whether innovative or adaptive. Some questions to guide a researcher's thinking about impact might include: Did that change matter to the community? Did it result in positive or negative changes? Who and what was the focus? Were those who actually experienced change or did change appear elsewhere? Were the results intentional, unintentional, or both? Was the innovation or adaptation maintained over a long period, or was the duration shorter? Impact might appear in the records as the responses by community members (such as a review of a new program in a local newspaper), or discussions of outcomes at a library board meeting.

### **Perceptions**

This refers to how the change agents were appraised by others who came in contact with them. In this study, Ernestine Rose is the focus, although other staff members, such as Regina Anderson Andrews were change agents as well (Whitmire, 2014) and may appear in discussions of change. This could include the perceptions of those working within the library system (e.g. how library staff perceived Rose and her work) or those in outside the

context of the library (e.g. how community members perceived Rose and the library). It may also include governmental structures of which the library is a part and/or funded by, professional organizations (e.g. the ALA), local partner institutions (e.g. schools, social service agencies), cultural clubs (e.g. arts organizations, women's clubs), and other organizations that may appear in the records.

## **Conclusion**

Ernestine Rose was in an unusual situation as someone who came from a different (and more privileged) racial background than her patrons, and who served a community that underwent a variety of transformations, including a surge in creative and intellectual output, during a time when the country as a whole saw transformation and hardship with the roaring 1920s and the subsequent Great Depression. While others have begun to tell Rose's story, the richness of that story and of the context surrounding it merits a much deeper examination. The in-depth analysis being used in this dissertation, as well as the focus on developing and testing theory, makes it useful to researchers seeking a rich description of the Harlem library, or seeking a precedent for testing and developing theory using historical materials. The focus on an innovative and community-oriented librarian may also benefit practitioners who are interested in looking to the past as a way of evaluating and improving the work they do in their communities.

# CHAPTER TWO

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

This literature review places the existing studies on Rose and the Harlem library alongside works on New York City history, as well as literature on change in urban libraries. This review is organized from narrow (Ernestine Rose and the Harlem library) to more broad (urban public library history), followed by a discussion of how institutional change is described in current research. By examining the existing literature, it is clear that there are many gaps this study will fill. Currently, the research on the Harlem library is limited to a small number of studies, and these frame the library in sometimes-conflicting ways, which encourages a return to the source documents as a part of a more comprehensive study of the Harlem branch. Additionally, researchers are not using historical topics as a basis for theory testing, which will be a significant contribution of this study. Finally, no existing research in this area delineates adaptive (responsive) change from innovative (proactive) change.

### Ernestine Rose and the Harlem Library

Several works within Information Studies focus on Ernestine Rose and the Harlem branch of the New York Public Library, where Rose worked. Anderson (2003) described Ernestine Rose and her role in connecting Harlem Renaissance authors and playwrights with their audience. She and her staff did this in a variety of ways, including hosting readings and art shows. The library also helped community members learn about their heritage through the Schomburg collection, which is a research collection on African-

American heritage initially started with a donation of materials by Arthur Schomburg during Rose's time at the library.

Jenkins (1990) also described Rose's positive contributions to the community. Jenkins (1990) argues that this was a dynamic time in the community, and that Rose was able to situate the library as central part of the community and as an institution that served as a model for working with underserved populations. Arns & Daniel (2007) use Rose as an example of value-centered librarianship<sup>7</sup> in their article tracing the development of different trends in the field and the ways in which these trends can help us define librarianship today. All these articles consistently frame Rose's work in a positive light, and tend to gloss over conflict (such as the issues surrounding promotion described in Whitmire, 2007). Acknowledgment of positive contributions is a valuable activity, however, these articles urge the author to critically engage with the records to uncover nuance and to accurately and completely describe all aspects of the library and Rose's work.

There are two works within the field of Information Studies that discuss Regina Anderson Andrews, another member of the Harlem library staff. Whitmire (2007) outlines Andrews' career, describing her promotion to become the first African-American woman to serve in a supervisory capacity in the New York Public Library (NYPL) System. She worked as a librarian at NYPL from 1923 until her retirement in 1967. Whitmire (2007) describes the barriers to promotion she faced, and her support by influential allies (such as W.E.B. Du Bois). Recently, Whitmire (2014) expanded this into a book-length work that covers

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<sup>7</sup> "a value-centered understanding of public libraries as cultural institutions that engage considerable physical, economic, and moral resources to improve the social and intellectual capacity of their communities" (p. 15).

Andrews' life and career in greater depth, and covers her early life and other experiences beyond her work in the library system.

Additionally, there is research on Rose and on the Harlem library in the fields of History and English. These studies offer valuable perspectives beyond Information Studies, but like the works from Information Studies they focus on describing Rose and the library through a certain lens (e.g. her contributions to the Harlem Renaissance) and do not offer a holistic discussion or use the Harlem library records as the basis for theory development and testing.

Tolson (1998) discusses the library's work to build strong collections of literature written by African-American authors, and efforts by several librarians (including Rose) to improve children's literacy and offer examples of positive African-American role models. Hutchinson (2011) argues that Rose helped make the Harlem library a "central cultural institution and intellectual crossroads" (p. 407) in the community, and uses the example of the library as part of a larger argument urging researchers to think of the Harlem Renaissance as a very diverse set of activities, rather than being solely confined to music and literature.

Hochman (2014) discusses Rose's reform work while at the library, stressing her focus on social justice, her promotion of reading as an avenue to success, and her encouragement of African-American librarians who were entering the profession. As with the research in Information Studies, these works on Rose focus on her achievements and social justice activities, and do not discuss potential tension surrounding library leadership by someone outside the community, or potential conflict surrounding proposed changes.

As with the Information Studies research, these studies serve as encouragement to return to the records and engage thoughtfully and critically to see what (if anything) is said about Rose beyond the positive picture painted in existing studies. Rose is an important

figure to examine because she existed at the intersection of multiple communities and experienced varying levels of privilege relating to race and gender. A discussion of how these privileges played out in her work in the library and community is particularly important for librarians seeking to work with underserved populations they are not identified as a part of. Critically engaging with the records surrounding her work can show librarians areas where she was successful in connecting with and serving the community, and areas where her privilege and outsider status may have hindered her ability to help the community.

Most of the existing biographical literature beyond Information Studies focuses on the African-American librarians at the Harlem library (e.g. Roffman, 2007; Whitmire, 2007; 2014). Much of it focuses on their groundbreaking activities as early African-American librarians, and is useful for highlighting their experiences at the library and to contrast them with Rose's experiences as a white librarian. Des Jardins (2006) discusses the practice of conducting biographical research on African-American librarians using historical documents, and includes some Harlem librarians as examples.

Nella Larsen is one member of the Harlem library staff who is heavily researched outside Information Studies. Larsen was a librarian as well as a promising Harlem Renaissance writer (Davis, 1994; Hutchinson, 2006). Davis' 1994 book is an in-depth exploration of Larsen's life, with a focus on her time as a writer and her work at the Harlem library. It also describes many of her activities within the library and her work alongside Ernestine Rose. Hutchinson (2006) also wrote an in-depth biography of Larsen, and describes Larsen's work within the library while also framing Rose as a colleague and mentor. Roffman (2007) uses a variety of primary sources to argue that Larsen was fully engaged in the practice of librarianship, and was not simply interested in library work and fiction writing as a way to gain social status, as she feels other authors (e.g. Davis, 1994;

Wall, 1995) have argued. The work in other fields offers a variety of useful perspectives that can inform this project beyond the work conducted within Information Studies.

However, none of them use the case of the Harlem library to test theory, and none focus on describing change or contextualizing the library to any great extent.

### **The New York Public Library System**

The Harlem library was one branch of the larger New York Public Library system. One of the most important aspects of library development in New York City was the decision from the beginning to shy away from running only one central branch, and focus instead on founding branches throughout the city, in order to make it so residents had a library near their homes. This approach focused explicitly on bringing materials to impoverished areas of the city (Dain, 1972), and differed the focus on bringing “wholesome” materials to an entire community that was seen elsewhere (e.g. Wiegand, 1989). Many of the studies on NYPL history focus on outlining a chronological series of events (Dain, 1972; Lyndenberg, 1972), and only a few critically engage with the history and discuss how issues like class, race, and gender may have impacted the library (e.g. Dain, 1991; Shanley, 1995), leaving ample room for further discussions of privilege and inequality within the context of the library system. As with the pieces on the Harlem Public Library, theory testing is nonexistent, meaning that the use of Information Worlds and the CHI model may assist the author in more completely describing inequality and change than previous work has, and may also lay the groundwork for future studies that extend this work to other areas of the NYPL system.

Phyllis Dain has done the most extensive research on NYPL in the field of Information Studies, so her work serves as a useful starting point. Dain (1991) studied 110 library trustees who served between 1895 and 1970. She found that trustees were most

often middle-aged to elderly, highly educated, and wealthy white men. Dain (1991) argued that while their wealth and social standing lent status to the institution, it could also be problematic in a diverse and changing city. This finding is particularly relevant to this project, as the priorities of privileged individuals disconnected from the Harlem community may have been very different from those of the community members, and this may have impacted the library's ability to meet community needs.

Dain's 1972 book covers NYPL's early history, focusing on library practices instituted by John Shaw Billings, the first Library Director who instituted some unusual practices (e.g. a reference library and a circulating library with separate finances and staff). While the goal of this work is to describe the history of the NYPL system, she also engages in some writing that contextualizes the library within the city, and which is useful for understanding some of the decisions that were made early on (e.g. a robust system of branches, rather than a central hub with few or no branches). Lyndenberg (1972) compiles studies printed between 1916 and 1922 in the *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, and these discuss several different branches and their early history. Like Dain (1972), his primary goal is to outline a series of events and occasionally remark upon change or influencing factors. However, he does not focus on situating the institution within its social context.

One piece explicitly relates NYPL history to social issues and the labor movement. Shanley (1995) describes the development of The Library Employees' Union of Greater New York, first organized in New York City in 1917 and disbanded in 1929, which was the first public library union in the United States. She argues that there were close ties between the union and other movements, such as women's suffrage, and that one of its primary goals was to improve the status of women in the field. Shanley (1995) focuses more heavily on social justice than Dain (1972, 1991) or Lyndenberg (1972), although she does not utilize



Information Studies theory or engage in theory testing as a way to describe these issues or their context(s).

### **Urban Public Libraries**

In addition to studies on NYPL, there are Information Studies works that focus on libraries in other cities or on urban libraries more generally. As with the works on NYPL, these studies are not theory-based and do not engage with change using the concepts of innovation and adaptation as this study does, suggesting that this study may lay the groundwork for useful discussions of urban library history on a broader scale.

Public libraries in urban areas began to serve their communities in the late 1800s (Rose, 1954). It was not until the 1880s and 1890s that some urban libraries opened their doors to the public, and even then many cities did not have central, publicly-supported libraries until later (Dain, 1975; Rose, 1954). Studies on urban public libraries in the United States offer a more comprehensive understanding of the history of libraries in cities, which can offer a useful context and point of comparison for this project. Some of these offer a chronology of events, as did some of the studies of the NYPL system, but others engage with library history critically and situate the libraries within their broader social contexts.

Woodford (1965) compiled information about the Detroit Public Library to trace its history and development over a 100-year period. Woodford, like Lyndernberg (1972) tends toward writing a positive and uncritical history of a beloved institution, without discussions of conflict, tension, or failure. Novotny (2011) also focused on one library, but offers a more engaging and critical discussion as he describes the impact of the Great Depression on the Chicago Public Library. He focuses in particular on public relations, and on attempts to create adult education programs and other ways to engage the public. He also emphasizes

the ways in which the library struggled with balancing the decrease in available funds with providing the services and materials patrons needed.

Latham's work (2009, 2011) is a good example of conducting library history research by critically engaging with source materials and not shying away from describing areas of disagreement alongside successes and collaborations. Latham (2009) discusses The Chicago Public Library's intellectual freedom policy, which was the first formal policy of its type in the country. It was first brought about after a series of complaints from Russian and Polish users about offensive materials in the Foreign Language Department. Latham argues that the policy was the result of two library administrators' conflicting ideals, and that it marks a turning point in the field resulting in a greater emphasis upon intellectual freedom. Latham (2011) discusses one branch of the library during the later years of the Great Depression. The branch was founded during this time, as a result of an extensive survey sent out to discover what library-related needs residents of the city had. She argues that the library could be seen as a cultural battleground of sorts, where new ideas and reforms could be tested (e.g. approaches to adult education, particularly the education of workers), with varying degrees of success and support.

Several authors emphasize the importance of the contexts surrounding libraries as a central aspect of understanding the libraries themselves. Ditzion (1947) covers New England and Midwestern libraries in general, but includes enough information about urban libraries to be considered here. Ditzion focuses on social context to a greater extent than some other authors, and argues that libraries served a variety of functions within communities, and organizes his work thematically to address these functions, rather than organizing it chronologically as seen elsewhere (e.g. Woodford, 1965).

DuMont (1977) argues that previous research had not discussed how the library fit into its broader social context, and focuses on how libraries could affect social change

(reform), and how they were impacted by that social context (reaction). Wiegand (1989), focuses on libraries during World War I, and points to a tradition in early libraries of providing “good books” aimed at social improvement, arguing this focus was the basis for some of the censoring activity that took place when certain topics were considered unsuitable. Inclusion and discussion of the contexts that impacted the library is important, and something not seen universally in library history literature.<sup>8</sup> It is rather common to address this in more recent scholarship, although much of that (e.g. Skinner, 2013) focuses on rural libraries or time periods outside the scope of the current study.

Elsewhere, authors provide a historical sketch of the field of public librarianship as a whole. Garrison (1979) traces the history of public librarianship from 1876 to 1920, in order to understand the role of libraries in society and to situate them within trends toward professionalization across multiple fields. Harris (1973) argues that libraries have operated as change agents in U.S. culture in different ways over time, but because they are headed by wealthy men who have an interest in maintaining the status quo, they are not as user-focused as they are often described as being.

Dain (1975) responded to Harris’ essay pointing out a variety of shortcomings in his work, including the use of a limited amount of evidence to describe trends in the field beyond the institutions he analyzes<sup>9</sup>. Using her own background in library history, Dain attempts to offer a different perspective on the founding and early years of public libraries, which she says needed to be backed by wealthy benefactors in order to have the initial capital to get off the ground in areas where the communities lacked the resources to built

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<sup>8</sup> Holley (1977) urges in-depth analysis and an awareness of social contexts as ways to conduct rigorous library history research.

<sup>9</sup> Harris was criticized by many other scholars as well, including Harwell and Michener (1974), Shera (1976), and Holley (1977), who felt that he was engaging in revision for the sake of revision, or doing so because it was a trend in historical work rather than because he had located sufficient evidence to challenge our understanding of libraries.

their own libraries. Importantly, Dain addresses some of Harris' problematic language surrounding the role of women in the field (who were submissive and retiring by his estimation), but also goes on to critically discuss the role of female librarians by offering counter-examples and also by discussing how class and race (rather than gender) may have played a role in the provision of library services. Dain (1975) says that many librarians were white and middle-class, and brought the viewpoints from these backgrounds to their work, which may have hindered their ability to provide meaningful assistance to patrons of color or working-class patrons. These are particularly important considerations to bring into a discussion of Ernestine Rose's role at the library, as she was from a different racial and class background than her patrons.

Martin (1998), like Harris, argues that libraries have gone through different phases in response to cultural changes, but places less of an emphasis on the motives of library founders, and instead focuses on what activities worked in libraries and why. According to Raber (1999), "Martin's fundamental point is that the public library, in response to social change, has experimented with and evolved a number of objectives and services, not all of which have succeeded." (p. 187). Martin's focus on experimentation in response to patron needs and social pressures is in line with the ideas of adaptation and innovation outlined in the CHI model being developed in this study, and may provide a valuable field-wide context in which to situate the changes seen in the Harlem library.

Like Martin, Shera (1976) focused on library history through the lens of successes and failures, reminding readers that many activities in librarianship do not cleanly fall in one category or the other. Shera's article is organized thematically, and problematizes our perception of certain trends in the field (for example, battling censorship is often seen as a success, but he reminds us that censorship is generally discussed only in the context of certain types of works, such as those focused on politics and pornography).

Latham (2010) looked at early twentieth century dynamics surrounding library philanthropy through the Carnegie Corporation, research on the impact of this philanthropy and on library services, and other organizations such as the American Library Association. She argues that there was a shift away from library control exerted by Carnegie philanthropy as time went on, and more of a shift toward control exerted by professional associations (e.g. the American Library Association). This move produced tensions, including those between local versus association-wide activities. These authors' findings do not apply exclusively to urban libraries, but urban libraries are included in their analyses.

Two authors besides Dain (1975) described the role of women in librarianship over time, and these articles may all help in contextualizing the activities and treatment of the women working in the Harlem library. Maack (1982) discusses the need for thoughtful and meticulously described methodology when doing work with women's history, as the area of inquiry is somewhat new and therefore not heavily represented in the published literature. She criticizes the work of Garrison (1973) in particular, who she argues generalized her findings about feminization as a force that marginalized libraries. She argues that the field needs a greater number of studies that outline the roles female librarians played in their libraries and communities, and offers a variety of specific areas (such as discrimination and leadership roles) that require further study.

Carmichael (1986) is critical of viewpoints that portray female librarians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as being exploited by male contemporaries and without autonomy. He uses the example of librarians in Atlanta, Georgia to offer a counter-example in which female librarians were paid fairly and could move between social roles (that of professional librarian and into married life) without feelings of guilt or betrayal. He offers some convincing arguments for why Atlanta may have been receptive to female

leadership in libraries, although his lack of discussion regarding methodology and his wholesale rejection of feminist interpretations of history (without much discussion behind the reasons for this rejection, and without acknowledging a nuanced approach in which feminist viewpoints can be considered alongside others), are problematic.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, several authors focus on historiography within the field of Information Studies. Holley (1977) traces the history of this area of research by describing changes in researchers' approaches to writing about library history, arguing that historical writing has become more thorough, critical, and context-focused over time. Holley urges researchers to situate historical figures "in the context of the times in which they lived" (p. 117). His point is incredibly valuable to bear in mind during the course of this study, as the contexts surrounding the Harlem library and its staff were different than they might be today, and it is important to describe those contexts to readers who may be unfamiliar with the time period.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Wiegand (1999), urges readers to engage with library history topics in ways that focus on the library's impact on users, and urges the use of theory to assist with this goal.

Goedeken (2005) analyzes biennial literature reviews on the topic of library history, describing trends in the literature chronologically and pointing to landmark pieces that encouraged new kinds of practice or sparked ongoing discussions (e.g. Harris, 1973; Garrison, 1979). Importantly, Goedeken points to Wayne Wiegand's body of work that emphasizes the improvement of library history methodology and urges researchers in this

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<sup>10</sup> There are other pieces on women in librarianship that address the early years of the profession (e.g. Fain, 1975; Garrison, 1973) but these are outside the time period of interest for this study.

<sup>11</sup> This focus on describing context can be seen elsewhere, e.g. Wiegand (1989) and Skinner (2013), where readers were reminded that the censorship of materials during wartime was in keeping with current beliefs surrounding the practices of librarianship, although those beliefs are different from those informing practice today.

area to turn to theorists such as Habermas. Habermas' concept of the lifeworld was part of the foundation for Information Worlds, and Wiegand's previous discussion of Habermas and other theorists (see Wiegand, 1999) further suggests the appropriateness of using Information Worlds in the present study. Wiegand's (1999) recommendation to turn to theory also reinforces the previous discussion of the need for a theoretically driven work relying upon the analysis of primary source materials.<sup>12</sup>

### **Other relevant themes in the literature**

It is worth briefly noting several themes that appear in library history studies on this time period, as these themes may appear in sources dealing with the Harlem library, and can be contextualized within the existing research if they do. These include the role of women's clubs, the discussion of libraries as educational institutions, and professionalization of the field.

#### **Women's Clubs**

In addition to work being done by library staff, some research has been done highlighting the contributions of library founders and supporters. Women's clubs played an important role in the founding of U.S. libraries (Dain, 1972; Finchum & Finchum, 2011; Stephens, 2004; Watson, 1994, 1996), and were so pivotal to the creation of libraries that they have been credited with founding 75 percent of the public libraries in the U.S. (Watson, 1996). Clubwomen were an important part of urban library development, when

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<sup>12</sup> Page 24 of Wiegand's 1999 article also shows gaps in the field as a whole, as Wiegand argues that the field has failed to construct many models to describe the information economy of individuals from a variety of backgrounds. While he is focused on individuals in this discussion, his discussion of the need for models to guide future Information Studies work points to the potential value in developing a model such as the CHI model being created for this study.

many other urban philanthropists were focused on other activities (e.g. Dain, 1972; Watson, 1994).<sup>13</sup>

Education was a major focus of the New York women's clubs, referred to as the New York Federation of Women's Clubs and Educational Associations, which included libraries within its work to promote a more educated public (Croly, 1898). Additionally, the library became a focus because it offered women a way to be involved in the public sphere while still engaging in an activity that was seen as appropriate for their gender (e.g. Gere, 1997; Stauffer, 2005; Watson, 1994, 1996). While much of the literature focuses on women's clubs and their role in the founding of libraries, the fact that they played a role in raising financial and political support sometimes meant that they could influence library collections and operations later on (e.g. increasing the holdings of Jewish history materials and raising funds to purchase new acquisitions) (Finchum & Finchum, 2011; Gere, 1997; Watson 1994).

Clubs have also been criticized for promoting agendas that supported the ideals of white, middle-class women, but that did not meet the needs of women of color and working-

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<sup>13</sup> Only one author (Ring, 1993) has argued that women's clubs were not effective at bringing libraries to their communities. In his study, Ring (1993) examined three rural communities and their clubwomen's efforts to found libraries. In the end, the clubwomen's efforts were hampered by lack of community support and infighting among stakeholders and town leaders, although Ring also attributes the women's lack of success to being more docile and submissive than urban women. He draws heavily from a fictional work on clubwomen to describe the mindset of real-life club members, and to offer what he feels is an accurate depiction of a group of timid and subservient women based on a description in a fictional piece. Watson (1994) offers a number of important critiques to Ring's work, and these may help to explain why his conclusions differ so widely from those found throughout the rest of the literature.



class women (Blair, 1980). It is unclear from the existing literature whether women's clubs played a significant role in Harlem's library, and if they did, if the goals of the clubwomen were aligned with Harlem community members' wants and needs. This gap in understanding is another reason to examine the Harlem library records to determine clubwomen's role (if any), and to see if clubwomen may have hindered the library's services, as Blair suggests.

## **Adult Education**

Education of the community is a theme that appears in a number of library history studies.<sup>14</sup> Lee (1996) points to the stances of a number of library administrators, who clarified the difference between formal educational institutions and libraries as such: "...the function of the school was to teach, while the function of the library was to give assistance in learning" (p. 68). This perspective gives the library a distinct role and value in U.S. culture, and a purpose not being filled by any other institution. The key concept underpinning all these activities is the library as a partner rather than a strict guide, as Lee (1996) suggests. Within this definition, adult education encompasses group activities, such as Ernestine Rose's events for local authors (Anderson, 2003) that allowed patrons to learn from their peers, as well as solitary educational activities. Education appears under a variety of guises, but activities and services that fall within this topic all share the common goal of enriching and enlightening adult community members outside of the context of formal education institutions (e.g. Lee, 1996; Rose, 1954; Pungitore, 1995; Wiegand, 2011; Williams, 1988).

The concept of community education is well documented in library history research.

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<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that the concept of "community education" here focuses on adult community members, as education for children comprises a considerable amount of the literature and is beyond the scope of this project.

In collecting “good books” that would enrich the community and the dismissal of fiction as a valuable part of the collection (e.g. Dain, 1975; Garrison, 1979; Wiegand, 1989, 2011), libraries at the turn of the century had the potential to restrict and shape reading habits based upon collection development practices. Rose worked at the Harlem library during a shift in librarianship away from “good books” that supported a certain vision of community enrichment, towards policies that upheld the importance of free access to best-fit materials (see Wiegand, 2011).<sup>15</sup> In 1939, the Library Bill of Rights, which emphasizes the importance of materials that meet patron needs over materials that promote certain social perspectives, was adopted by the American Library Association (Robbins, 1996). This change in approach during Rose’s time makes an in-depth examination of the Harlem records even more important, as it may shed light on how the institution navigated such a significant shift in one of the contexts surrounding it.

## **Professionalization**

Professionalization is another focus area of urban library historians, and describes the conversation among members of a field about how to be taken seriously as professionals who have specialized knowledge and, as such, can be turned to and respected as they share or apply that knowledge (Garrison, 1979). Latham (2011) indicates that there was tension between professionalization and service in Chicago libraries, and argues that this practice shifts the focus of professional activities towards image curation and away from meeting needs.

Shanley (1995) found that the New York City Library Employees’ Union opposed professionalization efforts, and instead tried to brand librarians as municipal civil servants,

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<sup>15</sup> Forrest Spaulding, who drafted the Bill, was also one of the most enthusiastic and thorough censors of library material in Iowa during World War I, according to his correspondence with the Iowa Council of National Defense (Skinner, 2010), and so experienced this shift as a professional as he led the field to be more access-oriented.

who organized around specific issues like wages. Both studies bring up an important point: A key part of professionalization is crafting a specific and unified professional identity. In Shanley (1995), administrators based this upon a vision of information professionals as existing in a white-collar role that the union members dismissed as elitist. It is unclear whether professionalization is discussed in the Harlem library records, although existing research on the controversy surrounding the promotion of Regina Anderson Andrews (Whitmire, 2011, 2014) suggests that there were concerns over the image of the library and library system, which may be understood by returning to the records and examining how (or whether) they describe what “professional identity” meant to the staff at that branch.

### **Change in the Literature**

The concept of change is a focus of this dissertation, as it includes the creation and testing of the Change in Historic Institutions (CHI) model. The model divides change into two types: Innovation and adaptation. While no formal theory building has been done using these concepts in previous research, examples of both are still present, and these can be used to describe the concepts as the model is formalized.

#### **Innovation**

Innovation is an idea that appears frequently in the literature, although the term itself is not always used. Innovation implies proactivity through either the embracing or catalyzing of change, and a perspective on change that envisions it as an opportunity for improvement rather than something to be resisted or passively adapted to (e.g. Anderson, 2003; Dain, 1975; Jenkins, 1990; Shanley, 1995). Pungitore (1995) argues that public libraries have served as innovating institutions throughout their history, and Dain (1975) envisions library innovation as taking place continuously, as libraries adapt to serve a changing society. In both cases, the examples of innovative activities the authors describe

only sometimes fall within the definition of innovation above, suggesting the need for clear definitions and a thoughtfully constructed model to inform future library history work.

Examples from several studies can be used to emphasize the fact that innovation does not involve trying new approaches at random. Instead, the reason a set of changes are considered innovative is that they are framed as ways to increase the library's value to the community, for example through building collections that allow patrons in an underserved community to research and understand their history (Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1990). Additionally, innovation does not necessarily imply the addition of new services, activities, or roles for staff, but sometimes also means rejecting existing models when those models are not serving the needs of the library or community (e.g. the rejection of Carnegie funds when their acceptance might strain existing community tensions. See Latham 2010; Martin 1998). Other innovative activity has to do with the founding of libraries and the expansion of urban libraries through the addition of branch libraries, which was common between 1880 and 1895 (Rose, 1954).<sup>16</sup>

Ernestine Rose serves as a useful example of innovation within this definition. Anderson (2003) describes many of Rose's activities as contributing to a strong and vibrant community, and Rose's own writing offers a glimpse into the mindset that informed some of this work. In her 1954 book, she describes the patron perception of the library in the following way: "Most people judge...every agency with which they come in contact—in terms of personal experience rather than in terms of all-round knowledge, a knowledge, which includes historical background, organizational details, objectives, and problems" (p. 5). Rose's focus on meeting patrons where they are and to bear their personal experience in

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<sup>16</sup> Increasing access to information for the city as a whole (Dain, 1972) or for specific populations (e.g. Novotny, 2003) were both concerns, and the most fundamental way to increase access was to build a library (e.g. Mallory, 1995).

mind would have been a newer perspective that would have aligned with that informing the Library Bill of Rights that was adopted during her time in Harlem (see Robbins, 1996).

The types of innovations that Rose implemented (e.g. readings and networking opportunities for local authors and others in the creative community) suggest that she was focused on making changes that improved the patron experience while enhancing the role of the library in the community, which ties in to the definition of innovation above, and which ties in with descriptions of her work in existing studies (Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1990). Even advancements that end up being unsuccessful, such as the reader's advisory service mentioned in Williams (1988), are still innovative because they represent new approaches to meeting community needs.

Innovation could take place in small-scale settings (e.g. a new program at a public library) or on a larger scale (e.g. the decision among a group of librarians to shift services in their institutions in a new way). Novotny (2003) describes a nationwide debate among librarians about how to serve immigrant populations, with an emphasis on libraries in Chicago. This conversation, and the resulting experiments with improving service, are innovative because those involved are actively responding to a perceived need in the community. Similarly, Dickson (1986) described the variety of populations served through the Works Progress Association (WPA) library program, including prisoners and patients in mental hospitals. Finally, Latham (2013) and Pozzi (2013) described services to immigrants within a single library. Even if they are responding to a change in their communities (an influx of immigrants), they are not reacting to a change that is impacting the library in a way that cannot be avoided (e.g. budget cuts, new legislation) and that can be adapted to without changing the course of library activities, which would make their activities fall under the definition of adaptation provided below.

Luyt (2007) argued that many historians do not envision the library as a social institution and study it without the amount of context it needs. Luyt's (2007) understanding of library history research gives the impression that it would be hard to call a library innovative, as the research does not contextualize the institution within its community. However, many other authors whose work was written before and after Luyt's article have discussed the context in which libraries and librarians operated, whether that context be the field, the city, or society as a whole, and their research encourages others to situate libraries within a context and to critically engage with that context (e.g. Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1991; Maack, 1982; Novotny, 2011; Wiegand, 1989). Wiegand (2011) argues that libraries serve as a harmonizing force in communities, and whether that role is a proactive one or an adaptive one, many of the authors cited here point to the library as a vital part of the community that seeks to serve its patrons as best as possible. Anderson (2003) is quick to point out that innovative activity does not occur in a vacuum. Using the example of the Harlem library, she describes how its story does not belong to any one figure, but to everyone who came together to make an impact and to shape the library in ways that made it more meaningful for the community.

## **Adaptation**

The primary difference between adaptation and innovation is that innovation includes responses to perceived needs in the local community that are often novel and sometimes wildly experimental, but are done to improve service to the community without being pressed to do so. Adaptation, on the other hand, involves responses to an explicit outside pressure, so can be thought of as reactive in nature. For example, libraries around the U.S. responded to World War I by changing their activities and acquisitions focus in response to the country's official stance on the conflict. During the period of United States

neutrality, for example, they offered information about both sides of the conflict, but began to censor materials about the German perspective after the United States entered the war (Skinner, 2013; Wiegand, 1989).

Under this definition, those changes in collection and censorship activities were in response to an external pressure, and were in line with something the library is being asked to do, or needed to do to adapt to a certain situation. In many cases, pieces that use the term “innovation” are actually describing adaptation (e.g. Finchum & Finchum, 2011; Novotny, 2011; Pungitore, 1995; Seavey, 2003; Woodford, 1965). Like innovation, adaptation is an idea that exists at the intersection of libraries and the broader community or culture, but while innovation deals with proactive community engagement, adaptation involves reaction to changes taking place in that broader context.

Several authors argued that Great Depression-era libraries were innovative because they responded well to the challenges of the Depression and continued to offer needed services. For example, increased circulation and demand for library services during the Great Depression, or the remodeling of library buildings under the Works Progress Administration (e.g. Pungitore, 1995), are examples of libraries responding to needs or funding opportunities (increased demand by patrons seeking inexpensive resources and entertainment; eligibility for federal assistance from a widely-used program) rather than anticipating needs and seeking ways to address them in new ways. While libraries did what they could with the resources available, it is important to note that each activity engaged in during the Depression (or any time period) cannot be considered to be innovative simply because the library was flexible in the face of challenges. The same external pressure can offer the potential for innovative and adaptive change in libraries. For example, cutting hours to save money but trying to stay open during the busiest times is an adaptation to financial stress; using the same financial crisis as an opportunity to provide job training

and budget workshops in the library is innovative.

Some of the broad histories that identify trends within the field also focus on adaptation. Harris' (1972, 1973) revisionist history of libraries raises important questions about the motivations of libraries as agents of social reform. While those reform efforts themselves might be considered innovative, Harris situates them as reactive activities, in which libraries are created and run to respond to a perceived social problem and/or uphold a given social order. In Dain's (1975) response, libraries are situated in a more innovative light, and also analyzed as complex institutions with more depth and nuance than Harris presents. While Dain (1975) does acknowledge that not everything libraries did was innovative, she does call for examination in much greater depth so that innovative library activities, or at least a more nuanced understanding of adaptive ones, could be uncovered. Other authors have also focused on adaptation. Like Harris, Martin (1998) argues that library change has taken place in response to societal pressures, and offers a broad history that conceptualizes trends in the field solely as responsive activities, and not as activities that occur as a result of engaging with local needs (e.g. bringing language materials to a local immigrant population) or experimenting with new service models and activities to improve the library without being pressured to do so.

It is likely that both adaptive and innovative change will appear in the Harlem Public Library records, particularly as the library existed in a neighborhood that was seeing a surge of creative activity, as well as being a neighborhood whose residents may have experienced discrimination based upon their race and class. In addition, the library was functioning during a time of financial uncertainty and the onset of World War II. These multiple, dynamic contexts, and the existing research on the Harlem Public Library as a community-oriented institution (e.g. Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1990; Whitmire, 2014) make this an excellent institution within which to test a theory of change, and encourages a



thorough examination of the records to see the different ways in which the library adapted and innovated under Rose's leadership.

### **Conclusion**

There is considerable precedence for this project in the literature, as seen in works in Information Studies and elsewhere that discuss Ernestine Rose and the Harlem Public Library (e.g. Anderson, 2003; Arns & Daniel, 2007; Hutchinson, 2011; Jenkins, 1990; Tolson, 1998; Whitmire 2007, 2014), as well as works that focus on NYPL and other urban library systems (e.g. Dain, 1972, 1975, 1991; Lyndernberg, 1972; Shanley, 1995). Other studies offer analyses dealing with trends in libraries at the time (e.g. Garrison, 1979; Latham, 2011; Lee, 1996; Wiegand, 1989), as well as discussions of change in libraries (e.g. Mallory, 1995; Pungitore, 1995).

However, none of these use historical analysis as an opportunity to test theories or develop frameworks, and the studies on innovation (e.g. Pungitore, 1995) tend to not define this term in a way that separates it from adaptation. There are also differences in the level of critical engagement with subjects, ranging from studies that focus primarily or solely on the positive aspects of a library's history within a community (e.g. Woodford, 1965), to those that question the role of different privileges within that space (e.g. Dain, 1991). All of this begs for a return to the records, using thoughtful analysis and coding, to discover trends and to situate those records and library activities within the myriad contexts in which they existed.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHOD

#### Introduction

Qualitative content analysis offers a variety of benefits and challenges to the researcher who uses it, as well as the potential to construct a rich narrative surrounding a historical event and its context. This chapter covers the method and the reasons it was selected, the different considerations that must be taken into account prior to using this method, including how to minimize issues such as bias that could diminish the quality of the final piece, and describes how credibility will be established in this study.

#### Qualitative Research Paradigm

Qualitative content analysis, unlike quantitative analysis, is concerned with “the processes through which texts depict ‘reality’ rather than with whether such texts contain true or false statements” (Silverman, 160). While quantitative analysis is more geared toward categorization and the presence or absence of factual information, qualitative analysis focuses on using written representations to understand the lived experience of the actors in the situation of interest (Atkinson & Coffey, 2004; Silverman, 2005). In the case of this study, which analyzes library administrative documents, “lived experience” refers to describing the experiences of the actors within the library, by describing the library itself, as well as activities and functions engaged in by individuals as described in the records. In addition, if any materials offer personal accounts or discussions of individual viewpoints, these will be examined and described thoroughly in order to engage with the concept of 'lived experience' as described in the literature.

Qualitative analysis is more subjective than quantitative analysis, but it also allows for more depth of understanding (Busha & Harter, 1980; Schutt, 2009). Qualitative content

analysis was selected for this study because of this focus on depth over breadth, and also because it is an accepted method when working with historical documents. In historical studies, many researchers use content analysis but do not explicitly describe its application in the work they publish. Instead, they focus on sharing the story that is told by the documents without the added benefit of indicating their criteria for selecting those documents, mentioning any documents that were not consulted, or outlining issues they encountered in performing their analysis (e.g. Anderson, 2003; Finchum & Finchum, 2011; Woodford, 1965). Wiegand (1999) has tried to encourage further use of the method by calling on library historians to draw upon the stores of primary sources found in libraries around the country, and others have pushed for the use of analyses that draw from book history traditions (Goedeken, 2005), but even these articles do not delve deeply into descriptions of the method or its most effective use.

In other cases, the approach to content analysis or a discussion of limitations is included, although only briefly (e.g. Knox, 2013; Skinner, 2013; Wiegand, 1989). However, most of the library history literature that describes methodology in any depth is analysis of secondary literature (e.g. citation analyses, literature reviews) (Goedeken, 2005), and not the qualitative analysis of primary sources. Since there is little work on best practices for qualitative content analysis within library history, many of the best practices outlined here have been drawn from discussions of research methods on a broader scale, with examples from historical work.

### **Qualitative Content Analysis**

Schutt (2009) refers to content analysis as “a research method for systematically analyzing and making inferences from text” (p. 454). The researcher begins with the documents of interest, and then develops procedures for coding various aspects of the information contained therein. Schutt’s description is more thematic and iterative in nature

than the content analysis described by other authors (e.g. Neuendorf, 2002), who view content analysis as largely being a process of categorization. The type of qualitative analysis used in this project is subjective in nature; it does not seek to verify hypotheses and cannot be generalized to a larger population. Instead, it focuses on understanding the reality in which the document creators lived (Silverman, 2005).

Allowing trends to emerge from the records requires the researcher to go into her work with less concern for detecting patterns early, thereby avoiding the danger of settling on one interpretation without full saturation in the data (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011, p. 40). By privileging subjective data, researchers are encouraged to understand the intentions of actors and more deeply grasp the context in which they operated, which is particularly important in historical research (Budd, 1995).

This orientation aligns with Atkinson and Coffey (2004) and Silverman (2005), who argue that qualitative work focuses on using written representations to understand the lived experience of the actors in the situation of interest. It also allows one to examine trends over time (Berg, 2001), which is useful when describing change in an historical institution. Content analysis of library administrative documents has been used by many library historians (e.g. Goedecken, 2010; Little, 2012; Nix, 2007; Novotny, 2011; Ryan, 2013; Searing, 2012; Skinner 2012, 2013; Weigand, 1989, 2011; Whitmire, 2007), providing substantial precedent for its use in this project. While the subject matter and time periods differ, each study uses similar documents (those produced as a part of the library's operation) to draw conclusions about a topic of interest. These types of documents will be collectively referred to as library administrative records. Library administrative records include board meeting minutes, circulation and accession records, annual reports, letters sent and received about library matters, and other documentation produced during the operation of the library.

In the existing literature (e.g. Nix, 2007; Ryan, 2013; Skinner, 2012), the final representation of the documents, and the arguments made based upon them, is not made until the text has been interpreted, meaning that while it has inherent and interpreted meaning, the text also has emergent meaning, thus utilizing all three of the approaches found across social science literature to construct the richest possible interpretation of the text. Throughout the evolution of this method, meaning within texts has been conceptualized in a variety of ways. Krippendorff (2004) categorizes the literature on meaning in works under three types: those that define content as being inherent in the text, those that take meaning to be a property of the source of the text, and those that define it as emerging during the process of analysis of the text. Each approach is valuable, and each can be true at different times depending on how the text is approached.

The goal of using qualitative content analysis is to rely upon these emergent trends, rather than imposing structure upon the data (Silverman, 2005), which previous work has shown to be effective in the interpretation of library administrative records. While there is precedent for the use of this method in historical research, there are a number of considerations (described below) that are important to take into account prior to engaging this particular approach.

### **The Role of the Researcher**

Appleby, Hunt, & Jacob (1994) trace three intellectual absolutisms that they argue have impacted historians' work and self-perceptions as researchers. Until the twentieth century, all these approaches focused on a detached and "objective" (or at least framed as such) reality, described in research that outlined orderly change and neat boundaries. It was only later on that this objective approach came under fire, and that researchers were encouraged to engage with histories that were not always clear-cut, and to describe change

that was not systematic. In fact, earlier historians were so eager to avoid the complications of “shifting personal perspectives” (p. 243) that they avoided any sort of philosophical discussions by lumping them together under “theory” and quickly dismissing them (Appleby, Hunt, & Jacob, 1994), which may help to explain why the application and testing of theory in historical work is minimal.

The first of these absolutisms (the heroic model of science) had its basis in the Enlightenment and prompted historians to engage with their work in an objective and detached manner. The second (the idea of progress), encouraged historians to see societal change as always moving in an upward, linear progression that took place in orderly, sequential stages. With this mindset came the assumption that “beneath the flow of daily actions of men and women there was an undertow of forces pulling those actions into orderly processes of change” (p. 241). The last arose from powerful national identity in the nineteenth century, and urged historians to place their countries within the larger design of world history.

While earlier American historians “chose to think of themselves as empiricists seeking to discover and document objective facts” (Appleby, Hunt, & Jacob, 1994, p. 243), critics have encouraged work that is more subjective and relativist in nature, and takes into account multiple viewpoints and contexts. This means that the role of the researcher is to describe the sources thoughtfully and accurately, sharing what is in the documents and the contexts surrounding those documents openly and honestly. They also urge the researcher to be aware of the gap between the documents themselves and the interpretation of those documents (Appleby, Hunt, & Jacob, 1994), which for this study includes documenting any potential biases or gaps in understanding that might impact interpretation.

Creswell (2003) offers a handful of guidelines for the role of the researcher in qualitative work. These include explicitly identifying “biases, values, and personal interests

about their research topic and process” (p. 184). He also suggests including contextual information to help the audience understand the topic and individuals of interest, indicating steps taken to secure permission from the Institutional Review Board, and explicitly stating how the study will address potential ethical issues that may arise.

### **Data Sources**

Because of the nature of historical records, there are some special considerations that must be attended to when using them for research. Dealing with lost, damaged, or incomplete records is a risk of working with any archival collection. In Skinner (2010; 2012; 2013) the records of interest included all administrative records that libraries produced between 1912 and 1920. However, the different libraries that maintained records had vastly different collections in regards to content, condition, and completeness, ranging from two notebooks of meeting minutes to a diverse collection of meticulously maintained and cataloged materials.

These discrepancies made comparing the documents challenging. To account for this, the records from each institution were analyzed individually, with notes made about trends within those particular records or examples of trends that had been identified in the existing literature (e.g. Coughlin, 1952; Geller, 1984; Robbins, 1996; Wiegand, 1989). These individual analyses were compiled, and comparisons were drawn from them. In some cases, comparisons could not be made, and/or the information did not create a complete picture. When this occurred, the information that was available was provided, and a description of what was missing and what could not be known because of that was included. For example, one library’s accession records show the deaccessioning of a number of German-language books in 1917 with no reason listed, but it is unclear if this was a part of regular weeding or if the removal of those items was a part of the widespread censorship occurring during this time (Skinner, 2010).

Wiegand (1989) also acknowledged what was present and absent in the records he examined, and described what conclusions he was unable to draw as a result. Krippendorff (2013) indicates that in some cases, inferences can be drawn even when some data is missing. In his example, FCC researchers listened to World War II German radio broadcasts, and created elaborate constructs over several years that helped explain the patterns they were seeing. In some cases they could use their deep understanding of the subject to fill in missing pieces in the data stream, all of which helped them in analyzing and predicting Axis military activity.

This deep understanding of the materials and the context in which they were created is an advantage of using this approach, particularly when informed and thoughtful inferences can be drawn. It also underscores a potential shortcoming: relying on inferences based on too little information, or relying on inferences too heavily when examples can be given from the data. Waltz, Strickland, and Lenz (2005) point out that original source data may not have been compiled systematically, which might create doubts about accuracy or completeness. Like other researchers who urge the following practice to avoid bias (Busha & Harter, 1980; Danto, 2008; Tuchman, 1994), they recommend drawing from as many sources as possible to account for possible lost information.

### **Context**

According to Danto (2008), one of the joys and challenges of historical work is that it purposely focuses on the context surrounding the topic of interest. The larger contexts in place at the time of a document's creation can shape what is included and omitted from the document, and how subjects are framed within it. For example, Skinner (2013) found that libraries sometimes left out important details of board meeting conversations that were described as heated or unpopular. This also ties into issues of bias, as bias can be present within the actual source documents as well as within their analysis, and this potential bias



is something to be aware of when trying to accurately reflect the information they contain. Similarly, Sreedharan (2007) argues that a document cannot be properly interpreted without thinking about the meaning of the document and its wording in the way it may have been interpreted at the time of its creation. The CHI and Information Worlds frameworks were selected for this study specifically because they are context-focused and might assist with this interpretation.

While context informs the experiences of actors and the creation of source documents, those experiences and documents can also help to shed light on that context. As Bentz and Shapiro (1998) state, “the individual phenomenon, no matter how ‘small,’ is used to understand a larger social trend or social structure” (p. 135). This means that, in conducting qualitative content analysis on a small amount of documents, the depth with which researchers describe those documents can add a vibrancy and richness to the breadth of understanding that comes with larger-scale quantitative analyses.

Just as a context surrounds the creation of source documents, a different context surrounds the researcher(s) who analyze those materials as they create their own documents. This context might influence how historic documents are interpreted, and may also be influenced by other contexts (e.g. that of the archive and its staff) that might alter the presentation of documents based upon how they are classified. These contexts are important to bear in mind as well in order to avoid bias in data analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

The analysis of the source documents, held online and in repositories in New York City, began in September and December of 2014. The repositories were visited in person, and in the case of the New York Public Library’s central branch, the repository also warranted a second visit after additional documents were found. At each repository, those documents that appeared to be relevant were photographed or scanned in order to conduct

the iterative analysis needed to complete this study. The purpose of the analysis was to apply coding frameworks developed for the CHI framework and Information Worlds theory to the documents, and to discuss how or whether the concepts within each appear in the materials.

Prior to conducting the in-person analysis, a group of volunteer coders conducted a pilot test of the coding frameworks using several sample documents. The coders compared their work, and the coding frameworks were found to be applicable to the documents. These steps were conducted to improve the dependability of the findings (DuBois, 1924, 1930; Peixetto, 1923; Rose, 1931a, 1931b). This coding process is discussed in more detail below.

## **Overview of Approach**

Data analysis using qualitative content analysis is necessarily iterative, since documents need to be visited and revisited as themes emerge and as different connections or bits of information become significant and need to be teased out. This very in-depth work gives the researcher a wealth of information, but does not give the researcher a complete picture of the phenomenon, as different interpretations may be reached depending on how the study was framed (Krippendorf, 2013). Richardson (1997) uses an analogy of a crystal when describing how qualitative studies might be framed: All the studies look at the same phenomenon (the crystal) but come away with different visions of the crystal based on which facet they chose. The researcher's job is to describe their facet thoroughly and thoughtfully so it can be understood on its own and as a part of the larger world.

As Danto (2008) argues, this much smaller but richer focal point is more appropriate for qualitative document analysis, where building the story of the research subject within its context is more valuable and feasible than attempting to conduct statistical analyses or arrive at an objective understanding. To put it another way, "Qualitative content analysis

goes beyond merely counting words or extracting objective content from texts to examine meanings, themes and patterns that may be manifest or latent in a particular text. It allows researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner” (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).

Danto (2008) urges researchers to visit collections of primary sources in person, even if digital copies are available. This allows for rich analysis and an understanding of the individual document and its place in the collection (and the place of the collection within the larger institution), which can help the researcher understand how its creators and collectors contextualize it, and assist the researcher in representing the documents and their context more accurately. Schutt (2009) refers to this focus on context as holistic research, which is “concerned with the context in which events occurred and the interrelations among different events and processes: ‘how different conditions or parts fit together’” (p. 427).

### **Coding for the Two Theories**

This study explored the use of theory in historical work, based upon the gap in the research identified by other authors (e.g. Wiegand, 1999). To do this, the author tested the Information Worlds and CHI theories in order to understand the extent to which they assisted in interpretation of historical documents by providing a framework for analysis. As mentioned above, the goal was to code for the presence of the theories, without imposing anything upon the analysis that was not present within the documents themselves. This makes it vital to construct coding frameworks that account for the major facets of each theory, without creating such rigid coding categories that the researcher risks molding the data to fit into them.

Sample coding frameworks were developed for Information Worlds and CHI.<sup>17</sup> A pilot test was conducted on a small number of documents (DuBois 1924, DuBois 1930, Rose 1931a, Rose 1931b), in order to determine whether the coding frameworks required adjustment prior to being used with the document set as a whole. These test documents were selected as they were available online and could be accessed by the volunteer coders without travel to New York City. In addition, they had more content than some of the other items in the collection, and so had more potential to include information that could be coded within the frameworks. After the pilot coding was completed, the researchers compared their findings and discussed the use of both frameworks in this context. This discussion indicated that the two frameworks could be applied to this type of document successfully, and allowed the researchers to come to an agreement about where specific instances of each coding concept appeared in the documents.

Krippendorff (2013) points out that different interpretations can be reached based upon the field or tradition in which one has been trained, as well as the research questions they select. He says those coming from different contexts can still reach an agreement with their coding and analysis, provided that a single interpretation has been decided upon as a point of reference (e.g. a research question or research questions that content could be classified under) and that those using this interpretation to guide their analyses understand it and agree upon its use. This focus on discussion and agreement was the basis for the sample coding. The resulting coding frameworks and lessons learned from the pilot project could then be applied to the documents as a whole.

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<sup>17</sup> The author, along with Jisue Lee, Jonathan Hollister, and Gary Burnett have formed a research team called 3 Js and a G to create a codebook for Information Worlds across three dissertation projects (3 Js and a G, 2014). This group did the pilot coding for both theoretical frameworks, although the CHI coding framework was developed by the author, instead of with the group.

Based upon the pilot coding, the author and fellow coders decided that coding at the paragraph level was more practical than coding at the sentence level, as coding by sentence was unnecessarily repetitive and resulted in coding the same information multiple times. Many of the Information Worlds concepts appeared in tandem in a document, and they appeared often enough that it became very repetitive to code at the sentence level. To address this, the documents are coded at the paragraph or section level, so that areas where different concepts appear are highlighted without this repetition. According to the codebook, “The concepts making up the Theory are not mutually exclusive categories, but interact with one another within any given Information World. For example, an individual, operating as a specific Social Type at a Boundary between two Worlds, may engage in specific behaviors (Social Norms) in such a way that those behaviors reflect a certain set of Information Values, and may also simultaneously engage in specific Information Behaviors. Thus, coding practices using the Theory should always allow for the use of as many codes as are relevant at any given time in the coding of data” (Burnett, Lee, Hollister, Skinner, 2014, p. 1).

Alternately, the concepts outlined in the CHI theory tended to only appear once in a document, as these concepts appear at different points in time (e.g. a change is described in one document, and the impacts of the change might be described in documents created after the change has taken place). To ensure consistency, the CHI theory was also coded for at the paragraph level, although separate concepts very rarely appeared in different parts of the same document.

One of the challenges that arose with coding for CHI was that an item could describe elements of both innovative and adaptive change. This was something that appeared in our pilot coding as well as in the full coding for this project. For example, in her statement (Rose, 1922) on serving populations and discouraging segregation, Rose is speaking from

her experiences adapting library services to different populations based on the kinds of collections those populations may find valuable, but is also engaged in innovative change by encouraging more inclusive library spaces and speaking against segregation. However, most changes described in the analysis clearly fell within one definition or the other.

The documents in New York City are held at the New York Public Library's archives, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York City Municipal Archives, and Columbia University.<sup>18</sup> In addition, 53 items in the W.E.B. DuBois papers (W.E.B. DuBois papers, 1803-1999) were coded. These were selected from the 93 items in the collection that mention Ernestine Rose, as they contained substantive content<sup>19</sup> that could be coded. The decision to add these digitized items to the analysis came after visits with the collections in New York City revealed limited information on race relations and the library. These additional items document letters to and from library staff not recorded in the library's collections, thus filling gaps in understanding of the library and allowing for the inclusion of a perspective of someone not employed by the library, which speaks to the call for completeness and the use of diverse resources mentioned earlier.

The collections held in each repository were sorted through in person, and those items that might be relevant were reproduced in order to be more thoroughly analyzed later. Table One represents the number of documents coded in each repository. Hundreds of

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<sup>18</sup> Due to constraints on time and the project's scope, not every document that might be relevant was consulted. For instance, Regina Andrews' papers, which have been previously consulted by Whitmire (2014) in her book on Andrews' life, were left out as only a small portion of the collection might be relevant.

<sup>19</sup> Many of the other items consisted of only a few lines (e.g. confirming a meeting time), so did not have enough information to be coded. This was true for some items in the other collections as well.

documents were reproduced,<sup>20</sup> although some (such as circulation statistics) were useful for providing context, but were not appropriate for theory coding.

During the initial data gathering process, notes were kept in Word documents about each document's significance and location, in order to make organizing and coding items easier later on. Once the digital reproductions of the items were in hand, they were organized by a number corresponding to the entry in the notes, and organized in folders by repository along with the notes.

One of the potential constraints of these theories is that it is hard to apply them to all administrative documents, particularly those that rely primarily on objectively reporting facts and less on describing context or one's interpretation of events. Therefore, things like meeting minutes and letters tended to be the richest sources of theory coding, while other administrative documents, such as accession lists, were used primarily to provide additional understanding of the library context by describing daily library activities.

Many of these documents were especially interesting to code because they were written from the perspective of a single individual, and so offer that person's perceptions of the world(s) and behaviors being coded. However, those may not match up with others' views. For example, in Rose's statement on library segregation, there may have been Southern librarians in the audience who did not work with African-American patrons because they were excluded from using their local libraries (Litwack, 1998). For better or worse, these librarians may have not thought of services in the way she described. Their papers might show a different perspective on events, and frame those events within the contexts of different worlds, such as more explicitly discussing the legal structures of Jim

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<sup>20</sup> The process of reproducing items varied by repository. For example, the Schomburg's collections could be photographed, but collections at the New York Public Library's central branch could not be, and had to be scanned by a staff member.

Crow, or why they felt that library services should be exclusive. One of the limitations of this study is necessarily that some perspectives may be missing because documentation written by every individual in every one of these contexts is not available. Therefore, every effort has been made to compare what does exist to see how different individuals agree and disagree in their descriptions of worlds, and to try to create as complete a picture as possible from that comparison.

### **Verification of Findings**

In this kind of subjective analysis, traditional definitions of reliability (the consistency of results between measurements), and validity (the extent to which an operation measures the variable(s) intended) may not be entirely appropriate (see Schutt, 2009).<sup>21</sup> According to Zhang and Wildemuth (2009), reliability and validity are a part of the positivist research paradigm that differs fundamentally from the qualitative approach, making these considerations ill-suited for judging the results of qualitative work, although elsewhere Golafshani (2003) believes the terms can be redefined to fit qualitative approaches.

While the positivist criteria are not truly applicable to qualitative analyses, there are some lessons they can provide about conducting good research. One of these is to be thoughtful and deliberate in constructing measurement instruments, including those constructed in tandem with data collection and analysis. One of the most fundamental ways to increase reliability and validity is to carefully create any data capturing instruments being used (Danto, 2008). According to Danto, "Data capture is the process by which data are taken from real-world primary sources, and sometimes from secondary sources, and entered into a format that gives the information a clear and understandable shape" (p. 43).

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<sup>21</sup> However, Bryman (2006) argues that validity can be improved by showing how the snippets of text or from interviews fit into the larger work, which can help readers to distinguish whether or not these selections represent the phenomenon accurately.



These instruments vary greatly between studies, but in the case of qualitative content analysis might include a list of terms or ideas that guide the reading of the documents based upon the research questions, and which can be added to or modified over time in light of trends that emerge from the data. In response to the problems posed by the poor fit of the positivist concepts of reliability and validity, Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed a set of alternatives (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability) that are more effective for evaluating qualitative research, and classify these as criteria underneath the broader concept of trustworthiness. In addition, trustworthiness is described throughout the literature on this method and offers an alternative to the concept of validity that is better suited to qualitative work (e.g. Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).

Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) drew upon Lincoln & Guba's (1985) work in their discussion of trustworthiness in qualitative research. The criteria they use are credibility (whether the research provides an adequate representation of the object of study), transferability (how well one's research question can be applied to another context), and dependability (how coherent the research process is to another researcher). All of these criteria rely upon being transparent in reporting processes and findings, and in sharing one's work with other researchers. Trustworthiness is described in a variety of ways, but most boil down to whether or not a researcher can be reasonably considered to be sharing an accurate and complete representation of the subject at hand. In Lincoln and Guba's (1985) words, "How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?" (p. 290).

### **Establishing Trustworthiness**

**Credibility** Credibility refers to the "adequate representation of the constructions of the social world under study" (Bradley, 1993, p.436). This criterion relates

to the issues surrounding context, representativeness, and accuracy. For example, Anderson (2003) gives a rich description of the Harlem community that surrounded the library branch and its staff who were the focus of her study. However, Whitmire (2007, 2014) interpreted some of the events Anderson described differently. In part this was because each focused on different aspects of the history of the Harlem library (an overall history of Rose's involvement versus the history of Regina Anderson Andrews' promotion and career), but their descriptions of the debate surrounding Andrews' promotion show different levels of tension and disagreement, and offer evidence of a need to return to the original documents to understand how the debate was originally described.

Establishing credibility in qualitative content analysis is a way to show the representativeness of the documents. In quantitative work, the concept of representativeness refers to how well the sample selected for a study "represents" the population of interest in all respects that are relevant to the phenomenon of interest. This helps increase the likelihood that the results can be generalized to the population as a whole (Schutt, 2009). However, the goal of qualitative analysis is not to seek breadth by representing a population, but instead to seek depth by very thoroughly describing one portion of a larger population (or the entirety of a very small population) (Schutt, 2009).

When thinking about credibility in this instance, it is again important to remember that the work should be representative of the chosen aspect of a topic, not representative of the subject as a whole. Richardson's (1997) crystal metaphor illustrates this beautifully and envisions research subjects and the validity of research as being complex and approachable from a variety of angles.

While Richardson initially used this metaphor to discuss validity, it has been used elsewhere as a justification for the value of qualitative research and the subjective

approaches that may be used. It also illustrates the importance of order and rigor throughout the research process, and takes into account the internal (researcher-centered) and external (contextual) qualities of the work (Markham and Baym, 2009). This concept of representativeness as a complete representation of a small facet of a larger structure is an idea that ties in with the ideas of trustworthiness, credibility, bias, context, and accuracy discussed elsewhere.

### *Enhancing Credibility*

According to Silverman (2005), researchers rarely outline their criteria for including certain documents and not others. As a result, it is often difficult to determine the typicality or representativeness of these instances and the findings they inform. To increase credibility, it is important to share the criteria for inclusion and exclusion and to generate findings that are transparent about bias present in the work. Often, the beginnings of this can be seen in statements of scope and/or in research questions, which place boundaries around the phenomenon being examined and describe or imply the viewpoint from which it will be viewed (e.g. Garrison, 1979; Maack, 1982; Watson, 1994). However, confidence in a study's representativeness can also be fostered by walking the reader through the data and showing how the source materials tie in with research goals, and to give examples of materials that were excluded and the reasons why (Silverman, 2005).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) have several suggestions for improving credibility, and all of these relate to a thorough and thoughtful research process. These include prolonged engagement with the subject and the data surrounding it, and checking interpretations against the data. These suggestions tie in with some of the arguments mentioned previously that urge researchers to make inferences carefully and thoughtfully, and to interact with as many source documents as possible. Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Zhang

and Wildemuth (2009) also stress the importance of transparency in coding practices and the process of drawing conclusions in order to make research more credible.

### **Transferability**

In quantitative analysis, transferability refers to the extent to which a researcher's hypothesis can be applied to different contexts. In qualitative analyses, the researcher does not need to be concerned with quantifying how this might occur (Zheng & Wildemuth, 2009). Lincoln and Guba (1985) highlight that transferability is highly context-dependent, because results offer only a "portrayal" of a situation (p. 214) rather than striving to present an objective truth. However, researchers should provide clear and complete descriptions of research processes and data sets that will allow other researchers to judge to what extent that approach or subject can be related to other research projects (Zheng & Wildemuth, 2009).

This relates to the need for transparency described above, and to the importance of ensuring accuracy and representativeness in records, and for clearly describing the coding categories that arose during content analysis. For example, Wiegand (1989) created a set of timeframes for describing the context surrounding World War I-era libraries (prewar, neutrality, wartime, and postwar), and this framework was applied in research elsewhere (e.g. Skinner, 2010, 2013), while some of his findings about wartime libraries (most notably his discussions of censorship) were compared with library records that were analyzed in other studies (e.g. Kimball, 2007).

As with any qualitative analysis, the exact procedure and research question(s) may not be transferable to other research contexts. However, other aspects of the study might be. For example, the different kinds of documents (library administrative records) that are useful for this project are similar to those used in other studies (e.g. Maack, 1982; Novotny,

2010; Skinner, 2012; Wiegand, 1989). These sources that seem most valued for this kind of research as they can be traced directly to the library itself, and allow authors to make clear inferences about library operations and possible motivations behind them.

Other authors may look at records created by community groups or individuals as they relate to the library (e.g. Pawley, 2001) or may rely upon newspaper articles as sources when describing the portrayal of the library in the media (some of this is seen in Wiegand, 1989). Many of the individual studies within the literature rely on multiple types of resources to describe the issues they study from as many angles as possible. Other parts of this research (e.g. coding sample documents when doing theory testing) may also be transferable to other research contexts.

### **Dependability**

The final aspect of trustworthiness to be covered is dependability, or how coherent the research process and findings are to another researcher (Zhang & Wildemuth 2009). One of the most significant ways this study's dependability can be improved is through a clear discussion of how the CHI and Information Worlds theories have been applied to the documents.<sup>22</sup> The existing literature on Rose and the Harlem library (e.g. Anderson, 2003) points to innovative change, but describing and modeling change has not been an explicit goal of any previous study. The lack of precedent for this theoretical work with historic documents makes careful coding even more important, in order to describe the ways in which the theories are present in the materials as accurately as possible.

One way to make the findings more credible is to have other coders go through documents in order to develop a dependable codebook. Using intercoder reliability

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<sup>22</sup> This also helped with credibility, as showing this process will help increase trust in the final research as something conducted thoughtfully and transparently, and with a reasonable application of theories to source documents.

(Mayring, 2000) gives the researcher more confidence that their interpretation of the documents is reasonable. For this project, two other doctoral students and a faculty member assisted with the pilot coding by going through documents and identifying items that they believed were related to the two theoretical frameworks, as described above. Previous work has found that discrepancies between coders' results can be mitigated by comparing and discussing coded material early and often (Creswell, 2003), and this approach was used in this coding as well. Additionally, peer debriefing, in which another researcher reviews the research and asks questions (Cresswell, 2003), took place during the dissertation writing process. Peer debriefing allowed for an outside perspective beyond the researcher's to address areas that were unclear or required reworking before the study was completed (Cresswell, 2003).

### **Accuracy**

In addition to credibility, transferability, dependability, it is important to consider how accurately specific instances are portrayed in the findings. Qualitative analysis focuses on using written representations to understand the lived experience of the actors in the situation of interest (Atkinson & Coffey, 2004; Silverman, 2005). Accuracy in this context refers to depicting those lived experiences and the contexts surrounding them as closely to the reality of the experience as possible. This is different from credibility, which stresses a complete representation of a phenomenon of interest. These two concepts work in tandem to foster an understanding of a phenomenon that is both true to the data and as complete a picture as possible.

Budd (1995) encourages researchers to focus on approaches that give agency to the actors within the documents, which has the potential to paint a more accurate picture of the time by highlighting the fact that individuals in all time periods behave intentionally

and their behaviors are informed by a variety of motivations. One way to do this is to carefully read the material of interest to develop a sense of the language being used, and the divisions into which data might fall. During this process, it is also important to remember the conceptual orientation informing the analysis (which could be conceptualized as the edges of the facet being looked through, to use the metaphor from above), in order to tie all aspects of the work together (Waltz, Strickland, & Lenz, 2005).

Accuracy of interpretation is also important, and ties in heavily with the issue of bias. Without consistently revisiting the data, it could be more difficult for the researcher to determine whether their interpretations are fully in line with what every piece of that data says. One way to do this is to maintain digital or paper copies of the source materials after visiting the collections where they are housed. In the data analysis for Skinner (2010, 2012, 2013), photographs of each relevant item (e.g. a page in a book of meeting minutes) would be taken during library visits. A document was created for each repository that listed the photographs by number, along with any notes about their significance or how they might be coded. These notes and numbered photos were placed in separate folders for each of the libraries. This made the retrieval and reanalysis of data simple, and offered a significant time and cost savings over continuously revisiting the original materials. Importantly, having collection of all the materials in one place made it easier to compare the assumptions and findings shared in research documents with what appeared in the original sources.

Elsewhere, researchers take in-depth notes of their impressions alongside quotes from the source material (e.g. Taylor, 2013; Wiegand, n.d.) that can be referred back to later as needed. Incorporating notes about the data within the coding categories is might provide an overall sense of the data, and make it simpler to revisit and alter categories based upon new findings and further analysis. A good example of this is Wiegand (n.d.), where notes

are organized on cards in a box that has dividers for each subject, and can be moved between categories, although this same framework could be applied to a digital solution as well.

According to Zhang and Wildemuth (2009), analysis often occurs in tandem with data collection, as categories are constructed and themes begin to emerge. This iterative process will allow the researcher to move between the development of concepts and the collection of data, and may help refine the researcher's focus on resources that are more useful for addressing the phenomenon under study. Consistently revisiting and revising categories as needed based upon the documents is another way to ensure that they are being reflected in the work accurately, and are subject to the themes that these documents contain rather than the themes the researcher imposes upon them.

### **Dependability and Confirmability**

These two concepts tend to be given less attention in the literature, but are still an important part of Lincoln and Guba's (1985) evaluative framework, and so worth considering in a study based on trustworthiness. Dependability is typically described as the level of coherence in the research process and discussion of findings (Bradley, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Zheng & Wildemuth, 2009), with some authors (e.g. Bradley, 1993) emphasizing coherence in descriptions of change (e.g. in a move from prewar to wartime activities). Confirmability refers to the extent to which a reader of research results can confirm what they are reading (Bradley, 1993). Basically, this means that the conclusions that were drawn appear reasonable based upon the evidence that has been presented, and the reader could conceive of drawing similar conclusions if they were analyzing the same documents.

As with the other criteria, dependability and confirmability rely upon complete



representations of the context, accurate descriptions of the phenomenon (and context), as well as transparent discussions of bias and limitations. One way to improve dependability and confirmability is through auditing study materials. To improve dependability, this means checking the consistency of the processes outlined in any research documents (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Zheng & Wildemuth, 2009), such as descriptions of data collection or the categories used to classify different materials.

For confirmability, checking the coherence of data and findings is important (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Zheng & Wildemuth, 2009), and it may be helpful to ask someone not involved in the research to examine the materials in order offer a fresh perspective and to indicate where there is a lack of clarity about certain issues or areas where processes and findings seem to lack coherence (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). All the criteria and considerations included in this paper can be addressed through conducting thoughtful research, asking for outside input by implementing suggestions from the literature or fellow researchers, and allowing analysis of the materials to guide coding and interpretation.

### **Ethical Concerns**

A qualitative analysis of historical records may present fewer ethical concerns than human subjects studies where participant confidentiality and well-being must be taken into account (Schutt, 2009), but some concerns are still present. This includes being aware of, and transparent about, bias within the records and analysis.

### **Issues of Bias**

#### **Bias within Source Documents**

One type of bias to be considered is that present within the source documents being examined. For example, Krippendorff (2013) noted that studies of newspaper reporting often focus on bias in accuracy (how closely the reporting aligns with the actual events or

statements of interviewees), and favoritism (bias based upon reporting favoring one side of an issue). Since library history studies often rely upon contemporary newspaper accounts for data (e.g. Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1990; Novotny, 2011; Wiegand, 1989), this kind of bias is important to consider. For this study, the primary documents being examined are archival records, but newspapers from the time will be consulted as needed to add additional context and perspective to the work. It is also important to remember that bias can appear in other types of source documents. For example, the library administrative documents Novotny (2011) draws upon highlight the different ways in which the library was raising funds and publicity, and experimenting with new programs. However, it is possible that the records glossed over or failed to mention unsuccessful experiments, pushback from the community, or other setbacks.

Danto (2008) and Busha and Harter (1980) emphasize relying on as great a variety of documents about a phenomenon as possible, which helps decrease bias and issues surrounding problematic assumptions. As mentioned above, it can also help with creating a more complete picture where some records are missing or incomplete, and increase the trustworthiness and validity of the study as pains have been taking to include all relevant data points.

### **Bias Introduced through Analysis**

Another kind of bias to consider is imposed upon the documents by the analyst. Waltz, Strickland, and Lenz (2005) argue that, “in content analysis, categorical schemes are generally developed or modified after data are collected and thus do not constrain or bias the data” (p. 245). However, none of the other materials consulted for this paper share that view. The example below is an illustration of how bias can be introduced into historical research by overlooking important aspects of a subject that are within the scope of the

study. Elsewhere, it has been argued that researchers' perspectives have an effect on their work and bring bias into it (even when researchers seek to be objective), and that research can be strengthened by engaging in reflexive practices and seeking to be transparent about how their own experiences impacted the work (e.g. the selection of research questions or methods) (Krefting, 1991).

The case of women in librarianship is a well-known example of bias in the analysis of historical materials. Previous research has shown that gender inequality is a part of the history of libraries, as many administrators and other senior-level stakeholders were men (e.g. Maack, 1982). However, the early historical research that was done on these institutions or the field as a whole tended to gloss over the role of women, who made up a majority of the field, or to describe their accomplishments and contributions with any depth and seriousness (Garrison, 1979; Maack, 1982).<sup>23</sup> Sreedharan (2007) encourages researchers to engage in internal criticism, which is the process of locating this bias by reflecting on what might be overlooked or overemphasized, with the goal of making the research more trustworthy through showing how the influence of the author's perspective on their presentation of the facts.

Tuchman (1994) suggests that one way to avoid bias is by reading enough pertinent examples of the item of interest (e.g. letters and diaries from pioneer Quaker women in the Midwest) to be able to understand the norms surrounding written expression. She suggests thinking of the document's writer as an informant in an in-depth interview, and to engage with their writing as you would an interview subject. Just as you would with an interviewee, you would use what they tell you to from whom you to try to determine social

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<sup>23</sup> See for example the flippant remarks found in Harris, 1972 and Ring, 1993.

location, and whether or not that individual shared characteristics with others of a similar social location (e.g. literate, white, rural women).

Alvesson and Karreman (2011) urge researchers away from creating rigid categories too early on in the research process, as this runs the risk of simplifying a complex social reality, imposing the researcher's views upon the data, and also "...underestimates the value of the material to surprise." (p. 40). They focus on the value of simply looking at the material as it exists when the researcher first encounters the documents, with the goal of understanding what is there and allowing categories to emerge organically. They also encourage researchers to engage in problematization, or attempting to engage the material from a variety of different viewpoints, and to allow the issues those viewpoints to complicate and challenge the frameworks and assumptions being used (Alvesson & Karreman, 2011). As mentioned with the example of women in librarianship, looking at the data from a variety of viewpoints helps to prevent bias by accounting for all the ways those ideas could be conceptualized. As Silverman (2005) describes, the goal is to closely examine a small body of documents in the hopes of understanding the *participants'* categories (rather than the researcher's), and thinking about categorizing in this way may also help alleviate researcher-imposed bias.

### **Trustworthiness of Document Creators**

The researcher must consider the trustworthiness of a source document's creator in order to accurately represent their perspective and critically analyze the documents for potential issues. Danto (2008) suggests closely examining each document individually in order to try to assess the author's trustworthiness and guard against false evidence. Similarly, Sreedharan (2007) suggests thinking about whether or not the author of documents is in the habit of reporting facts correctly. This may be something that can be

considered in the case of newspaper articles or other materials where the author has a body of work that has been previously subject to scrutiny, but may be more difficult with archival records by an unpublished creator. In the case of Skinner (2012, 2013) this became easier by understanding what had been found on other studies on the same subject (e.g. Wiegand, 1989, 2011), which made particularly erroneous documents stand out and subject to additional scrutiny. In this study, a limited number of other studies have been conducted with these documents, and these may assist in establishing this kind of trustworthiness.

### **Conclusion**

Qualitative content analysis is a valuable approach for studying historical documents, particularly when trying to create a context-rich picture of the phenomenon in question and to test theories that rely upon understanding both the phenomenon and its context(s). In this study, care must be taken to accurately and completely describe the records and the activities and people within them, and to be transparent about any potential bias, in order to engage in thoughtful analysis resulting in trustworthy findings.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ERNESTINE ROSE AND THE HARLEM PUBLIC LIBRARY

#### Introduction

This chapter covers Rose’s professional life, as well as the activities of the Harlem branch during her time there, and of the New York Public Library as a whole. It concludes with a discussion of Rose, the Harlem branch, and the NYPL after Rose’s retirement.

#### Rose’s Early Life and Career

Ernestine Rose was born in Bridgehampton, New York in 1880. She graduated from the New York State Library School in Albany in 1904 (Jenkins, 1990; Sandford, 2011).<sup>24</sup> Four years later, the 28-year-old Rose began working at what was known as the “polyglot” library (Sandford, 2011, p. 3), which primarily served Chinese immigrants on the Lower East Side, and where she worked to incorporate Chinese-language materials into the collections (Sandford, 2011).<sup>25</sup> Rose worked in this branch from 1907-1911, and is listed as a member of the New York Public Library’s Library School from 1912-1915 (Billings, Appleton, & Anderson, 1912; New York Public Library, n.d.). She also worked at Wesleyan University for one year prior to returning to the New York Public Library (Jenkins, 1990).

In 1915, Rose became head of the Seward Park branch at 192 East Broadway, and remained there for two years. As with Chatham Square, Rose grew collections of books in Hebrew and Yiddish, as well as in Eastern European languages. She expected branch staff

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<sup>24</sup> While they share a name, there does not appear to be a connection between the librarian Ernestine Rose and the early nineteenth century Ernestine Rose (1810-1892), a women’s rights activist and Jewish immigrant from Poland (Anderson, 2003).

<sup>25</sup> For an enjoyable local history perspective on Rose, including the article author’s personal journey to learn about her, and a local historian’s efforts to save Rose’s papers from a dumpster, see Sandford (2011). Besides this article, there is little information about Rose’s personal life—her extant writing is all related to her work in libraries, although it is possible that some of her materials that were found by Sandford contain additional personal information not shared in the article.

to familiarize themselves with Jewish culture, and directed programming at the library. This included the use of the library by community groups, and bringing in prominent Jewish authors and intellectuals for programming (Tierney et al., 2013). These same kinds of activities were seen later during her time at Harlem. From 1917-1918, Rose was the Assistant Director at the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh (New York Public Library, n.d.).

Throughout her early career, Rose worked alongside librarians who “emphasized the importance of the neighborhood and focused on programs which not only helped the immigrant to adjust to a new country...but also encouraged an acceptance and maintenance of the immigrants’ customs and culture,” and this likely informed her community-oriented approach throughout her career (Jenkins, 1990, p. 218). Jenkins (1990) aligns this approach with that of social workers in the community, rather than with other librarians “whose outreach services to newcomers were designed to ‘Americanize’ them as quickly as possible” (Jenkins, 1990, p. 218).

During this time, Rose published her pamphlet entitled *Bridging the Gulf: Work with the Russian Jews and Other Newcomers*, which reflected on her work and on library services to immigrants (Rose, 1917). The pamphlet shows Rose’s commitment to meeting users where they are, and meeting the needs they express rather than using the library to push them in a certain direction (as was seen with Americanization). Rose argued that “New York has always been a foreign city...yet only ten years ago many persons were asking, ‘why should public libraries issue books in foreign languages?’” (Rose, 1917, p. 5).

Dain (1972) described American library service to immigrants in a troubling light: “If they could not be excluded altogether, and attempts were made to do so, they could at least learn English, adopt American (that is, Anglo-Saxon) ways, become ‘good citizens’ as soon as possible” (Dain, 1972, p. 228). New York City was the center of the influx of new immigrants, and many librarians in New York saw this as an opportunity for them to assist

in assimilating the new residents (Dain, 1972). This tied in with the public library movement's belief in the importance of creating good citizens by providing the resources to educate oneself and thus participate in democracy (Dain, 1972).

While the different NYPL branches were certainly educational, there are also reports of libraries on the Lower East Side, like Seward Park, that were cultural hubs and that tried to provide a greater variety of programming and support to patrons beyond simply that which would assimilate them to United States culture (Dain, 1972). As time went on, more and more librarians based their work with immigrants in their "compassion for their struggle to make a new life for themselves," (Dain, 1972, p. 291), so even while the concept of Americanization persisted in librarianship, it was less pronounced and less condescending as time went on. The focus on assisting patrons in the ways they needed was seen, for example, in the inclusion of foreign-language materials in different branches, which varied by branch (e.g. Chatham Square specialized in Chinese materials) to serve immigrants in the different neighborhoods while avoiding the duplication of collections (Dain, 1972).

During World War I, Rose worked with the American Library Association's Library War Service, which distributed books to soldiers serving in the war. During this time, she organized separate library services for African-American soldiers (the army had segregated library services at this time), and served as the director of hospital libraries in Coblenz, Germany (Jenkins, 1990; Sandford, 2011). Rose returned to the United States in 1920, and was selected to lead the 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch based upon her work with African-American soldiers and her earlier work with immigrants (Sandford, 2011). Rose adapted the approaches she learned working with immigrants, such as learning the language and



customs of the community, and celebrating cultural heritage, to her work in Harlem (Jenkins, 1990).<sup>26</sup>

### **The Harlem Renaissance**

Ernestine Rose joined the Harlem library in June of 1920 (Anderson, 2003), coming to Harlem at an exciting time. The Great Migration was in full swing, and large numbers of African-Americans were moving to New York to escape life in the Jim Crow South (Wilkerson, 2010). The Harlem neighborhood became the center of cultural life for New York City's African-American community, and the Harlem Renaissance was born as artists, writers, and musicians moved to the area and gained exposure and support for their work. The idea of the "new Negro," championed by Alain Locke, W.E.B. DuBois and other intellectuals and community leaders, sought to redefine African-Americans' status and sense of self by focusing on and celebrating artistic, literary, and academic achievements (Jenkins, 1990). These community leaders found an eager collaborator in Ernestine Rose, who was implementing changes at the Harlem library, and so the library became an important part of the Renaissance and the Harlem community (Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1990). Anderson (2003) sums up the library during the Harlem Renaissance in the following way:

The story of this library does not belong to a single figure, such as Rose or Arthur Schomburg, or even to a group of illustrious figures such as Hughes or Countee Cullen, whose names we call upon to lend status to a once obscure

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<sup>26</sup> There was also another NYPL branch slightly farther south in Harlem (Called the Harlem Library branch in NYPL records, rather than the 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch). This branch opened in January of 1909 (New York Public Library, 1909).

branch library. Rather, the real story belongs to a confluence of interests and a mission whose time had come. The library provided a space in which a people, long denied an understanding and appreciation of their own history and culture, could explore what it meant to be black. It became a sphere for public discourse; within this domain, voices representing a wide range of political and aesthetic viewpoints found expression and audience. Building on its community foundation and local interests, the library grew into a world-class research institution that continues to bring readers and inquiries from all over the world (p. 386).

### **Library Services**

Rose saw the library as a place where white and black New Yorkers could come together, and that would also serve as an integral part of the Harlem community. “Its programs and book collection had to stimulate, guide, and promote racial pride for blacks themselves, and they were necessary to educate whites about the history and culture of black Americans. Racial understanding, for Rose, could be achieved through knowledge” (Jenkins, 1990, p. 220). She felt it was important to study people and their interests, and to find as many ways as possible for the library to connect with those interests (Anderson, 2003). Rose tried to keep the library as a place where all community members were welcome, in spite of a broader cultural climate where social and economic issues could drive people of different races and backgrounds apart. Emphasizing that all users were welcome, and that the library was free, was particularly important for many patrons who had come from the South, where they had never been allowed into a public library (Anderson, 2003). She also worked to integrate the staff to meet community needs more effectively (Jenkins, 1990).

The library served as a meeting space for many organizations, and Rose encouraged community groups, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the John Brown Historical Society, and the Liberty League of Negro Americans to have their meetings at the 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch (Jenkins, 1990). Another very important service the library performed during this time was reference, with its noncirculating materials in the Division of Negro Literature, History, and Prints (Jenkins, 1990).

Rose's experience at the library served as the basis for service activities beyond the library, and within the field as a whole. The library served the field through the creation of bibliographies on African-American history and literature, and on other related topics, such as "The Negro's Background (Africa and the West Indies)" and "The Negro's Contribution" (Anderson, 2003, p. 398).

Rose also convened the initial meeting of the American Library Association's (ALA) Work with Negroes Round Table, in order for librarians to discuss work with African-American patrons. The group met annually for three years at the Association's annual meeting (Jenkins, 1990). She sent out a questionnaire to 122 different libraries prior to the Round Table's first meeting, and found that many libraries provided services to African-American patrons in separate facilities staffed by African-American workers who had not been given sufficient training to do their jobs effectively. Rose continued to emphasize the importance of an integrated staff in her Round Table work, particularly for white employees, who she felt were "woefully ignorant" of African-American culture (Anderson, 2003, p. 391).

Although there was considerable demand for these discussions, the round table disbanded after 1923, after disagreements between Southern and Northern librarians about how to approach service to African-Americans (Jenkins, 1990). Jenkins (1990) also suggests that Rose's confrontational and dominating style may have also been an issue.

While the Round Table no longer existed, Rose continued to participate in ALA activities related to race relations and adult education (Jenkins, 1990). It is not clear from the records whether librarians of color were actively included in these discussions, or whether it was a group of white librarians talking about African-Americans, without bringing African-Americans into those discussions.

### **Library Outreach and Programming**

Outreach and programming were vital parts of the library in the 1920s, and benefited from growing interest in African-American culture and social issues within the community (Anderson, 2003). As the library coordinated programming, the staff often tried to involve community members. In particular, Rose involved community leaders in library projects, as they knew the neighborhood and the best ways to make programs successful (Jenkins, 1990). For example, Ernestine Rose wrote a letter to many Harlem religious leaders in 1921, encouraging them to send representatives to a civic committee meeting for planning the Negro art exhibit (Rose, 1921a). She selected religious leaders to be included in planning after recognizing their importance and standing in the community (Anderson, 2003). The planning committee for the Negro Arts Exhibit, held in the library in August of 1921, reached out to religious leaders as well as prominent women in the community to raise awareness of and support for the exhibit (Williams, 1921, 1921a).

The exhibit featured a variety of African-American artists and was held from August 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1921 (New York Public Library, 1921). It was very successful, receiving praise from the *Crisis* and *Opportunity* (Anderson, 2003). This initial exhibit was the “preoccupation of the artists with general rather than racial subjects,” and that artists were struggling for recognition as professionals learning their trade (Rose, 1922a, p. 543).

Rose noted that “As time goes on, it is inevitable that Negro artists will avail themselves of the riches inherent in their race history and consciousness” (Rose, 1922a, p. 543).

Word about the exhibit was spread around the artistic community, and African-American artists responded positively to having their work included (Hare, 1921). The library also spread its influence through the support of community leaders. As Rose said, “The negro editors are among the best friends of the library and it is thru them, the social workers and other prominent individuals that the library is extending its influence slowly but surely thru the various strata of negro life” (Rose, 1921, p. 111). She felt it was important to appeal to more privileged individuals in the community to be successful: “The library must gain the interest and support of this social and professional, often wealthy, group before it can hope to become an integral part of negro life” (Rose, 1921, p. 111). The library’s literary events and civic forums were highly regarded and well-attended, and the library staff tried to include a variety of viewpoints in these forums (Anderson, 2003).<sup>27</sup> Even so, the library tried to be accessible to everyone. George Schuyler credited Rose with helping make Harlem cultural life less stuck up and narrow than it was elsewhere (Anderson, 2003).

The library hosted a larger exhibit the following year, from August 1<sup>st</sup> to October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1922. The second annual Exhibit featured a section of work by amateur artists, as well as work by more experienced artists as was included in the previous year (Latimer, 1922). The exhibit this year was renamed the Exhibition of Negro Artists, from the Negro Art Exhibit, after that name had drawn criticism in 1921 (Anderson, 2003). As with the 1921 exhibit, community outreach was a major component, and the exhibit (whether intentionally or not) had the dual purpose of showcasing artistic work while aiding in the construction of a

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<sup>27</sup> The ALA did not pass an official policy on intellectual freedom until 1939 (and Rose was present when it was passed), but Rose was ahead of her time in her efforts to respect multiple viewpoints well before this time (Anderson, 2003).

cohesive community identity, by bringing together different elements of the community for outreach and planning (Anderson, 2003).

This exhibit featured a wider variety of work than the previous year (Anderson, 2003; New York Public Library, 1922). The library had hoped to host annual large-scale exhibits, but there were none further until the ones done in collaboration with the Harmon Foundation later in the decade (Anderson, 2003). However, the library continued to display work by individual artists, and to receive gifts of artwork for its collections (Anderson, 2003).

The Harmon Foundation became involved with the library's art exhibits in the late 1920s, and the exhibits were juried. The Foundation said these events needed to be juried "because we are so new at this work, and must establish reputation and standing" (Brown, 1933, p. 1). The Harmon Foundation was named after a white philanthropist, William Elmer Harmon, and was founded in 1926 to award artistic achievements by African-Americans. Its first juried exhibit took place in 1926 at the 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch (Anderson, 2003), although elsewhere the 1928 show is cited as being the Foundation's first show (Anderson, 2003, Brown, 1933). Some sources cite the Foundation's exhibition as the first effort to recognize the work of African-American artists, although this is due to marketing efforts that reached the larger public, as these shows occurred well after the 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch's first exhibits (Anderson, 2003).

Rose and the library also benefited from the involvement of library staff in activities, and she appears to have encouraged staff to take an active role in programming and generating ideas to improve the library, in addition to other activities (e.g. reference work) (Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1990; Whitmire, 2007). For example, Regina Anderson Andrews used her creative abilities and burgeoning interest in theater to enrich library programs, by asking Rose for permission to use the library's basement for the Krigwa Players, a theater

group formed by W.E.B. DuBois. DuBois credited Rose with the initial idea to house the theatre group at the library, which he hoped to form to offer a space for plays written and performed by African-Americans (a concept not present in the theatre world at the time) (Anderson, 2003). Andrews eventually wrote several plays for this group (which was called the Harlem Experimental Theatre later on), using the pseudonym of Ursala/Ursula Treling (Whitmire, 2007).

The branch's welcoming approach and active outreach made many programs successful very quickly. The year Rose arrived, circulation rose 18 percent between July and December, and enough new readers registered with the library to make it one of the five largest branches in Manhattan (Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1990). Rose and the rest of the staff experimented with a variety of programs, including music recitals, book talks, art exhibits, discussion forums on various topics, and lectures by educators (Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1990).

The library continued to be an important part of Harlem Renaissance creative activities as time went on, serving as a clearinghouse for publishing information, an exhibition space for artists, and a venue for plays by dramatists (Jenkins, 1990). By 1921, it had become a space for new arrivals. Langston Hughes remembered his first day in Harlem: "On a bright September morning in 1921, I came up out of the Subway at 135<sup>th</sup> and Lenox into the beginnings of the Negro Renaissance. I headed for the Harlem Y.M.C.A. down the block, where so many new, young, dark, male arrivals in Harlem have spent early days. The next place I headed to that afternoon was the Harlem Branch Library just up the street. There, a warm and wonderful librarian, Ernestine Rose, white, made newcomers feel welcome, as did her assistant in charge of the Schomburg Collection, Catherine Latimer, a luscious café au lait" (Hughes, 1963, p. 312). The library continued to be the first stop for many artistic individuals who came to Harlem. In 1925, on Arna Bontemps' first day in

Harlem, he went to the public library because he was told “it was the place to go” (Anderson, 2003, p. 396).

In addition to providing source material and information on submitting manuscripts, the library provided a venue for writers to read from their writing and to come in contact with the “black intelligentsia” (Anderson, 2003, p. 398). Given the importance of patronage to the Harlem Renaissance (Bloom, 2004), this exposure may have had resulted in financial benefits as well as creative exposure for an author.<sup>28</sup> These opportunities to network were mentioned in a letter from Harry C. Lewis, who was displaying work in the 1922 exhibit and who was very interested in showing his work to potential buyers, and also the chance to “rub shoulders with those of my race” (Lewis, 1922, p. 1).

Regina Anderson and her roommate, Nance, earned a reputation as being hospitable to new artists and writers in the Harlem community, and Anderson would pass along information about different writers to Rose, convincing her that they should present their work at the library. Evening volunteers at the library, such as Jessie Fauset, encouraged writers and artists to work seriously on the crafts and share their labors at the library. This interplay between the library and the creative community led Lewis (1981) to remark, “the intellectual pulse of Harlem throbbed at the 135<sup>th</sup> Street library” (p. 105).

The library’s events were not always positively received. In October 1926, Rose wrote to Carl Van Vechten (Rose, 1926b) to tell him that his controversial book, *Nigger Heaven*, would be the topic of discussion at the season’s first book meeting, and promised “a lively and stimulating evening” (p. 1). Rose encouraged Carl Van Vechten to be present,

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<sup>28</sup> Patronage by white intellectuals and philanthropists was a mixed blessing for Harlem artists, creating tension between the desires of well-meaning patrons and desires to be true to their identity and interests. For a complete discussion, see chapter six in Bloom (2004).



saying: “I am going to add a suggestion which I hope will appeal to you and would certainly be gratifying to me. Why not take this occasion to find out the truth about the Library, which you have used in your books quite freely, and, forgive me for saying so, -with almost complete unaccuracy [sic]” (p. 1-2).

Library programming not only included cultural programming, but also programming on social issues surrounding race. The library would include individuals with sharply differing viewpoints in programming. For example, Charles Johnson and W.E.B. DuBois were both members of Harlem’s literary elite, but both had very different views about the portrayal of African-Americans in creative works. Johnson approved of works that turned to folk traditions and the working classes for inspiration, while DuBois (and Fauset, who worked with him), looked toward the middle and upper classes (The Talented Tenth) to inspire them (Anderson, 2003). In reference to the variety of programs and viewpoints brought in to the library, Andrews said she was glad to be on Rose’s staff, because she was given a lot of freedom to plan and to cooperate with community organizations (Anderson, 2003).

## **Library Collections**

The branch’s book collection at the start of Rose’s tenure was described as “undistinguished,” although she found that general materials on sociology, history, philosophy, and the useful arts appealed to patrons (Jenkins, 1990), which may explain why these topics continued to be among the focus areas for the library’s general collection in the decades to come (e.g. Schomburg Collection, 1938, 1939, 1942). Rose described her patrons as being eager to learn, and described the application desk of the library “as a doorway into the ‘other half’ of many lives, the half which lives while not working for a living, the half which thinks, aspires and endures” (Jenkins, 1990, p. 222). Rose also

emphasized the importance of making materials available to African-American children that included stories of African-Americans and African-American history and culture (Anderson, 2003). As with other library activities, other staff members provided input about the collections. One example is the “clipping file” of articles related to the African-American experience, begun by Catherine Latimer in the 1920s and still in use in the 2000s (Latimer, 2003).

The greatest collection accomplishment during this time was the creation of the Division of Negro Literature, History, and Prints, which Anderson (2003) refers to as “the library’s most significant legacy” (p. 385). Rose became aware of the need for this collection after patrons showed an “intense interest in books by and about black people” (Jenkins, 1990, p. 222), but noticed many barriers to providing these materials, including items being out of print or held in private collections, and there were limited funds with which to replenish the shelves (Jenkins, 1990). She borrowed books from some individuals, and formed a committee to discuss how to address the problem. The group decided a permanent, noncirculating collection of materials about African-Americans was needed (Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1990). Rose’s vision for the library was “to make it a centre for the instruction and inspiration of Negro youth, for the enlightenment of whites, and for the research of students and scholars” (Rose, 1925b, p. 3).

The collection was dedicated at a ceremony on Many 8, 1925, and at the time was the only one of its kind in a public library. Rose noted the importance of the collection for giving African-Americans a sense of history and place, as well as for whites, who needed the collection “so that their prejudices ‘would die of malnutrition’” (Jenkins, 1990, p. 223). In addition, she emphasized the value of the collection in a public library, where it would be available to the public (adults and children) as well as to scholars (Jenkins, 1990).

The original committee for the Division included Arthur A. Schomburg, who was born in Puerto Rico and was an avid collector of books on individuals of African heritage around the world (Jenkins, 1990, Sinnette, 1989).<sup>29</sup> Soon after the Division was established, Schomburg put his collection up for sale (Anderson, 2003). Rose called upon the staff and community to support the library's bid for Schomburg's materials. When he put his collection up for sale, there were other offers, but Rose and others felt "it would be a calamity to let this collection leave the United States, where it should serve the purpose of enlightenment to both races, and where such an educational process is so necessary (Rose, 1925b, p. 2). Rose also reminded supporters of the importance of the library's work: "This is the only attempt, as far as I know, to form a collection of Negro literature in a public institutions [sic] and at the same time to render it of easy and popular access to all people. Moreover, it is located in the greatest Negro city in the world, and will be safe guarded in every possible way to the people whom it concerns" (Rose, 1925b, p. 2-3). While Rose and others organized the logistics of the sale, Schomburg continued to pursue his passion for history, traveling to Seville, Spain to do research and acquire materials (Schomburg, 1926).

Two years after the collection was established, the library received a grant of \$10,000 from the Carnegie Corporation to purchase Arthur A. Schomburg's private collection of materials, which included books, manuscripts, pamphlets, and etchings by and about people of color around the world, and added these materials to the Division (Jenkins, 1990, Wood, 1926). The grant was negotiated by Rose and the committee along with the National Urban League (Jenkins, 1990), showing the library's continued reliance upon the support of community organizations in completing its work.

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<sup>29</sup> A complete biography of Schomburg can be found in Sinnette (1989).

The collection became available in 1927, opening in January of that year (Schomburg Collection, 1927). Materials continued to be added to the collection, including paintings of prominent figures, such as a painting by African-American artist O. Richard Reid of Henry Leach, a white supporter of African-American art and culture (e.g. Leach, 1928; Wood, 1928, 1929).<sup>30</sup> Schomburg was appointed curator of the Division in 1932, and served in this role until his death in 1938, after which the division was named for him, and a memorial was held at the library in his remembrance (Jenkins, 1990; Rose, 1939).<sup>31</sup>

## **Library Staff**

Ernestine Rose began her tenure at the 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch as a mid-career librarian, having already worked in several other library settings after earning her library degree in 1904 (Jenkins, 1990). She brought with her from her previous positions an understanding that the entire staff needed to learn the culture of the community in which they worked: “Accurate knowledge of the people, their backgrounds, social and human, is the first essential. By this I mean an intimate acquaintance on the part of every member of the library with the history, traditions and literature of each nationality that the library expects to serve...the artificial ‘missionary spirit,’ so lauded in the past, will die, as it should, a natural death...one cannot patronize and still hope to be accepted as a friend (Rose, 1917, p. 20).

As a part of her efforts to get to know the community, Rose wanted to integrate the library staff, in order to bring in people who had a better understanding of the community

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<sup>30</sup> Apparently the artist was not the most enthralling character, as L. Hollingsworth Wood noted, “I am amazed at Mr. O. Richard Reed’s having persuaded you to sit for him—he bored me to extinction trying to get me to do it—and I congratulate him on his success” (Wood, 1928, p. 1).

<sup>31</sup> Although the collection was not officially named after him until his passing, it was sometimes referred to as the Schomburg collection prior to this time (e.g. Rose, 1936).

than she did.<sup>32</sup> She brought in African-American staff members and tried to situate them in “visible public service roles,” which she felt would make the library more appreciated by the community (for example, novelist Nella Larsen Imes was a children’s librarian). One of her first actions as head of the 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch was to hire Catherine Latimer as a library assistant, who is referred to frequently as the first African-American professional librarian in the NYPL system. Latimer became a fixture at the library, remaining for 26 years (Anderson, 2003). Several months later, she brought on Sadie M. Peterson (later Sadie Delaney) as a library assistant. Peterson had no library training, but was passionate about the library, and had contacts in the community that were helpful to the library. Peterson focused on work with children and with blind patrons (Anderson, 2003).

As the community’s Spanish-speaking population grew, she also hired a Puerto Rican woman named Pura Belpre White (Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1990). She also hoped that an integrated staff would help all staff members appreciate cultural and racial diversity, and used this to guide her staffing practices as well as a staff exchange program between her branch and predominantly white neighborhood (Jenkins, 1990). Franklin Hopper, Chief of the Circulation Department of the NYPL system, praised the changes at the branch, saying the experiment in integrating the staff, as well as the “change of spirit of the administration of the branch” had a considerable effect on the branch’s influence in the Harlem community (Hopper, 1921, p. 240; Jenkins, 1990, p. 222).

In 1922, Rose brought on two more African-American women to help her connect with the community, particularly the community of young writers who were moving to Harlem. Novelist Nella Larsen Imes joined the library in 1922, and was promoted from

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<sup>32</sup> She had also experimented with this in her work with European immigrants, where she brought in staff members who were members of those immigrant communities (Jenkins, 1990).

assistant to children's librarian in 1924, She resigned in 1926 due to health concerns and in order to focus full-time on her writing (Anderson, 2003). She also brought on Regina Anderson Andrews, who used her connections in the literary and artistic community to publicize the library and bring in volunteers (Anderson, 2003).

While some articles, such as Jenkins (1990) paint a hopeful picture, integration of this library did not mean African-American librarians were shielded from discrimination elsewhere in the NYPL system. Whitmire (2007, 2014) described the career of Regina Anderson Andrews. When she was asked to provide her race on her NYPL application, she said "I'm American." When brought in to discuss her application, Andrews, who came from a multicultural background as many other Americans have, was told "you're not an American. You're not white" (Whitmire, 2007, 409). The NYPL system did decide to hire Andrews (who at the time was still Regina Anderson—she became Regina Andrews in 1926), but told her that she would have to be sent to Harlem because of her race. Her first position, in 1923, was as a junior clerk at the Harlem library (Whitmire, 2007).

Integrating the library system as a way to learn about the community and bring community members into the library was a groundbreaking activity at the time, as the library world was, "marked by racism" and would be for decades to come (Anderson, 2003, p. 390). While Rose wanted to integrate the library, she was concerned about making the library a "colored library" for two reasons: She was concerned that creating a African-American branch could in effect deny African-Americans the use of other branches in the NYPL system, and she was also concerned that it would keep African-American librarians from working in other branches (Anderson, 2003, p. 390). Her concerns about making the branch solely African-American did not stop her from hiring people of color for the staff, however, and by 1925, five of the ten library assistants at the branch were African-American (Anderson, 2003).

## The Great Depression

In 1929, the stock market crashed, signaling the beginning of the Great Depression (McElvaine, 2009). Scores of Americans lost their savings and their jobs, and in the Midwest and West, once-fertile farmlands were reduced to dust as a result of harmful agriculture practices (Worster, 2004). Public libraries were also impacted, as budgets were cut and salaries were frozen (Kramp, 2010). The New York Public Library system felt this crunch, as workers rallied for more funds for materials and for improved wages (e.g. Middleton, 1937).

To counteract the hardship and financial insecurity the American people experienced, president Franklin D. Roosevelt instituted a variety of relief programs, such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which provided jobs in the public sector to people in many fields (Clemens, 2008). Some of these workers came to the New York Public Library, including the 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch, to assist with different projects (Denny Vann, 1936). Despite the bleak national climate, The Harlem library continued to serve its patrons, and to offer valuable programming and services.

### Library Services

The library continued to assist researchers and the public, and was mentioned in the acknowledgements of several scholarly works of the time that relied upon Harlem branch materials (Rose, 1936).<sup>33</sup> Rose described the library's services with pride, saying "the work we are doing here in a small and quiet way is of great benefit" (Rose, 1936, p. 2). One of the ways it fulfilled this service was through the publication of bibliographies, including one in 1930 on "semi-popular titles" (Hopper, 1930, p. 1).

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<sup>33</sup> These include "Prof. Loggins' book, 'Negro Author'; the poet, James Weldon Johnson's 'Black Manhattan'; Nancy Cunard, in her book 'Negro Anthology'; and many others. Their works were primarily based on the books they found on our shelves" (Rose, 1936, p. 1).

The library also served as the basis for an experiment in adult education from the American Association of Adult Education, and was one of only two libraries in the country to be a part of this experiment. The other library was the Auburn Branch of Atlanta's public library system (Jenkins, 1990). The adult education experiment came at a critical time for the library, allowing a library that was faced with staff cutbacks and aging facilities to "augment and remotivate the staff and to redefine the branch's programs to meet the community's needs at a time of deepening social and economic malaise" (Jenkins, 1990, p. 226). The project was the first of its kind, and there were high hopes that the outreach and programming it engaged in as a part of serving adult learners would be effective (Jenkins, 1990).

### **Library Outreach and Programming**

One of the reasons the branch was chosen for this experiment was its reputation for community acceptance, and ability to coordinate activities with different groups. After noting continued high dropout and illiteracy rates, even with the involvement of churches, schools, and social and civic organizations, it was thought that a library with such a community focus might provide the answer (Jenkins, 1990). Not everyone agreed with this assessment, however. The letter written by W.E.B. DuBois regarding this project (DuBois, 1932b) and mentioned in more detail in the "Library Staff" section below, shows his skepticism that the project would be successful. In particular, he was concerned that she had selected someone to head the project who was too inexperienced, and was worried that Rose was only willing to work with African-Americans who were not overly critical (DuBois, 1932b).

Rose, along with fourteen community members, made up the Harlem Adult Education Committee, which guided the project staff with policies and advice (Jenkins,



1990). The staff consisted of two field secretaries, a readers' adviser, a curator, and a secretary. The field secretaries worked alongside other organizations to run educational programs, as well as directing some library-sponsored adult education activities, such as public affairs forums, parenting institutes, and art workshops. The readers' adviser provided reading lists to individuals and study groups, maintained a citywide list of educational opportunities, and wrote a column that appeared in several newspapers. Schomburg was also involved in the program, engaging in reference work and lectures, and his presence enhanced the credibility and appeal of the program (Jenkins, 1990).

One of the committee's challenges was creating a program that appealed to a broad spectrum of users from many socioeconomic backgrounds and educational statuses, as well as those who would otherwise not be interested in coming to the library. The very broad scope of the program ended up being problematic, and limited its ultimate success, as the wide variety of programming sometimes duplicated existing activities, did not appeal to the community fully, or could not be completed due to a lack of trained instructors. While they had hoped to stress cultural, educational, and vocational activities, cultural programming was the most popular, in part because it boosted morale (Jenkins, 1990). The Carnegie grant ended in 1935, although Rose maintained the staff and committee, in order to integrate adult education activities into the branch's general programming (Jenkins, 1990).

During the Depression, the library continued to build its reputation as a respected collection of materials on the African-American experience. The library responded to requests for information from students at colleges around the South. The library also focused its limited budget on improving the Negro Division's holdings: "The selective books purchased with the small sum of money at our disposal have been used to obtain necessary links in the original Schomburg Collection to make it one of the best in the country" (Rose, 1936, p. 2).

Even in the midst of the Depression, the library continued to play an important role in educating the public about African-American culture. Other cultural heritage institutions continued to contact Rose asking to use some of their holdings in exhibits and other programming (e.g. Etzkorn, 1932), and the library continued to perform reference services and other duties (e.g. Fauset, 1933; Krieg, 1937; Rose, 1937). The library also continued to host art exhibits. At the exhibition in March of 1933, Evelyn S. Brown of the Harmon Foundation gave the opening address, and focused on the collaborative efforts of her organization, along with the Harlem branch and Harlem Adult Education Committee, to present African-American art.

The library also continued to offer other programming. A 1932 letter from Chas. W. Fillmore confirms his presence as a speaker at the library's George Washington Bicentennial Celebration (Fillmore, 1932). Additional resources on the specifics of this program were not forthcoming, although the choice of a celebration for George Washington at an African-American library is an interesting one, as Washington was an avid supporter of slavery and kept enslaved people himself (Hirschfeld, 1997). The adult education experiment allowed the library to continue its tradition of timely and interesting programming, such as a four lecture series titled *The Negro in the New World* (Schomburg Collection, 1932). Famous figures from the Harlem Renaissance continued to be involved with the library. Claude McKay was involved with committee work with the library, as well as with a project involving a list of playwrights (McKay, 1937).

The World's Fair was held in New York City in 1939, and the materials in the Schomburg collection show that the 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch had plans for involvement. A letter from Catherine Latimer to Fred R. Moore, Editor of the *New York Age*, included a statement by Schomburg detailing these plans: "I have mapped out the following line of action: To have exhibited the portraits of Negroes who have done their bit in the city of New

York to be backed by documents and their printed works. I would like you to help me show the portraits of these notable persons that they might be integrated in the greater exhibit that will take place during the World's Fair in New York City, a prelude to the bringing out of a folder in colors of these notable persons" (Latimer, 1938a, p. 2). The prominent individuals he wanted to profile included Alexander Crummell, Frederick Douglass, Peter Williams, John Peterson, Patrick Reason, Ira Aldridge, Pennington, Samuel Cornish, Katie Ferguson, and Sojourner Truth (Latimer, 1938a, p. 2).

### **Library Collections**

Despite the financial crisis and budget cuts throughout the country, the Harlem library was able to continue building its collections. Acquisitions records for 1938 show new materials being added to both the Schomburg and circulating collections. Although few items were acquired several months that year, every month the Schomburg Collection had higher numbers of new acquisitions than the Negro Division. Sociology titles were most frequently acquired for the Schomburg (sociology titles outnumbered others purchased for most every month), although in some months, there were acquisitions in other areas such as travel or literature as well. (Schomburg Collection, 1938, 1938a, 1938b, 1938c, 1938d, 1938e, 1938f, 1938g, 1938h). Only one month saw a larger number of newly-acquired titles in an area outside of sociology, and this was in March with the addition of 54 literature titles (compared to 19 sociology titles (Schomburg Collection, 1938a). The Negro Division had less clear focus areas for collection this year, although sociology, biography, and travel materials were acquired somewhat more than those in other genres (Schomburg Collection, 1938, 1938a, 1938b, 1938c, 1938d, 1938e, 1938f, 1938g, 1938h).

While the Schomburg received more acquisitions in 1938, this trend reversed in 1939, with all acquisitions records from that year showing higher acquisitions in the Negro

Division. Several items this year were also reclassified, although the records do not indicate their prior classification or location. Sociology accounted for the highest number of acquisitions, although fiction and travel books were also acquired somewhat frequently. Except for one acquisition of 23 fiction books in May, the acquisitions in each genre were in the single digits most months (Schomburg Collection, 1939, 1939a, 1939b, 1939c, 1939d, 1939e, 1939f, 1939g, 1939h). This may be an indication that the library had a smaller acquisition budget to work with, as well as that the library was feeling the effects of materials shortages overseas (Becker, 2005).

Rose issued a report in 1936 on the previous four years of the Department of Literature, History, and Prints (Rose, 1936). The materials in the collection were purchased for the library by the Carnegie Corporation, in an effort to assist adult education efforts in the city. Efforts to make the records accessible were successful, with usage increasing each year between 1932 and 1936 (Rose, 1936). The manuscript and rare book collections continued to grow, with important additions, such as the papers of John E. Bruce, who was “born in slavery, self educated, lived to correspond with six U.S. presidents and was editor of more than seven newspapers” (Rose, 1936, p. 2). The library also continued to build its collections of African-American art, in some cases through donations. At the 1933 opening of the Negro Art Exhibition, the Harmon Foundation presented the library with the painting, “Blind Sister Mary” by William Edouard Scott, to further strengthen the library’s holdings (Brown, 1933).

The library had a collection of magazines and periodicals, which were popular for users looking to stay abreast of news in different parts of the country (Rose, 1936). The WPA workers who helped at the library made a huge difference in the library’s collections of clippings. They were brought in around 1933, and were able to index and file clippings, and the library had four organized vertical files of materials as a result of their work. Prior

to the WPA workers' efforts, the library was "about nine years behind in going over Negro Newspapers," (Latimer, 1940a, p. 2), although the library was still several years behind as the Depression drew to a close (Latimer, 1940a).

## **Library Staff**

During the Depression, the library was threatened with staffing cutbacks, but was able to maintain an ample staff thanks to the adult education experiment, and Carnegie Corporation funding mentioned above (see Jenkins, 1990). The library also hosted WPA workers, including eight teachers assigned to do research at the Harlem branch (Ely, 1936). One significant staffing change that occurred was the appointment of Arthur A. Schomburg as curator of the Division of Negro Literature, History, and Prints in 1932, which by this time contained the vast collection of related materials he had acquired and cared for over the course of his life. Schomburg remained curator until his death six years later in 1938 (Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1990). There was some conflict over this, with W.E.B. DuBois and Catherine Latimer expressing concerns over his appointment after Latimer had overseen the collection from its inception to 1932, when the library received a grant to afford to hire Schomburg as curator (Anderson, 2003).

Reference librarian Catherine Latimer seemed instrumental in library affairs during the late 1930s and through the 1940s, and many of the letters in the Schomburg collection from this period are to and from her (e.g. Bontemps, 1944; Carter, 1938; Latimer, 1938a, 1938b; Locke, 1938; McKay, 1937). A letter from several months before Schomburg's death referred to Latimer as "Librarian in charge of Division of Negro Literature and History" (Stoner, 1938, p. 1), suggesting that she took over this division in his absence. Arthur Schomburg died on June 10, 1938 (Latimer, 1938), and Latimer was responsible for sending out letters sharing the news with those who had tried to reach him

to inform them of his passing (Comma, 1938; Latimer, 1938).<sup>34</sup> Schomburg's successor was Dr. L. D. Reddick, hired after the completion of his doctorate at the University of Chicago in the summer of 1939 (Hopper, 1940).

The Harlem branch also dealt with system-wide issues as well, particularly those pertaining to budgeting and to the efforts of the Staff Association to improve working conditions. In 1934, the Mayor insisted the library furlough employees to save money, which the staff association objected to in part because they were already facing salary decreases. During this time, Franklin Hopper also pointed to a variety of issues regarding salaries, and noted that librarians were not protected from enforced leave by having "tenure of office" (Hopper, 1934, p. 2). Another interesting situation involved figuring out how library employees were classified so they could receive benefits. A report was commissioned by the Staff Association to investigate this, and it described a series of discussions surrounding the state retirement system revealed that the NYPL staff were technically not classified as state, city, or private employees, making it hard to know how to engage with staffing issues. The report tried to decipher what category the library employees might fall into, but decided it would require more research to answer this satisfactorily (Isserman, Isserman, & Kapelsohn, 1939).

In the 1930s, prominent voices in New York's African-American community, such as W.E.B. DuBois, began to distance themselves from Rose.<sup>35</sup> Former Harlem branch librarian Regina Anderson Andrews sought a promotion elsewhere in the NYPL system, and faced

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<sup>34</sup> One of these letters indicated that he had died unexpectedly from an infected tooth (Latimer, 1938c).

<sup>35</sup> An examination of over a decade of correspondence between DuBois and Rose, held in the DuBois papers in Amherst, outlines the rise and fall of their relationship, from frequent collaboration on projects in the library, to DuBois' protest over the treatment of Regina Andrews, and finally his terse response to her final attempts at correspondence (including one immediately prior to her retirement from the library). (e.g. Dubois, 1932b, 1942, 1942a; Rose, 1942).

substantial barriers to that promotion because of her race. Andrews initially began her career at NYPL at the Harlem branch, but was transferred between branches a number of times, and during her career felt she was not being offered an appropriate salary or the opportunities for promotion that reflected her experience and impact (Whitmire, 2007, 2014).<sup>36</sup>

DuBois, among others, felt Rose was not supportive of Andrews in her fight for her promotion, and intervened on her behalf (Anderson, 2003; Whitmire, 2007, 2014). DuBois met with Rose and Chief of the Circulation Department Franklin Hopper, who assured him that race was not a factor in her promotion, although DuBois was skeptical, and reached out to Harlem Democratic leader Ferdinand Q. Morton for support, and was joined by others who protested NYPL's treatment of Andrews, in some cases boycotting the library and cancelling speaking engagements in protest. Andrews was eventually successful in her fight for promotion, becoming the first African-American to head a NYPL branch library in 1938 (Whitmire, 2007, 2014).

DuBois' advocacy for Andrews occurred around the time that tension grew in his relationship with Rose. In one draft letter, DuBois is highly critical of Rose, doubting the effectiveness of a program she implemented by saying "I find again that I cannot keep from thinking that the chief difficulty is that you do not trust colored people of ability, education and force. That you are continually seeking to do the work yourself and to depend upon good-natured and pleasant colored helpers, without real strength and initiative. I may be mistaken in this, but if this is true, your work in Adult Education, as well as in other lines, is bound to be a failure" (DuBois, 1932b, p. 2).

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<sup>36</sup> Whitmire (2014) offers an in-depth biography of Andrews, as well as a discussion of her career and promotion.

Rose never received this letter, nor did she leave behind any records in the NYPL or Schomburg Center archives indicating why she was not more vocal in supporting her former colleague. DuBois instead sent her a very brief reply indicating he was unable to be a part of the Adult Education program. In a letter to Catherine Latimer, who was still working with Rose at the library, he explained that he initially drafted the longer letter refusing to have anything to do with the movement, but changed his mind and later sent a noncommittal reply “because after all, the movement is not simply hers” (DuBois, 1932d, p. 1).

## **The Beginning of World War II**

World War II began on September 1, 1939 with the German invasion of Poland, and ended with the surrender of Japan on September 2, 1945 (Axelrod, 2007). Schomburg curator Lawrence D. Reddick was actively involved in collecting war-related materials and documenting the war’s impact on the library. In a 1940 report, Reddick described the war as the most significant thing to happen to the library in the last year, noting that “since the Schomburg collection, as other social institutions, does not exist in vacuo, it has been affected mightily” (Reddick, 1940aa, p. 1).

In describing the war’s impact on the library, Reddick goes on to say: “It may seem a far cry from Berchtesgaden to 135<sup>th</sup> Street, yet the failure of the Schomburg Collection to secure the microfilm projector contemplated for the new building may be traceable to decisions made in the capitals of the Continent and their fatal issue upon the field of battle” (Reddick, 1940aa, p. 1). He justifies his argument by stating that “Concretely, war runs up the cost of certain building materials; the higher these costs mount, the smaller is the balance from the total appropriation then available for equipment. Moreover, the European pulp industry has been dislocated, the book trade reduced to a trickle and the production of



works of our special interest—normally a secondary endeavor—has virtually ceased in that part of the world” (Reddick, 1940a, p. 1).<sup>37</sup> The library’s financial state was also seen in Reddick’s request for a larger acquisitions budget, which he justified by the fact that there were limited collections in African-American history and culture, and these materials were important to collect and preserve (Reddick, 1940aa).

While the library faced financial impacts, it experienced social impacts as well, as national conversations turned towards the war effort and away from homefront issues. As Reddick put it, “For a long time we shall hear less of books and more of guns.” (Reddick, 1940a, p. 1). He also reminded readers that the library existed within the context of world, national, and “racial” forces, as well as the more “more constant focus” of “the fortunes and policies of the New York Public Library system itself.” (Reddick, 1940a, p. 2). The NYPL system did respond to the war in a variety of ways, both in decisions about collections and the role of the library and society, and in actions to protect physical structures and collections (e.g. removing glass around the doors and replacing it was a shatterproof wire-mesh window made from Celotex) (Becker, 2005).

Reddick closed this same report with lofty goals for the role of libraries in society, saying “In the religious Medieval Period of the Western World, the church was the principal institution. It was surrounded with the hopes, the fears, the sentiments and the beauty of the people of that day. In the secular Modern Period, there seems to be no important reason why the university and library should not bear a similar relation to our time and people. Yet we do not. It may be that we have been timid, reluctant to assert that the life of our existence flows through the agencies of communication and the library and the university,

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<sup>37</sup> This is similar to disruptions in the publishing industry seen during World War I. In one instance, Midwestern libraries had trouble securing materials for their non-English-speaking patrons (see Skinner, 2010, 2013).

joint symbols of the Book, are the institutions for the preservation and spread of culture. If in this small corner we are able to demonstrate the possibility of even this special library serving as a broad and deep vitalizing force in its area of American life, this result may be not only of the highest significance to libraries and universities everywhere, but should carry an emphatic suggestion for our age” (Reddick, 1940a, p. 16). While all librarians may not agree with this perspective, it goes underscore his passion for libraries and for the importance of his work to the community the Harlem library served.

## **Library Services**

One of the major ways the library served the community during this time was through creating a larger, updated space in which to operate. In her last years at the library, Rose pushed for renovation of the old Carnegie building that housed the branch. On May 28, 1942, a dedication ceremony was held to celebrate the opening of the branch’s annex, which held large community rooms, an exhibit gallery, and an auditorium (Jenkins, 1990).

Reddick, like Rose had done elsewhere (Rose, 1917, 1954) pointed to the importance of providing user-centered services: “the simple proposition that a public institution should be a public institution, serving all alike without regard for human or social differences—to which all agree in theory—is finding a more continuous expression in practice. The ‘tone’—friendly, quiet, professional—is improved” (Reddick, 1940a, p. 3).<sup>38</sup> Reddick emphasized the importance of the library in the lives of its users. Due to the Great Migration, he estimated that roughly half a million African-Americans lived in and around New York (Reddick, 1940a, p. 2). He said, “The special bond between these people and this collection is obvious. Moreover, the large celebrations this year in such cities as Chicago, Detroit and New York

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<sup>38</sup> In keeping with the quiet tone, Reddick also notes that “The noiseless typewriter is a godsend” (Reddick, 1940aa, p. 3).

of the Diamond Jubilee of the close of the Civil War are but other indicators of the increasing self-consciousness of this group” (Reddick, 1940a, p. 2), and he pointed to federal and state funding for these celebrations and collections as an indicator that African-American history was a part of American history more people were interested in preserving (Reddick, 1940a, p. 2).

Although the focus was on the user, Reddick still made it clear that the library’s primary purpose (and, he argued, the primary purpose of other libraries as well), was as a place for reading and study. However, he said “a certain educative function is served through conducting tours” (Reddick, 1940a, p. 5), and at least one group a week asked to be given a tour of the Collection. The list of these groups is diverse, and includes groups from local schools and universities, community organizations, religious groups, and visiting groups from out of town (Reddick, 1940a).

The importance of the library’s services was also made apparent in the high volume of reference questions the Schomburg received, both by telephone and in person. Reddick reported that “The more serious inquiries” averaged around fifty per month, and included topics such as “Southern opinion of Frederick Douglass” and “Origin of the ‘National Negro Anthem’” (Reddick, 1940a, p. 6). Reddick does not include statistics about the number of less complex reference requests the department received. Reddick also emphasized the ongoing importance of the library’s clipping service for researchers, who were oftentimes unable to locate the newspaper articles elsewhere (Reddick, 1940a). The Schomburg collection experienced an increase in attendance along with the increase in reference services (Latimer, 1940a). Classes from around the city visited the Schomburg, including K-12 students, university students, and community members in adult education courses (Latimer, 1940a).

## Library Outreach and Programming

Reddick began his section on outreach activity by reminding the reader that “Nearly all of our relations are, in one sense, ‘public relations’ but in the more limited meaning of the term ours have been good” (Reddick, 1940a, p. 4). When thinking about outreach activities, Reddick clearly articulated who he felt the user base was: “Its general clientele is the whole public. Its special clientele is composed of (1) scholars interested in the study of the Negro and race relations and (2) the Negro community of New York” (Reddick, 1940a, p. 11).

As a part of outreach, Reddick tried to determine the needs of Harlem residents by reaching out to other cultural institutions to ask about for input. In his first year, he initiated a survey of all the cultural institutions in Harlem, in order to determine answers to the questions, “What does Harlem read?” and “What does Harlem want to read about?” and base collection activities upon these findings (Reddick, 1940a, p. 11). The area they surveyed was within the boundaries of the Harlem River and Lexington Avenue to the East, Amsterdam Avenue to the West, 110<sup>th</sup> Street to the south, and 163<sup>rd</sup> and 155<sup>th</sup> Streets to the North (Reddick, 1940a).

Reddick also tried to foster connections with scholars around the country and internationally, particularly Latin America, Africa, and Europe. This was in order to stay current with available printed and manuscript materials that may be important for the Collection, and to connect with research and collections elsewhere (Reddick, 1940a).

African-American newspapers regularly reported on and featured library activities, although he noted, “Success with the metropolitan dailies has been slight. Despite the competition from more dramatic and sensational events, we must work out more effective arrangements with these great agencies of communication” (Reddick, 1940a, p. 5). Despite

the lack of regular coverage in New York City daily newspapers, some coverage did still appear. The *New York Times* and other local papers gave considerable coverage to the Schomburg's 1939 honor roll, of distinguished individuals in race relations, titled American Negroes of Distinguished Achievement, and the Associated Press issued a release that was read nationwide. Only one paper of all those in the country that covered the poll viewed the poll negatively, and this was "a Negro weekly" which Reddick declined to name (Reddick, 1940a, p. 5).

Publicity about the Schomburg appeared elsewhere as well, with several radio announcements appearing about the Honor Roll, and with a leaflet entitled "What is the Schomburg Collection?" appearing at the New York World's Fair, The American Negro Exposition in Chicago, and at libraries in universities around the city (Reddick, 1940a, p. 5). Reddick also compiled an Honor Roll in 1940 (Reddick, 1940). The Collection also was present with a booth at the World's Fair for the "75 Years of Negro Progress" celebration, led by northern U.S. cities as a "sequel to Appomatox," and with an emphasis "on the democratizing influence in and the cultural contributions of the Negro in American life" (Reddick, 1940a, p. 5). As a part of the celebration, the Schomburg also prepared Photostat shows to be exhibited in elsewhere in New York, as well as Chicago and Detroit (Reddick, 1940a). The Collection loaned materials for exhibits elsewhere as well, including to a traveling exhibit run by the Circuit Case Extension Cooperative, which was shown at roughly a dozen colleges in the South (Reddick, 1940a).

The Schomburg also exhibited their collections closer to home, by highlighting collection strengths within the library. One example was *The War and The Whole People*, held in September of 1942, which highlighted collections dealing with wars around the world and emphasizing "the deep and universal yearning for a better world" (Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature, 1942a, p. 2). The library held other exhibits on African-

American culture as well. In late 1939 and early 1940, the library presented several exhibits: “The Negro in the wars of the United States,” “Christmas and emancipation literature,” and “The contribution of the Negro woman to American Civilization,” which was one of their most well-attended exhibit in several years (Latimer, 1940a, p. 2).

Another popular outreach activity that took place within the library was the Collection tours mentioned under *Library Services* above. These tours were important for educating the community about the library and the history it preserved, and Reddick noted that “Even a fifteen minute ‘lecture demonstration’ turns out to be most revealing to many of our visitors” (Reddick, 1940a, p. 6).

The library engaged in some interesting fieldwork in 1941, by working with a local minister named Dr. Martin, who had roughly 5,000 items of interest to the library. Dr. Martin had donated some items, and would loan materials to the library as well. Catherine Latimer decided to create a file listing all his items, so he and the library staff could compare their collections and see what items Dr. Martin had that the library did not (Latimer, 1941). In 1942, the library continued to assist others with their collections, by providing input on organizing materials to *The Crisis* magazine’s new Information Bureau (Latimer, 1942).

In July of 1941, the Schomburg Collection was closed as it was moved to another Harlem branch (Latimer, 1941), possibly because of the renovation work that was completed just prior to Rose’s departure the following year (Jenkins, 1990). The move hurt the Collection’s attendance, with only about one-third the usual number of visitors, and with no school or community groups visiting in the three months after the move (Latimer, 1941). The number of exhibits was also smaller, with two at the temporary location in the first half of 1942. The Schomburg Collection was moved into the branch’s new building in

May and June of 1942, and the first exhibit held in this space was *The War and the Whole People* several months later (Latimer, 1942).

## **Library Collections**

As a part of collection development, Reddick wanted to gather the stories of soldiers and those on the home front, and issued a call for war letters from African-Americans in the service. A published call for such materials appeared in 1941, seeking to collect and preserve these materials, and asking for the cooperation of community groups in collecting and forwarding letters (Reddick, 1941).

Another way Reddick tried to build the Schomburg's collections was by including information about African-Americans serving in the legislature. Letters from representatives and senators at the state and federal levels responded positively to his letters, which requested a photograph, a biographical sketch, a set of bills the person had introduced, and any other materials they felt should be included (e.g. Wimbish, 1943).

The Schomburg Collection received gifts of book manuscripts, letters, speeches, and other archival materials (Reddick, 1940a, p. 4). The Schomburg Collection staff also conducted the collection's first inventory since 1928 (Reddick, 1940a). It is unclear why there was a 12-year gap between inventories, although during the process Schomburg staff learned that four items had gone missing (Reddick, 1940a).

The library also continued regular collection development activities, including the acquisition and classification of new materials, including a recently-created microfilm of Frederick Douglass papers from the Douglass Memorial Home and other institutions. When reporting on the Collection's cataloging activities, Reddick noted particular issues in using cataloging practices for names of Haitian authors, African tribes, and voluntary associations, as well as for noting an author's racial identity. The catalogers consulted other

experts, and added dates to author names. He also mentioned difficulties in working with certain special collections materials, and said they had thus far been impossible to deal with (Franklin, 1940; Reddick, 1940a). The library lost their WPA workers in April of 1941, which meant there was no one to paste clippings for the papers they got in. In 1942, there were five years' worth of African-American newspapers to be classified and pasted (Latimer, 1942).

Between 1939 and 1940, the Schomburg Collection also instituted a system of recordkeeping in order to accurately reflect past and present finances, attendance, circulation, "and other essential data" (Reddick, 1940a, p. 3). When they compiled this data, Reddick noted that the Schomburg Collection's usage was higher than ever. He noted that many scholars used the collection, but that working class people who had migrated from other parts of the U.S. or abroad also accessed materials, "only too happy to find here a newspaper 'from back home'" (Reddick, 1940a, p. 4). Attendance figures, based on data from May of 1925 to May of 1940, showed a steady increase in attendance. While figures fluctuated from month to month within a year, the number of visitors continued to rise with the passage of time (Latimer, 1940).

## **Library Staff**

Library staffing also changed during Rose's last years at the 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch. A special cataloger was hired in the Schomburg Collection in 1940, bringing the staff up to the curator, reference librarian, full-time cataloger, and a part-time cataloger who came in once a week. The Collection also had "nine desk assistants, stenographers and clerks...provided through the good offices of the Works Progress Administration" (Reddick, 1940a, p. 3). While Reddick focuses on the other staff in that section, it is important to note that he also began working at the Schomburg in the preceding year (Reddick, 1940a).



Support staff also changed, such as Herbert Brice, who transferred from the 121<sup>st</sup> street branch to the 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch to perform clerical work in 1942 (Fleming, 1942).

Ernestine Rose also left the library after the start of World War II, retiring after a long career in the NYPL system (Sandford, 2011). Catherine Latimer, who had been hired in Rose's first years at the library, remained at the library after Rose's departure (Anderson, 2003).

### **The Library After 1942**

Rose retired in 1942, after 22 years of work at the 135<sup>th</sup> Street Branch. After her retirement, she moved back to her hometown of Bridgehampton, although she still taught summer classes in hospital librarianship at Columbia University for several years (Anderson, 2003; Sandford, 2011). World War II continued to rage in Europe, ending in September of 1945 (Axelrod, 2008). The library continued to serve the community and to preserve materials related to African-American culture, even after losing its highly-regarded Schomburg curator several years after the war (Davis, 1948).

Today, the library continues its tradition of service. It became independent of the library branch in 1972, after being designated as one of the Research Libraries of the New York Public Library. Building expansions in 1991 have created more space for lectures, performances, and other activities, as well as space to house the Center's records. The Center currently includes five research divisions: Art and Artifacts, Research and Reference, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books, Moving Image and Recorded Sound, and Photographs and Prints. It continues to serve patrons through the collection of primary source materials, as well as through programming on African-American life and history (New York Public Library, 2014).

## Library Services

Reference work continued in the Schomburg Collection, and the report of reference work from this year includes a list of authors who used the collection. Many famous names are on the list, including some that began their relationship with the library decades prior during the Harlem Renaissance (Latimer, 1945),<sup>39</sup> emphasizing the importance and distinction of this collection, as well as the loyalty of those who used it from the beginning. In 1948, the Schomburg Collection was still acting as a branch library and a research library, and engaged in many branch-related and research-related functions (Williams, 1948).

Branch-related functions included working with school groups, providing copies of African-American newspapers, maintaining bulletin boards of current news and events, sponsoring public events (e.g. lectures), preparing speeches to outside groups, cooperating on projects with other libraries, and reviewing books related to African-American life and culture that might be acquired by the circulation department (Williams, 1948).

Research functions included time-intensive bibliographic searches to locate materials for purchase,<sup>40</sup> Indexing and processing non-book materials, reference assistance and information services for those using the collection, assistance with group research projects (e.g. the *Encyclopedia of the Negro*), mail and telephone reference, services to the United Nations (e.g. loaning materials for a mission to Haiti), projects and production of materials to stimulate research (e.g. bibliographies, microfilming activities, letter-writing to

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<sup>39</sup> The list for this year is impressive: W.E.B. DuBois, Richard Wright, Otelia Cromwell, Langston Hughes, Sinclair Lewis, Roi Ottley, Sadie Daniel, George E. Haynes, Bucklin Moon, Chester B. Himes, St. Clair Drake, Carter G. Woodson, Seymour J. Schoenfeld, Jessie Fauset, A.K. Nyabongo, Kingsley Mbadiwe, Lorenzo J. Greene, J.A. Rogers, Franklin Frazier (Latimer, 1945).

<sup>40</sup> No comprehensive bibliographies existed in this area at the time, so extensive searches through divergent resources in multiple fields had to be completed in order to acquire materials for their collection (Williams, 1948).

include African-American periodicals in H.W. Wilson Indexes), and encouraging gifts of important manuscripts and other primary documents to the collection (Williams, 1948).

### **Library Outreach and Programming**

The library continued to actively engage visitors with issues surrounding race and racial identity. While other library staff are not mentioned as being regularly involved in the country's conversations on race, many of the records situate Reddick as someone who was very active in and regularly consulted about the experience of African-Americans. As the curator of a highly-regarded collection of materials on African-American history, literature, and culture, this is not especially surprising, although he does seem to be more vocal about issues of inequality than his predecessor

Reddick also operated at the library during a time where there was increased interest in race relations, as evidenced by Latimer's discovery of many more requests for such materials in the Schomburg Collection (Latimer, 1945). This increased interest may have made it easier for him to more actively engage people, such as the city employees, on issues of race, although the reverse (that his active engagement may have generated interest) may also be true.

Library programming reflected the library's ongoing tradition of bringing in speakers and materials that engaged people with issues of race in the United States. For example, library staff compiled a bibliography of readings to accompany a 1945 lecture entitled "Picture of the Negro in the Public Mind" (Schomburg Collection, 1945), for those who wanted to learn more about the treatment of African-Americans in the United States. This was a part of an ongoing series from 1945-1948 entitled *A World View of the Negro Question* (Schomburg Collection, 1945). The series was open to "leaders" (defined as "public officials, heads of organizations and advanced students in public relations"), rather than the

general public, so they would not be in competition with university lectures on the subject, and so the information from the lecture series could be disseminated by leaders through their organizations (Walter, 1944, p. 1).

The course in race relations “received a splendid response from most of the city departments,” (Reddick, 1944, p. 1) with one notable exception. When Reddick sent a letter to Commissioner Robert Moses, head of the Department of Parks, asking him to send one or two staff members to attend the program, Moses scrawled in the margin “we can’t send people to all the gatherings in town” (Reddick, 1944, p. 1). There was no record of a reply sent to Reddick.<sup>41</sup>

Lawrence Reddick continued to host other timely programs at the Schomburg. One such example is the meeting entitled “The Negro Warrior: His Record and His Future,” during which a disagreement arose over barriers to African-American veterans’ ability to find employment after the war (Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, n.d.). Many classes and community groups came to visit the collection this year, with longer lists of visiting groups each month than were found in earlier reference reports. A particularly interesting group was the Electronic Corporation of America, to whom Latimer gave a talk on the Schomburg Collection during Negro History Week (Latimer, 1945). The Schomburg continued to host exhibits, including “an exhibit of our rarest items which had been stored away for the duration of the war and which were returned to us the early part of the year. This exhibit included first editions, manuscripts, beautiful bindings and all the material dated between 1573 and 1860” (Latimer, 1945, p. 1). This exhibit was held in February to June of 1945 (Latimer, 1945), although no information is available about where the items

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<sup>41</sup> Research on Moses describes him as a challenging person to work with: Moses frequently overstepped the authority of other city departments, and also was described as “insensitive” towards people of color, due to his attempts to restrict access to recreational facilities (Tierney et al., 2007, p. 5).

were stored, if there was a particular event that triggered this move of materials, or if this was something that was done with rare materials across the NYPL system.

The library found a new way to serve the community as veterans returned from the service in World War II. Latimer's reference report noted that "some are planning to write, others are glad for the opportunity to catch up in their reading while still others are asking for information about various schools where they plan to finish their education" (Latimer, 1945, p. 2).

### **Library Collections**

The library continued to accumulate newspapers, although there was no staff member to organize them, and by 1945 the situation seemed dire. As Catherine Latimer says, "This mass of material has to be classified and pasted on blanks for our clipping folders. At present and for most of the year we have had no one to do this work which has seriously handicapped this service which is a very important supplement to our book collection for in many cases there is no other material except clippings. We also have about 10 cartons of clippings that have been given to us. I very urgently need a clerk to help with this work" (Latimer, 1945, p. 2). However, the library did plan to microfilm some of the "more important" newspapers (Latimer, 1945, p. 2), showing that the collections were continuing to stay current with the times.

### **Library Staff**

One of the greatest challenges Lawrence Reddick faced during his time as curator of the Schomburg Collection was maintaining a high-quality collection under considerable financial constraints. In 1948, the problem became publicized, and people concerned about the state of the collection wrote to NYPL Director Ralph A. Beals. Critics pointed to "the manifest indifference to the Collection on the part of city administration and officials of the

New York Public Library” (Davis, 1948, p. 1), and called for additional resources to be directed toward the neglected library (Davis, 1948). Between late 1947 and early 1948, Lawrence Reddick and the NYPL administration exchanged letters regarding his resignation, due to the lack of support for the Schomburg and his inability to make ends meet on his salary (Reddick, 1947).

The lack of resources was the impetus for Reddick’s departure from the library in March of 1948 (Reddick, 1947). Those who wrote to library and city officials also cited concern over the treatment of Reddick. One letter described him as having “a vision of the possibilities of a truly great cultural center built around an enlarged Schomburg Collection where the valuable source and secondary materials of Negro culture: books, magazines, sculpture, paintings would be made available for the use of scholars and the education of laymen from all over this country and abroad” and expressed concern “that a man of Dr. Reddick’s ability should feel compelled to leave a position for which he is eminently fitted because the situation there makes it impossible for him to do the job that should and could be done” (Hayden, 1948, p. 1).

Reddick relocated to Atlanta University Library in Atlanta, Georgia (Williams, 1948), and was succeeded by Dr. Dorothy A. Williams (Atwood, 1948). He took with him “all of the material collected by the Library on the Negro in World War II” (Williams, 1948, p. 1), which caused later issues for the Schomburg in trying to locate items related to this subject (Williams, 1948).

### **Rose’s Life After 1942**

After her retirement, Rose bought an 1880s-era house in her hometown of Bridgehampton (Sandford, 2011), which she called Random Manor (Rose, 1944). Rose still traveled to the city to go to Columbia University (Rose, 1944), where she taught for the

library school after her departure from the NYPL system. Her records at Columbia show her teaching Library Work with Hospital Patients (Ls 152) during the 1945-6 and 1946-7 school years (Rose, 1945-6; 1946-7). She seemed engaged in hospital library community and in expanding the opportunities for students here, just as she tried to do at her previous positions in NYPL branches. For whatever reason her involvement in the Harlem community waned, it seemed that it was a regular part of her professional identity to engage deeply and passionately with a community or topic when it struck her interest. Her engagement with her work seems to have made an impression on students (e.g. Shepard, 1945). Shepard's (1945) letter to her former instructor includes lengthy and thoughtful writing about all the things she gained from the course, and she concludes by saying, "Thank you, Miss Rose, for all you did to make the course so profitable to us all. I have gained much from the experience. I am grateful to you personally for the experience" (p. 2). Other students appreciated Rose's teaching as well: A copy of *The Public Library in American Life* found in her records at Columbia university has the following inscription: "My teacher of N. Y. Public Library School. A dear person & inspiring. – G. B." (Rose, 1954a).

Her notes show efforts on her part to make the course meaningful to students—ranging from a variety of suggestions for class projects, notes on opportunities for students in the field, and a good deal of correspondence between her and the many library professionals she tried to bring in to speak, to attend events, and/or to host her students as interns (Arnott, 1946; Fuller, 1946; Purington, 1946; Rose, 1946, 1946c; Quigley, 1946). Rose also wrote up reports on each session of her course (e.g. Rose, 1945) that reflected upon what worked and didn't, and how she might change things in the future.

One of the biggest ways Rose was involved in the hospital librarianship community was in seeking out opportunities in the field for her students, either by pointing them to a

list of different kinds of library work (Rose, 1946), or by networking to secure internships for her students (Arnott, 1946; Fuller, 1946; Purington, 1946; Rose, 1946c; Wilson, 1946). The response from hospital librarians was overwhelmingly positive, suggesting that she was well-regarded in this area of the field. She also organized programming, such as conferences and speaking engagements, around the topic of hospital librarianship. For example, she guided the formation of the Institute on Hospital Library Work, to promote awareness of and training in the area of hospital librarianship, based on the need for such professionals expressed by the Veterans' Administration after the war (Rose, 1946a). She was also approached to be a guest speaker for other departments and organizations, and to be a leader in professional organizations (e.g. Fish, 1946; Rose, 1946b).

Rose seemed active in her hometown of Bridgehampton as well, engaging in a variety of activities and regularly corresponding with contacts in the city (Sandford, 2011). The Schomburg and New York Public Library's Manuscripts and Archives both hold letters from after Rose's retirement, and show that she still avidly corresponded with friends in her professional network. Rose's correspondence from this time is sent from Bridgehampton (Mason, 1945; Robinson, 1945; Rose, 1944), although some of the letters indicate that she would sublet an apartment in New York when she had a class to teach at Columbia (Crissey, 1945; Rose, 1945a).

Rose and DuBois were no longer writing in the later part of her career at the library. Their only communication after 1932 was a letter from Rose to DuBois requesting his photo for the Schomburg's collection, and DuBois' very brief reply (DuBois, 1942, 1942a; Rose, 1942). Rose's communication with the Harlem library also appears to be infrequent, and there is only one letter in the Schomburg from her to the library after her departure. The tone of the letter is friendly, and inquires her "135<sup>th</sup> St. friends" (Rose, 1946, p. 3), saying she hopes to visit everyone when she comes to teach at Columbia next (Rose, 1946d).



However, there was another person Rose kept in contact with after leaving NYPL. After her retirement, she went back to Bridgehampton, where she exchanged letters with Franklin Hopper until his retirement several years later (e.g. Rose, 1944, 1946d).

### **The NYPL System During and After the Great Depression**

The bulk of Municipal Archives materials dealing with the NYPL system deal with the central building, although some branch improvements are mentioned. Based on the available records, it appears the bulk of city funding was directed at this building. A 1935 memo outlined the city's responsibility for the central building: "In the matter of responsibility that the Park Department must assume in the maintenance of buildings and other plant of the Museums, associated with this Department, quoted below, for an example, is 'Section Eighth of the Lease and Agreement for the Use and Occupation of the Library Building at Fifth Avenue and Forty-Second Street:' 'The City shall annually provide funds for the maintenance and repair of the building, and the city authorities, or Department of Public Parks acting under its direction, shall, at all times, provide and care for the roads, walks, fences, grading and general care of the grounds and appurtenances attached thereto. The city, in addition, shall, at all times, furnish a supply of water and adequate police patrol and protection. With the limitations already defined, the party of the second part shall exercise entire direction and management over all the affairs of the library building and the books, collections and appurtenances" (Sherry, 1935).

A similar agreement with the city was not found for the branch buildings, suggesting that they may have relied on other sources for funding. The Municipal Archive's records primarily document the NYPL system's interactions with the city on issues of funding, building, and maintenance. The Harlem branch is not one of the branches mentioned in the records I examined as one receiving improvements, which is especially

significant given Reddick's frustration with the condition of the structure and collections (e.g. Reddick, 1947).

As could be expected, records indicate financial strain during the Great Depression, such as those created by the Staff Association records held at NYPL, which repeatedly stress tight budgets and concerns over staff pay (Isserman, Isserman, & Kapelsohn, 1939). Library staff were encouraged to raise awareness and find community members to petition on their behalf in order to reduce the amount of funding cuts the library would experience (e.g. Middleton, 1937).

In the early 1940s, some of the correspondence related to a proposed move of the Central Circulation Branch, and to finding a location to build a new structure to house the branch (e.g. St. John, 1941). The branch's finding aid in the New York Public Library Archives show that it was housed in the Central Building, and indicate that by the late 1940s staff were unable to effectively serve the high volume of patrons in such a small space (New York Public Library, 2015). Presumably no ideal building site was located, as the branch closed in 1970, and its collections became part of the nearby Mid-Manhattan branch.

There was also outcry about negative comments about the library and its director made by Robert Moses, Commissioner of Parks, in his 1941 report to the Mayor. The report was not present in the files examined, but several response letters were. These letters focus on the director's prominence as a scholar, and on the challenging conditions (e.g. overcrowding and underfunded programs) faced by staff (Gosnell, 1941). However, one letter praised Moses' view, referring to some of the employees as "grumpy," and describes one occasion in particular: "Only a couple of months ago I had occasion to complain to the

library authorities of the dictatorial conduct of an employee who evidently thinks of himself as a composite embodiment of Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini” (Kadison, 1941).<sup>42</sup>

One memo about the Central Building describes where some of the funds went during the Depression: “Apparently they have used any funds that were made available to them for sponsoring WPA projects” (Constable, 1941), including a variety of projects such as “...some mechanical work sponsored by the Library and financed with tax notes” (Constable, 1941).

Beginning in 1943, there are records from the Department of Parks and Recreation outlining the library’s postwar plans. These include the Central Building expansion and the relocation of the Central Circulation Branch (e.g. Moses, 1943, 1944b, 1944c), which were discussed starting two years earlier. It is possible that the library administration and city officials decided to postpone these activities until after the war, but still wanted to lay preparatory groundwork in the meantime in order to expedite the process, as evidenced by the creation of contracts for specific activities and the library director’s insistence that the work be started as soon after the war as possible (Cormier, 1944; Hopper, 1944; Moses, 1944a).

Elsewhere (Hodgkiss, 1945) records indicate that other cultural institutions around the city were also receiving funds as a part of a state aid postwar program, although the details of this program are scarce in the correspondence from the Department of Parks and Recreation. A letter from Franklin Hopper refers to it as the State-Aided Post War Program, and indicates that the Department of Public Works agreed to handle the New

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<sup>42</sup> This same person describes an editorial he wrote to the *New York Times* in 1938, decrying the behavior of “a number of minor employees” by saying “Maybe it’s the spirit of the times; at all events, the dictatorial virus is unmistakably at work” (Kadison, 1941), suggesting that his vivid descriptions of staff transgressions may have been the result of his interest in current events, and less about the staff actually behaving as the combination of three dictators.

York Public Library's State-Aided Program (Hopper, 1945). It was eventually decided to put off the state aid projects until 1946 and 1947, after some budgeting and logistical concerns (e.g. the inability to do construction in areas currently housing books for the Central Circulation Branch) (Hadley, 1945).

In 1944, Franklin Hopper also asked for additional funds to give NYPL employees cost of living bonuses, although Commissioner Moses said he needed more information before he would discuss the issue (Moses, 1944). Not long after Ernestine Rose's retirement, Franklin Hopper left his position as Head of Circulation, retiring in 1946 (Rose, 1946d). His successor was Esther Johnson, who would be the one to respond to Reddick's resignation, and the one who would announce his successor, Dorothy Williams (e.g. Glantz, 1948; Reddick, 1947).

## **Conclusion**

In 1948, the Schomburg Collection was encouraged to revisit and refine its mission in a recommendation document produced by Dorothy G. Williams, acting curator after Reddick's departure. In the document summary, she insists that "the Schomburg Collection cannot hope successfully to be all things to all men. The recommendations suggested above would very distinctly point the future development of the Collection toward scholarship and research and away from its present community-centered program" (Williams, 1948, p. 5). This approach would allow the Schomburg to be more focused in its research activities (New York Public Library, 2014) although it also signaled a departure from the community orientation that Rose, and the librarians who helped shape the Harlem Renaissance, tried to create.

While her role in the library was complicated, often applauded but also criticized, none of the sources consulted for this project deny that she had a considerable impact on

the institution where she spent much of her career. It seems appropriate that a memorial for Rose would be organized by a citizens committee, and held in the building renovated just before her departure. Rose's memorial at the library took place on June 5, 1961, and was attended by library staff, members community members, and former patrons who all wanted a chance to gather and remember her (Jenkins, 1990). The original Carnegie branch building is still standing today, next door to the modern-day Schomburg Center building at the intersection of 135<sup>th</sup> Street and Malcolm X Boulevard. The ivy-covered structure, and the much larger research library next door, are a powerful visual reminder of the rich history of this library, and of how much it has grown over time.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## THEORETICAL TESTING WITH ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS

### Introduction

This chapter describes the results of coding for the Information Worlds theory and the Change in Historic Institutions (CHI) model. It begins by listing the different repositories visited and describing the relevant documents they contained, then moves to a discussion of the theories in relation to these documents. Finally, it concludes with synthesizing thoughts about the applicability of the theories to the document set as a whole. This chapter is focused on discussing the full collection of documents, rather than providing a narrative history as done in the previous chapter. It also includes examples to illustrate the ways different theoretical concepts appeared in source documents. For a brief overview of the number of documents accessed in each repository, refer to Table 1.

### The Repositories

This section describes the repositories consulted for this study, organized by the order in which they were visited during the author's first visit to New York City. The first repository is the W.E.B. DuBois papers, which is available online, and was accessed prior to the author's departure. The materials at two of the New York Public Library's research divisions, as well as the materials at the Municipal Archives and Columbia University, were consulted in person.

#### W.E.B. DuBois Papers

The W.E.B. DuBois papers are held at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. W.E.B. DuBois was an African-American scholar and activist who was one of the guiding forces behind the Harlem Renaissance, as well as one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and editor of *The Crisis*

magazine (Anderson, 2003). Many of DuBois' papers are digitized, and because he so frequently corresponded with the library, there are relevant materials to be coded from this collection. A search for "Ernestine Rose" in the WEB DuBois papers revealed 93 results, all of which overlapped with other relevant subject terms used in the collection metadata (e.g. New York Public Library).

DuBois and Rose communicated frequently between 1923 and 1932, at which point their communication abruptly stopped except for a few letters exchanged in 1942. These letters have been considered by other authors (e.g. Whitmire, 2014), but this is the first study to apply theoretical frameworks to their contents as a way to understand the events they describe. These letters are particularly important to include here as they cast a light on the activities of the Harlem library that is based on an individual interpretation from a perspective outside the library. In addition, the letters show a candid and ongoing conversation between two individuals, which is a departure from many of the more formal and less explicitly opinionated documents often found in the library archives.

Some are very brief requests for DuBois' presence at events, and contributed to constructing a timeline of events related to the library, rather than contributing insights about Rose and the library. These very short letters were not coded, as they did not contribute useful information, and that which was appropriate for coding (e.g. salutations) was duplicated in other items already being coded.

Instead, the coding focused on longer documents that contained more information. Perhaps the most notable of these was a draft letter from DuBois to Rose, outlining his concerns with her approach to serving African-American patrons. This unsent letter was one of the last documents DuBois wrote addressed to Rose (DuBois, 1932b), and was created after disagreements over the fairness of Regina Anderson Andrews' promotion process.

Andrews, a former librarian at the 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch, had moved to a different branch library in the NYPL system, and was hoping to be promoted to a higher employment grade. Andrews faced discrimination as she sought promotion, and enlisted the help of prominent DuBois and others. DuBois communicated with Rose and Franklin Hopper, head of the Circulation Department, in an effort to secure Andrews' promotion. Ultimately she was successful, but only after considerable effort on her part and the part of others, and the disagreement over her promotion caused DuBois to sever ties with Rose (see Whitmire, 2014).

### **New York Public Library**

The New York Public Library system is divided into two main sections: Reference and Circulation. The Reference department includes activities at the main branch, and is focused on research collections and services rather than on circulating collections and branches. The present-day repositories I visited are in the Reference section (research libraries with non-circulating materials). However, the records that were analyzed were related to the Circulation department. This department oversees the different branches in the NYPL system, and so records related to the Circulation Department are those that were searched for information about the Harlem branch. The records related to the Reference department dealt with activities in the main building, and so were outside of the scope of this study.

Two different research divisions of the New York Public Library were accessed for this study: the Manuscripts and Archives, as well as the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, which is a research library in Harlem. These research libraries are a part of the Reference department, but house materials created by the Circulation department. The



Schomburg was visited once over a several-day stretch, while two separate visits (several months apart) were made to the Manuscripts and Archives division.

### **Manuscripts and Archives**

The New York Public Library's Central Building is a research library housing the library system's Manuscripts and Archives division, which holds a majority of the primary source records related to the history of the library system. The author made two visits to this division. The first visit yielded only a handful of relevant documents, but a later series of searches for information on hiring and promotion practices unearthed additional materials, and the second visit was more fruitful.

During the first visit, only one letter, from Ernestine Rose to Carl Van Vechten (Rose, 1926b) was coded. Carl Van Vechten was the author of the book *Nigger Heaven* (Bernard, 2012; Van Vechten, 1926), and the letter invited him to the library to attend a book talk about the piece. Rose invited the author to be present for the discussion of the book, particularly since he had referenced the library in his writing but had not visited it. The coding of this letter is discussed in more detail below. The second visit was prompted by continued conversations with Manuscripts and Archives staff, which revealed additional materials that might be of use. These collections contained the directors' correspondence and the Staff Association records, and included more items relevant to the present study.

### **Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture**

As expected, The Schomburg Center (which was founded as a part of the 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch) had many valuable records from Rose's time. The research for this study focused on the Schomburg Center Records collection. There were other collections that may have been relevant to the study at the Schomburg, but these were largely out of scope and have been considered elsewhere, and so were not consulted. For example, Whitmire (2014) looked at

Regina Anderson Andrews' papers in her biography of Andrews, and so the relevant historical information they contained could still be pointed to in this study by accessing the secondary literature.

Like the DuBois papers, the collection included many letters to and from Rose comprised of a few brief lines confirming the dates of events, requesting speakers, or thanking the staff for reference assistance. These items were not analyzed, as they did not contain enough information to apply the theories to in meaningful ways. Some items from after Rose's retirement were accessed, but these were out of scope for the dates analyzed in this study, and were used to describe the library's development after her departure, but were not coded.

### **Municipal Archive**

The items in the Municipal Archive, with one exception, did not directly relate to the Harlem Branch. This one relevant item was from two years after Ernestine Rose's departure from the library, and provided useful information about the library's continued development, although it was not coded. The other records consulted at the Municipal Archive dealt with the Central Building and/or with the library system as a whole. Like the Columbia records, these were not coded, but were studied to provide context that outlined the different system-wide and citywide forces that impacted the Harlem library.

The letter from the Harlem library was from Schomburg Collection curator L. D. Reddick, and was addressed to Commissioner Robert Moses from the Department of Parks, inviting him and his staff to attend a race relations course being offered by NYPL and the General Education Board (Reddick, 1944). The letter included marginalia written by Moses, instructing that the letter be filed and remarking "we can't send people to all the gatherings in town" (Reddick, 1944). While the letter was outside the time period that items were coded for, it brought up an important consideration to keep in mind when coding items that

were in scope: The importance of coding marginalia in addition to the letter's main text. In this instance, doing so would provide very different perceptions of information value when using Information Worlds theory.

## **Columbia University**

Ernestine Rose's papers at Columbia were created after her retirement from NYPL, but were consulted to see if they mentioned anything about her time at the Harlem library, or contained documents from that time that she had taken with her. The records did not contain this sort of information: Only one document even mentions her work in Harlem, and that is a letter from a New Jersey librarian asking her to speak on race and libraries (Slauson, 1946). There was no reply from Rose present in her records.

The Columbia records related to her post-Harlem work teaching courses on hospital librarianship, as well as her service work during this time (e.g. serving on committees, locating students' internships, etc.). Because of this, these items were used to provide biographical information related to the end of her career, but were not included in theory testing.

## **Open Coding**

As mentioned above, the documents were coded in a three-step process. The first step was open coding, used to identify general trends and to get a sense of the document as a whole prior to applying theories to it. Often times, notes for open coding simply gave a brief overview of the document's contents, although if content stood out that related to information appearing elsewhere, this was also noted. Open coding was not done as a part of theory development or theoretical analysis. Instead, it was used as other library historians have approached documents, which was to use these to construct a narrative about the topic of interest, and to foster a deep understanding of the documents and their contents. Therefore, the results of this coding appear in the previous chapter on Ernestine

Rose and the Harlem library, which includes this narrative. A more in-depth discussion of the coding process itself, and the decisions informing the content analysis, can be found in the Methods chapter.

### **Information Worlds**

This section discusses the application of the five Information Worlds concepts (boundaries, information behavior, social norms, social types, and information value) to the coding documents. All five concepts of Information Worlds appeared in the materials. Even when not all five appeared in the same paragraph, each concept almost always could be found in each document. To make the discussion of the coding easier to understand, many of the examples for this section are taken from the correspondence between Ernestine Rose and W.E.B. DuBois. The coding of these letters provide ample evidence of how information theory provides a useful lens for understanding the documents, as well as noteworthy examples that clearly illustrate each of the concepts. When needed, examples from other coded documents are included to illustrate a point.

### **Boundaries**

Boundaries are the places where multiple worlds intersect, and where there is the potential for information exchange between those worlds (Jaeger & Burnett, 2009). The concept of boundaries was often present, but required analysis of multiple documents in order to fully understand how those boundaries functioned. For example, Rose's 1922 statement on library service to African-Americans clearly delineated boundaries between Rose's vision of library service and that of Southern librarians. Rose's perspective was that library service should not be segregated, but instead focused on providing specialized service to the community, but welcoming any patron into the library. Many of the Southern

libraries opposed her ideas, and felt that segregated library service was the best option (Rose, 1922).

However, in order to fully understand these boundaries, other materials had to be consulted. When looking at the ALA Bulletin (Rose, 1921b) that described the Work With Negroes Roundtable meeting (Rose's statement was a response to the backlash surrounding this group), these divisions in service models are still evident, but another boundary becomes clear as well: The group does not seem to be actively seeking the input of African-Americans in their discussions of library service, either for the work of the Roundtable or within attendees' individual libraries.

A complete list of attendees was not included in the Bulletin, making it impossible to know if any people of color were present, but there is no mention of asking for the perspectives of African-American librarians or patrons. The document explicitly pointed to "the difficulties attending colored representation on the governing board of the library," (Rose, 1921b p. 201), without saying what exactly those difficulties were. All we are told is that "this subject was discussed somewhat at length, several libraries believing in a less formal participation of colored opinion, for instance, in an advisory capacity only" (Rose, 1921b, p. 201).

The secondary literature also described how deeply divided the groups were in their differences, with neither being willing to adopt the other's model. Eventually it was decided that the North and South should come up with models for library service to African-Americans separately, rather than to continue working towards the creation of best practices for the field as a whole (Jenkins, 1990). Rose appeared frustrated with both groups, the Southern librarians who supported segregation, as well as Northern librarians "who were only partially awake to the demands of Negro constituents of their libraries"

(Rose, 1922, p. 1), and who might believe arguments about the value of segregation due to this lack of awareness (Rose, 1922).

In some cases, a boundary was clearly present, but there was not enough information to fully understand and articulate the relationship between the two worlds. For example, the Red Cross was using a room in the library as a teaching center, and beyond them being promised the space for the whole year (Rose, 1923), there is no additional information in any other records about the Red Cross' work in the library, or about how they came to be in that space. In fact, the only reason they were mentioned was because they used a space that W.E.B. DuBois' theatre group wanted to use (Rose, 1923).<sup>43</sup> Only one other letter mentioned the Red Cross, and only to say that they would be vacating the library space at some point and that the theater could use it (Rose, 1932a).

As the Little Theater movement progressed at the library, DuBois created clear boundaries between his theater group and others. He indicated in several letters that other groups were not up to "our standard" (DuBois, 1927d, p. 1), suggesting that he situated the library, as the host organization, within the world of his theater movement, and situated other theater groups he did not approve of outside of that world. The letters regarding the theater groups are discussed in more detail under Information Value below.

The coding for Information Worlds also reflected boundaries that formed over the time period studied. The most notable example is the boundary that formed between W.E.B. DuBois and the NYPL system over Regina Andrews' promotion, where DuBois and others protested racial discrimination in promotion practices (e.g. DuBois, 1930). This boundary appeared in the documents through DuBois' dissatisfied tone in relation to the

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<sup>43</sup> In some cases, the Red Cross used space in public libraries for various purposes during World War I (Skinner, 2012, 2013; Wiegand, 1989), although this was nearly five years after the end of that conflict, so this is unlikely unless they had taken over the space during that time and held on to it after the war.

branch's personnel issues (e.g. DuBois, 1930). In one letter, he says, "You say that you recommended Mrs. Andrews for appointment in the Third Grade. But Mr. Hopper told me that you particularly qualified that by saying you would not obligate yourself to receive her as your First Assistant, and I understand that this qualification really invalidated the recommendation as such recommendation must carry with it the willingness of the Branch Librarian to receive the one recommended as her assistant" (DuBois, 1930a, p. 1). This boundary also appeared with a decrease in the number of times where the library and DuBois are referred to as being a part of the same world, as was done in the Little Theater example above.

DuBois clearly outlined the evolution of this boundary in a letter he drafted to city officials, where he described Rose's early years at the library, and the high hopes surrounding the changes she implemented. However, these developments stopped, as "Miss Rose identified herself with the community less and less. Her time has been increasingly taken up with outside interests, the number of colored employees has not increased with the colored population, while promotion in library work has been increasingly difficult" (DuBois, 1930, p. 2).<sup>44</sup> While the letter suggested a boundary between the library system and the African-American community (through the NYPL's lack of commitment to fair hiring and promotion), the above language also suggests an additional boundary that has formed between Rose and DuBois, but not between DuBois and the entirety of the branch, as he continued to communicate with Catherine Latimer, who was still employed at the library (see DuBois, 1932d).

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<sup>44</sup> The outside interest he referred to primarily seemed to be the Adult Education campaign the library was involved with (DuBois, 1930).

## Information Behavior

Information behavior refers to normative behaviors related to information use (or non-use) (Jaeger & Burnett, 2009). In the case of information behavior, the documents describe two different sets of behaviors: those that were a part of the letter (e.g. the letter as a form of information exchange), as well as the description of other information behaviors within the letter (e.g. information sharing through a speaking engagement). This was seen in Rose (1924a), where Rose asked DuBois to speak at the library about his recent travels. While the focus of coding was on the actual letter contents (meaning that this letter was coded for information sharing, because he was speaking to an audience rather than engaging in an exchange), it was still important to be aware of the information behaviors related to the physical artifact, in case this would assist in understanding its purpose within a world.

For example, a report document, created for distribution rather than written with the expectation of a reply, could explain a context or describe actors differently than a letter, and taken as a whole, these documents could provide multiple perspectives from which to view actors and the worlds in which they functioned. This also spoke to the idea of information channels, as face-to-face meetings might be the place where those decisions were discussed (e.g. Rose sent many letters to potential attendees regarding planning meetings for library activities e.g. Rose, 1921a), while other channels (such as written communication) might be used to convey decisions that had already been reached (e.g. DuBois, 1927e).

Other information behaviors appear within the context of the documents as well, and within the set of documents coded for the theories, all aspects of Information Behavior (information seeking, sources, sharing, exchange, use, archiving, avoidance, and channels, see Appendix A) were present (although each aspect was not present in each document).



For example, in his letters related to his displeasure with the NYPL system's treatment of African-American employees, information avoidance was present, as DuBois expressed distrust for the library's information related to fair treatment of employees (e.g. DuBois 1930). In this letter (DuBois, 1930) information sharing was also present when he said he would bring his concerns to the Civil Service Commission, Mayor, and Aldermen of New York City. This letter served as a useful example of how different several sub-areas within a concept might appear in a single document, which was particularly common with information behavior.

### **Social Norms**

Social norms are behaviors that are common and agreed upon by the members of a world, and are enforced by the members of that world (Jaeger & Burnett, 2009). Social norms appeared in the structure of the documents, as well as their contents. For structure, different norms of addressing recipients were apparent, and these tended to relate to type (discussed more fully below). For example, Rose always addressed W.E.B. DuBois with his title as well as name (she referred to him as "My dear Dr. DuBois", e.g. Rose, 1926, p. 1). DuBois uses a similar greeting ("My dear miss Rose", e.g. DuBois, 1926, p. 1), indicating that this style of salutation is the norm for their interactions as two authority figures within their worlds.

Other norms appeared within the bodies of the letters. For example, Rose often served as an intermediary between W.E.B. DuBois and Franklin Hopper, the Head of the Circulation Department. In several letters, she mentions meeting with Hopper about an idea she and DuBois had discussed previously. In one instance, Rose and DuBois wrote back and forth about forming the Little Theater group and hosting performances, and she met with Hopper to share the idea and get his approval (Rose, 1926). In this example, it appears that the norm in the world of the library system was for the library staff to discuss

ideas independently, and then propose those ideas to the administration for approval prior to implementation. In addition, it also showed that it was the norm for the staff to be the ones to meet with library administration, rather than individuals outside the library system such as DuBois (the exception being the meetings that were held in the 1930s regarding Andrews' promotion, see Whitmire, 2007, 2014).

## **Social Types**

Social types are the roles fulfilled by a member of a world, and are shaped by how others in the world define their role (Jaeger & Burnett, 2009). Two of the ways social types appeared in the documents were related to professional or organizational roles, and to racial identity. Professional roles were frequently highlighted in these documents, which was expected in documents related to a professional environment. Sometimes these types were outlined in the use of titles. Rose, for example, always signed her name over the words "Branch Librarian," even to people with whom she had regular contact, such as DuBois (e.g. Rose, 1926, p. 2). Others were often referred to by role as well, such as Hopper and the library administration, who DuBois referred to as "the library authorities" (e.g. DuBois, 1926a).

Typing related to organizational role occurred with cultural activities as well. One example was related to the Krigwa Players Theatre Group (the name of the theater group discussed above), as it got off the ground and the planning for its development continued (DuBois, 1926a). DuBois had decided upon a set of goals based on some of his previous discussions with Rose (e.g. increasing patronage and membership), but also insisted that only material deemed appropriate be included.

As DuBois said, "I propose that the play house should be open for plays to be produced by other groups on terms which would protect the library from the kind of persons and plays which should not be permitted to appear, and...continue the standard which we

have begun and secure us due credit” (DuBois, 1926a, p. 1). Typing appeared here in two ways: By discussing those within and beyond his theater group by pointing to the high standards of his group, while also pointing to “other” groups (anyone outside the Krigwa Players) and further dividing these by ones that had acceptable content to share, as well as those whose plays were not permissible (DuBois, 1926a). Typing of other artists who would use the playhouse space continued, as he insisted that producers be listed on programs as “Guests” of the Krigwa Players Little Negro Theatre, creating a clear delineation between them and the theater group that regularly presented work at the library (DuBois, 1926a).<sup>45</sup>

The 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch was a library with an integrated staff, serving a largely African-American population as a branch that was part of the NYPL system, where administrators and the vast majority of employees were white. Not surprisingly, then, racial identity appeared in a variety of ways. In some cases, African-Americans as a group would be described as a type (for example, the patrons being discussed by the Work With Negroes Round Table discussed under “Boundaries”, see Rose, 1921b, 1922), or an individual person’s race would be an important part of an interaction.

One example was a letter Rose received about Augusta Savage’s application to the Fontainebleau School of Fine Arts. Savage was a sculptor and had displayed her work in the library previously (Whitmire, 2007). In the letter, Savage’s race, rather than her artistic abilities, were explicitly pointed to as what kept her from being accepted. According to the Chairman, “to be perfectly frank with you, we did learn that miss Savage was of the colored race and...it would not be wise to have a colored student” (Peixotto, 1923, p. 1). He indicated this was because the students (many of whom were from the Southern United

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<sup>45</sup> DuBois also wanted visiting performances to donate part of their proceeds not to the library, but to the theater group itself for decorations (DuBois, 1926a). There was no indication if the library administration decided to approve this.

States) lived in very close proximity. He continued: “You can readily see that disagreeable complications would arise and the applicant in question would perhaps suffer most from these complications” (Peixotto, 1923, p. 1). This was a very explicit case of typing, although it also pointed to the concept of social norms by situating her presence as outside of those norms, thus providing one of many examples from this research where these concepts overlap. The intersection of professional role and racial identity also appeared in later documents relating to racial inequality in the NYPL system, for example through Hopper’s mention of “young colored women with the sort of education that library work requires” (Hopper, 1930a, p. 1).

The coding also showed changes in individual roles. For example, in the discussion of the theater group described in the “Innovation and Adaptation” section below, W.E.B. DuBois is framed in the documents as being someone with whom Rose collaborates and whose opinion she seeks in matters related to the theater group. Several months later, however, his role had shifted slightly, as he is being invited to a group meeting that Rose seems to have coordinated independently (Rose, 1923b).

### **Information Value**

Information value refers to an agreed-upon hierarchy related to the value of different types of information, from high value to low value (Jaeger & Burnett, 2009). Ernestine Rose and W.E.B. DuBois both often wrote letters that included explicit statements of information value. Rose’s conclusion in her 1922 statement on the Work with Negroes Round Table was an especially strong example: “If my report has not made my attitude clear, it is a mistake in my way of putting the matter and not at all a mistake in my fundamental beliefs” (Rose, 1922, p. 1). In many of her letters to DuBois, she implied or explicitly stated the value of his presence and involvement with the library.

In one particular case, the statements were particularly clear when she asked him to speak to a class: “Any evening shall be at your disposal. Only let me know which one, and don’t, I beg of you, refuse! We want you so much” (Rose, 1924c, p. 1). DuBois ended up politely declining the invitation (DuBois, 1924a).

DuBois’ letters also provided many examples of information value. To continue with the example of the theater group, DuBois applied very explicit value to another theater group, called the Sekondi Players, who were also using the library basement: “I feel very strongly concerning the matter and if the Sekondi Players appear in the library basement I should feel that I would have to withdraw my co-operation. They are not at all up to our standard” (DuBois, 1927d, p. 1). This did end up creating a rift between his theater group and the library: DuBois withdrew from the Little Theater movement that same month, taking the name “Krigwa” with him (DuBois, 1927e, p. 1). In both cases, Rose and DuBois placed a very clear value on a particular person’s involvement in the library, and these valuing statements (while not always quite so pronounced) were present in enough letters that it could be considered a normative behavior.

The concept of Information Value also stood out in the letter from Ernestine Rose to Carl Van Vechten regarding his book *Nigger Heaven* (Rose, 1926b).<sup>46</sup> Rose’s letter highlighted two different areas to which value might be applied: First, her perception of the book’s portrayal of the library as being mostly inaccurate, and encouraging him to visit the library during the book discussion to “find out the truth about the Library” (p. 2.) Immediately after, she mentioned that the book “...has just been placed in circulation and is being read widely. So you owe us a visit anyway, do you not think so?” (p. 2).

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<sup>46</sup> The book itself (Van Vechten, 1926) was particularly interesting, since it was written by a white man about Harlem, and includes fictitious representations of the many figures of the Harlem Renaissance that Van Vechten had tried to befriend. To put it lightly, the work received mixed reviews (e.g. Chesnutt, 1926; Larsen, 1926).

In both cases, his presence at the library was highly valued (in one case to clear up inaccuracies about the library in his writing, and in another because his work is being widely consumed by her patrons). However, her writing shows opposite perceptions of value of the book itself: She did not seem to highly value the book because it was inaccurate, but her mention of the book's high circulation indicated it was valued by patrons (Rose, 1926b).

### **The Worlds of the Harlem Library**

The examination of documents revealed several different worlds within the library system, as well as worlds intersecting with the library. In order to fully understand the extent and nature of each of the worlds, additional work would need to be done studying other records by actors in the worlds (e.g. more of WEB DuBois' papers, the papers of literary figures such as Nella Larsen and Langston Hughes, Regina Andrews' papers, etc.). However, the author used the records related to the library to begin sketching outlines of these worlds as they appeared in relation to the 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch. For a more complete discussion of the potential for future development of this research stream, see the Conclusion chapter.

The world of the library itself was, as expected, the world most completely described within the documents. In this world, Rose's type was as the leader of the library, although she did defer to other authorities within the larger world of the NYPL system, within which the library was nestled. In the documents, the norm was that library documentation was created (or at least signed) by Rose, Schomburg, or another leader within this institution, although many unsigned records (such as circulation or accession records) may not follow this norm.

The world of those working with social justice and community organizations also intersected with the library. In this world, DuBois was one of the people Rose most frequently corresponded with, and (in relation to the library at least), was typed as a leader

of this community, and someone who was a colleague whose advice and collaboration was frequently and eagerly sought.<sup>47</sup> There was also the world of the literary and artistic community that interacted with the library, although this world seems to intersect heavily with the community of activists (such as DuBois), who often appeared as patrons and/or promoters of African-American creative talent (such as the Little Theater movement).

The library served as a space that encompassed a variety of voices, by providing a venue for the sharing of many ideas related to African-American lived experience and culture. Anderson (2003) pointed to Habermas' notion of the public sphere, and contemporary notions of the "black public sphere," which gives us a sense of the worlds of 1920s Harlem and the library's place within them: "Harlem's public spheres may have included the black churches, the street corners, UNIA rallies, and the publications of the NAACP and urban League, as well as the more radical publications such as *Fire!* and *The Messenger*. But it was the library that proved capable of encompassing the greatest range of voices. Unlike Garvey's mass movements or DuBois' *The Crisis*, the library did not have an agenda or polemic to advance. But it did provide a place for dialogue on issues of real concern to this community" (Anderson, 2003, p. 410). Anderson's quote distills the world of the library most effectively: while her use of Habermas without the influence of the smaller worlds may not fully address the norms, types, information behaviors, etc. within the library, she does effectively describe the world of the library as a whole, and points to some of the places where it intersects with the wider community (which might serve as a jumping off point for future study).

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<sup>47</sup> Other sources (e.g. Hughes, 1944) suggest that this world was populated by the community's elite members, who DuBois referred to as the Talented Tenth, and did not provide a complete or accurate representation of the neighborhood of Harlem as a whole.

Some larger worlds outside of the library and New York appeared as well, such as the world of the American Library Association, and the separate worlds of Northern and Southern librarians described above (Rose, 1922). Similarly, Whitmire's work pointed to differences between New York and Chicago libraries, as Chicago libraries had a larger number of African-American librarians, although the city itself had a smaller number of African-American residents than New York. Regina Anderson Andrews also recalled facing less discrimination in Chicago than she faced in New York (DuBois, 1930; Whitmire, 2007). On an even larger scale, the Great Depression and the world of American society made its way into library documents, as W.P.A. workers were brought in and budgets were slashed (e.g. Ely, 1936).

### **Change in Historic Institutions (CHI)**

This section discusses the application of the CHI model to the coding documents. It relies largely on the formation of the Schomburg Collection as a primary example, although coding issues that are better illustrated with other events are occasionally brought in as well. The CHI model is envisioned in three stages. In the first stage, the author determines whether or not a change has occurred. That change is then classified as innovative (proactive) or adaptive (reactive) in the second stage. The third stage considers the results of the change by examining its impacts and the perception of the change within whatever community/communities it impacts.

### **The Presence of Change in the Documents**

Change appears in the documents, and many of the documents that were fruitful to code for Information Worlds were also fruitful when coded for CHI. This excludes, of course, documents that do not discuss change. One of the most important findings related to coding for CHI in these documents is that there are only a few instances (e.g. a report on the state of the library) where a change would be described fully in a single document. More often,



changes were described in a series of documents, particularly since the bulk of items coded for this study are letters. For example, DuBois' theatre group was discussed in early 1923 (see Rose, 1923), but the conversations about this theatre group go on over many letters.

Often, one change (e.g. a new program) would be subject to later, smaller changes, as it evolved based upon impact and perceptions. This might result in new, small changes happening as a part of the larger change (e.g. changing the night the program was held), or might result in shifts within the larger change as a whole (e.g. canceling a program considered to be unsuccessful). One example from the theater group discussed above was a change in operating expenses, when the group began to pay a \$2.00 fee to the library's janitor. This smaller change was implemented by the library's administration to ensure the janitor received some compensation from groups when he had to stay at the building past 9:00 PM (DuBois, 1927; Rose, 1927).

The CHI model allows one to describe very small as well as larger changes, and it was helpful to be able to look at a change across all the documents that describe it, to understand how these smaller adjustments fit in. After coding showed that these changes appear across multiple documents, and often include elements of discussion and adjustment as time went on, an additional component was added to the CHI model allowing for a cyclical effect, wherein the impact and perceptions related to a change may result in further adjustments to the program or service in question (see Appendix B).

In some cases, it became challenging to exactly describe the evolution of a change due to missing documentation. For example, Rose's letters to DuBois early in 1923 frame him as the person spearheading the development of a theater group in the library (Rose, 1923, 1923a). However, by late September, Rose writes him to say that a number of people were interested in coming together at the library to discuss forming a theater group, and had tentatively set a meeting date. She said, "Knowing your interest, I am writing to ask if

you will not join us. We should not feel that we could go very far up here without your help” (Rose, 1923b, p. 1). In this instance, it appeared Rose was inviting DuBois along as a participant to an event already planned, rather than as someone initiating the planning, but it was unclear from the letters what (if anything) changed during that time.

One issue the present research was not able to address fully was resistance to change (which could be thought of as the concept of continuity), where there would be the opportunity for change, but the decision makers would decide not to make the change. In this instance, it would not be appropriate to use the coding framework (as the full framework deals with describing a change that has occurred, rather than simply indicating that the potential for change exists), but still would be important to describe that the activity fit with the concept of continuity (or upholding the status quo), and to situate that description within broader contexts if applicable.

For example, when describing Rose’s lack of assistance with Andrews’ promotion, touched on earlier in this chapter and elsewhere, it was important to also describe the activities of others (e.g. DuBois’ and Andrews’ attempts to promote change, the administration’s insistence that discrimination was not happening, etc.), and to situate this within broader social contexts (e.g. hiring and promotion practices within the NYPL system as a whole). This was the only example of continuity that was discussed in-depth, so this study could not fully articulate what this continuity might look like across different instances, or how it might be addressed in a coding framework. Additional work is needed with additional documents in order to fully understand how this phenomenon might appear in historical records.

## **Innovation and Adaptation**

Deciding whether a change is innovative or adaptive requires an understanding of the context in which that change occurs, both in the sense of understanding the context within the collection of documents, as well as the larger social contexts informing that document. For document coding in this study, this meant looking broadly at the documents for trends to locate corroborating evidence, since many changes were described across multiple documents as mentioned above. In addition, determining innovative versus adaptive change required an understanding of the broader trends in librarianship and in society, in order to be able to indicate whether or not a particular change (or something similar) had appeared elsewhere.

The most notable example of a change that appeared across multiple documents may be the development and evolution of the Schomburg Collection, both in terms of the volume of documentation, and the wide-reaching impact of the Collection. In this case, it would be impossible to know if such a collection were innovative without an understanding of what other similar collections (if any) existed in the country. In this instance, the collection was the only one of its kind in a public library when it was dedicated in 1925 (Jenkins, 1990), showing the importance to consulting secondary literature and other resources beyond the coding documents in order to correctly identify when an innovative change is taking place.

Sometimes a change appeared to be both adaptive and innovative, as one took a situation that required responding to (e.g. the change of a neighborhood's demographics and information needs), but attempted to address it in a way that had not been attempted previously. This was not the case the Schomburg Collection, as the Collection was such a new idea for a public library (even one with a large African-American patron base), that it would be untrue to the data to code it as anything but innovative. However, it did appear at some points elsewhere. For example, in Rose (1922), she discussed the Round Table's work

(and her own approach to librarianship) in terms that were both adaptive (working with changing communities) and innovative (finding ways to serve those communities most effectively, and using language focused on inclusion and meeting needs, rather than language focused on the idea of giving “good books” to readers as a form of social improvement, as was common in the field at this time, see Wiegand, 1989, 2011).

More work is needed with the model to determine and describe exactly how adaptation and innovation intersect in library documents. While they often appear as parallel concepts (i.e. one or the other being represented in a change event), the fact that they could potentially be related, and what the character of the relationship(s) might be merits further investigation. In the documents under study it appears that adaptation and innovation can reinforce and inform each other, because each is motivated by a desire for change. The primary way the concepts differ is in the motivation guiding them.

Adaptation, as mentioned before, is motivated by the desire to change in relation to an existing outside force, while innovation involves a desire to change to meet a need that has not been met previously. This has implications for modern-day libraries as well as researchers, as libraries and information studies researchers continue to work with changing populations and changing needs, but want to find new ways to serve their patrons. For a more complete discussion of future research directions involving CHI, see the Conclusion section.

### **Impact and Perceptions**

Impact and perceptions also appear regularly in the documents. For example, many documents (e.g. Latimer, 1940a, 1941, 1942; Reddick, 1940a), point to the Collection as a vital and useful service for researchers, as well as an educational resource for other members of the public (e.g. school groups), signaling a positive impact on the research community and the Harlem public. These documents also describe perceptions related to

The Schomburg Collection's importance, such as the Collection's distinction as a unique entity within a public library.

Impact and perceptions may lead to the evolution of new activity (or lead to new changes). For example, DuBois (1926) writes to Rose in part to discuss the Little Theatre. After the theater was formed, he wanted to talk with Rose and "the library authorities" about the project, so "on the one hand, we can give all groups an opportunity, and on the other hand, can keep a high standard and receive reasonable credit for starting the Little Theatre" (DuBois, 1926, p. 1). In this example, DuBois' perception was that the theater might draw considerable interest, but also revealed his desire to tailor the program as it progressed to only include content he considered high in quality. This resulted in changes within the theater group, such as DuBois' eventual departure mentioned earlier.

The potential for a change to evolve had not been previously articulated in the CHI model, and so was added after the analysis (see Figure Two). More work is needed to see if and whether impact and perceptions might result in different changes (and how this might be reflected in the model). However, the example above shows that a change event is not always a discrete event, and in order to effectively describe the change, it may be necessary to track the evolution of change over time.

Dorothy Williams, who was Lawrence Reddick's successor as the Curator of the Schomburg Collection, articulated this in her vision of change from her recommendation report for the future of the collection: "It is realized that change is necessarily often (and wisely often) a slow process—'not lightly vacated are the burdens of quiescant [sic] years'. But of first importance is the determination of the extent to which such a change as is here proposed is deemed desirable. For once objectives are clearly sighted, the requisite means for reaching them tend in time to be found" (Williams, 1948, p. 5).

## Conclusion

Both the theory of Information Worlds and the Change in Historic Institutions model are useful in interpreting historical documents. In the case of Information Worlds, the material within the documents could be articulated very well using the concepts conveyed in the theory. This was largely true for the CHI model as well, although some additional testing and refinement of concepts is needed in order to fully and accurately describe the changes outlined in the documents.

In addition, both theories work well together, as Information Worlds served as the basis for describing small and large social contexts, while the CHI model provided a framework for thinking through the process of change in each of those contexts. The use of CHI was greatly enhanced by the understanding provided by Information Worlds, as CHI primarily described the change process, but focused less on the structure of the world in which that change occurred. However, an understanding of that structure, and of larger social contexts, is vital to being able to classify change. Information Worlds proved to be a very useful way to articulate these contexts, and this, combined with the understanding of broader social contexts through consultation of the secondary literature, made for a study that could successfully apply the CHI theory.

Both Information Worlds and CHI are valuable in part because they can describe large and small contexts and activities (e.g. a single branch versus an entire library system, or a minor adaptive change versus the creation of a new research collection), and both are best used when one is able to consult and understand information related to all the contexts informing the topic of interest. One of the most significant findings from this study, therefore, was that future researchers who are looking to use these theories would benefit from an in-depth knowledge of the subject matter, as well as the ability to consider how different elements of a theory might relate and overlap.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

#### Introduction

This chapter synthesizes key findings that may be beneficial to researchers and practitioners, and suggests possible areas for future study based upon this project and its conclusions. For a complete discussion of the findings from this study, refer to the chapters on Theory and Archival Records and Ernestine Rose and the Harlem Public Library.

#### Findings for Researchers

The primary focus of this study was to describe the history of the Harlem library during Rose's tenure, using content analysis and coding for theories as an approach to understand this history. There are two main sets of findings that are relevant to researchers in historical and social science disciplines. The first is related to the history of the library. This study confirmed and built upon the work of previous researchers (e.g. Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1990; Sandford, 2011; Whitmire, 2007, 2014). While several (Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1990; Sandford, 2011) focused on the excellent work Rose engaged in during the Harlem Renaissance, this study attempted to take a more critical and long-term view of Rose's work. In part, this was to problematize discussions of Rose as a champion of service to African-Americans, based upon Whitmire's (2007, 2014) work that showed her lack of support for Andrews' promotion. This study's findings aligned with both perspectives, showing Rose as a passionate and dedicated professional, while also showing that issues arose with her leadership.

Rose came to the library mid-career, and was able to adapt her previous experiences to the library, and to bring in and work with staff who made the library an influential and transformative place (Anderson, 2003). However, it also confirms that workplace tensions

existed, and documents indicate that Rose did not always seem effective at addressing those tensions (e.g. Latimer, 1932). Rose also was described as becoming more and more distant from the African-American community (DuBois, 1930).

Not surprisingly, this paints a picture of a historical figure who was as complicated as any other, and who had a variety of strengths and weaknesses. More work is needed to fully describe Rose's engagement with conflict and tension in the workplace, as well as the distance that developed between her and the African-American community. Understanding and articulating Rose's complexity as completely as possible not only offers a more complete assessment of her career and contributions than previous work, but may also offer simultaneous inspiration (through her innovative approaches) and food for thought (through the conflicts that arose, particularly during Andrews' fight for promotion) for other librarians to consider as they interact with the communities they serve.

The second set of findings for researchers is related to the application of the two theories to historical records. This study showed that both theories could successfully be applied to historic resources in order to draw meaningful conclusions. Information Worlds worked very well with the documents, with all five concepts appearing regularly in the documents, and providing insights about the social location and behaviors of the different actors. It was found that the documents that were appropriate for coding were those in narrative form (rather than things like circulation tables), and that most documents contained all five concepts. It was also found that coding documents at the section or paragraph level produced the best results.

CHI could be used to articulate innovative change, as well as the impacts and perceptions of a change. Most documents that were coded for Information Worlds could be coded for CHI, the only exceptions being those that did not describe change. Unlike Information Worlds, the change described often appeared across multiple documents, so



describing a change event requires a body of documents created over a range of time. The CHI model was also revised slightly from its original form, to include a mechanism for feedback, where the impact and perceptions of one change can either result in further refinements to that particular change, or result in new changes.

While both theories were useful, both would benefit from further testing with historical resources. This would help researchers determine whether they are useful across multiple contexts, and to see if additional concerns arise or if additional refinements are needed. Further discussion of how this theory testing might be approached is described in the “future directions” section below.

### **Findings for Practitioners**

There are several aspects of this study that may be of use to practitioners. The 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch serves as an early example of user-centered, community-oriented service. This tradition of service is important for librarians in understanding how librarianship has evolved, in order to learn from the past as practitioners continue building and improving the field. The specific programs and services may also be of use to librarians as an inspiration for programs and services they can implement in their own libraries.

Rose’s was ahead of her time with her community focus, at a time when it was more common to provide enriching material for community betterment, rather than providing the material that community members selected as enriching (Anderson, 2003; Wiegand, 2011). Her desire to understand her patrons’ needs as articulated by the patron was in part facilitated by building bridges between the library and community groups that can provide guidance and collaboration. Early examples of community service to diverse and changing communities are particularly important to examine in today’s libraries, as immigration to the United States has risen, and diversity in communities has increased, and libraries are finding ways to provide services to their new patrons (Toppo & Overberg, 2014). Rose

described the library as “the staunch, welcoming friend of the wandering or bewildered immigrant” (Rose, 1917, p. 3), and the role of the library as a welcoming and comfortable place as she described continues to be an important function in many communities (Toppo & Overberg, 2014).

While the library’s history serves as a reminder of the importance of the call to serve the public, its failures also serve as a reminder for librarians to be self-aware, adaptable, and open to change and criticism as they seek to build the best libraries they can. As Anderson (2003) said, “the story of the 135th Street Branch library is larger than its transformation into a world-renowned repository of knowledge; it serves as a model of the library finding its place in its community” (p. 417). The library’s activities can also inspire ideas for programming, or give librarians a historical perspective to compare to their own approach to programming services. For example, Lawrence Reddick described the “primary purpose of this library, as of others, is reading and study” (Reddick, 1940, p. 5), although the Schomburg and the library as a whole still engaged in a wide variety of other activities, just as libraries do today (Zickuhr, Rainie, & Purcell, 2013). Libraries continue to be important to users, with 91% of Americans age 16 and older pointing to their importance in communities (Zickuhr, Rainie, & Purcell, 2013), showing the incredible impact that libraries and librarians are making as community anchors and information providers.

Secondly, the theoretical frameworks used in this study may be of value for librarians. Practitioners who conduct scholarly research or who seek an additional way to evaluate their institutions can draw upon Information Worlds and CHI. Librarians might turn to Information Worlds, and the 3 Js and a G codebook (3 Js and a G, 2014), as a guideline for thinking about each of the different Information Worlds and about to consult examples of each concept and its components (see Appendix One for codebook). Using Information Worlds, librarians can describe their community and the different worlds

within it, and understand how those worlds and the world of the community fit within their larger contexts as well. They can also describe the world of the library, and look for where there are intersections (or boundaries) with the worlds of the community being served, and to identify where those intersections currently do not exist.

Practitioners can also use CHI as a framework for thinking about the process of change, particularly in the context of evaluation efforts for programs and services. It may be particularly helpful when thinking about how an earlier change was perceived and what impact it had, in order to guide thinking about similar changes in the future. This thinking can also be applied when looking at changes made at other libraries, when considering whether or not to implement those in one's own library.

Finally, practitioners can use the Information Worlds theory and the CHI model as frameworks to inform their practice. Information Worlds could be used during assessments of community needs, as a tool to describe the different sub-sections of the community, and to consider how the library intersects with those worlds. This information can be used to consider how these different worlds might perceive and value library services and programming.

Practitioners might also combine the frameworks as a part of their evaluative practices. Using the example of a new speaker series, one could use CHI to outline how other libraries implemented similar programs, and then use Information Worlds as a tool for examining one's own community to better understand the appropriateness of that change within that context. This allows for some pre-implementation evaluation, which may be useful for arguing relevance and effectiveness, and can be combined with other evaluation activities.

## **Future Directions**

This dissertation's focus on a historical topic as well as on theory testing opens the door to a rich variety of future research subjects. Possible future research directions are divided by those related to the topic of this study, those related to the two theories, and other findings.

### **Ernestine Rose and the Harlem Public Library**

The focus of this dissertation was primarily on theory testing and on outlining the history of the library, and so many important aspects of Rose's tenure that were not in scope were not fully developed. One of the most important of these has to do with the intersection of race, gender, socioeconomic status, and the library. Social justice will be a vital component of future research, as it is impossible to truly understand and learn from the people of the Harlem library and neighborhood otherwise. This study has incorporated discussions of social issues to a great extent, but more could be done to develop this in the future.

One important aspect of this topic that needs to be addressed further is discrimination in libraries, and what the integration of the NYPL system through the Harlem branch and Regina Anderson Andrews' fight for promotion can teach us as modern day information professionals (particularly those who are working in administrative roles). Librarianship is a field still grappling with inclusivity, acceptance, and diversity, and for the most part is still a sea of white faces (American Library Association, 2012; Kelley, 2013). Turning to the past can provide lessons about how to respond to staff concerns and create a welcoming environment, by looking at what worked well and what did not. Whitmire (2007, 2014) provided a very thorough discussion of the events themselves, and laid the groundwork for additional work in this area. Recent research by the Pew Internet Life project shows that African-American and Latino patrons are more likely than white

patrons to say libraries are important to them and to their families, and that they would like to see more library services provided (Zickuhr, Rainie, & Purcell, 2013). This points to the need for greater diversity in hiring, so patrons can interact with staff who may have more similar experiences and understanding of the community (Kelley, 2013).

A study that explicitly maps learnings from the NYPL's history to library activities of today, perhaps through looking at modern-day cases of discrimination and how (or if) they differ, would be a great resource for researchers and practitioners looking for discussions of how people of color are treated in our field. Other research might also investigate Andrews' promotion further, by examining the documents related to different employment grades found in the Staff Association records (e.g. New York Public Library, 1927), and also locating and examining organizational charts to see how closely these align with Rose and Hopper's statements to DuBois. There is one example of an organizational chart from the 1950s in the New York Public Library Manuscripts and Archives (New York Public Library, 1950), although other more contemporary examples might exist.

These future studies would be particularly important for those in administrative roles, as racial inequality in the library was not something that the administration seemed actively engaged with at any point in the time period studied here. Even though the 135<sup>th</sup> Branch became integrated, and there were people of color employed there and at a handful of other branches from the 1920s-1940s (Anderson, 2003; DuBois, 1930) this shows more of a response to a desire to meet African-American patrons' needs in part by having an African-American staff, rather than a commitment to creating a discrimination-free environment in which those staff members would work. In fact, the library records do not show any outreach to NYPL staff about race relations until 1944 (Johnston, 1944), even though the library administration had been a part of very public disagreements about race and promotion over a decade earlier (Whitmire, 2014).

The 1944 memorandum includes similar language to the stance of the administration in the 1930s (e.g. Hopper, 1930a).<sup>48</sup> The memo is in response to several staff meetings that were held to discuss race relations, as there were concerns over the policies of the Circulation Department related to “the employment, placement, variety of experience, and opportunity of promotion for Negroes” (Johnston, 1944, p. 1). The memo explicitly listed the library’s policies regarding employment and promotion (Johnston, 1944), and the language is similar enough to earlier responses that it is possible they were drawing from and simply restating these policies in both cases (Johnston, 1944, indicated that these policies had been in place for at least twenty years). This example underscores the importance of thoughtful leadership by library administrators, and such work could build upon existing discussions that situate the library within institutional oppression (De Jesus, 2014).

Other social issues, and their intersections with the library, could also be explored. For example, when Langston Hughes described Harlem after the 1943 riots, he drew a very distinct line between the people by Sugar Hill and City College, “nice high-rent houses with elevators and doormen...where colored families send their babies to private kindergarten and their youngsters to Ethical Culture School” (Hughes, 1944, p. 1), and the rest of the neighborhood, where people lived in poverty and crammed as many as possible to a tiny apartment (Hughes, 1944). DuBois’ “Talented Tenth” lived on top of the hill, disconnected

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<sup>48</sup> The memo does not explicitly state if anyone at the 135<sup>th</sup> Street Branch initiated or attended these meetings, only that the enlarged branch had some additional higher-paid positions open for those doing special work at the branch (Johnston, 1944), possibly as a part of the Schomburg collection.

from the poverty and frustration their poorer neighbors felt, and were as indignant about the riots as wealthy white New Yorkers (Hughes, 1944, p. 1).

While the library records examined for this study showed the Adult Education program of the 1930s (e.g. Schomburg Collection, 1932), and Rose tried to make her library open and welcoming for all (Anderson, 2003; Jenkins, 1990), it seems that many of the activities, at least in the early years under her leadership, are influenced by wealthier community members such as DuBois. Further research is needed to locate the working-class residents in the records (provided they are present). In addition, future work can examine the other Harlem branch on 124<sup>th</sup> Street, which was out of scope for this study, but may have records pertaining to services to Harlem's working-class residents.

Public libraries were a heavily used resource by the public in the Great Depression (e.g. Kramp, 2010), just as they are today (Zickuhr, Rainie, & Purcell, 2013). This provides a historical precedent for the long-term value of libraries. Future studies could look at an innovative library, such as the 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch, or systems such as the NYPL system, for lessons and inspiration. There are studies that show what libraries around the country did during the Great Depression (Kramp, 2010; Novotny, 2010, 2011) but more could be done to explicitly draw comparisons between those libraries and modern libraries during the recession, provided that these studies properly account for the historical contexts surrounding each. One possible approach might be to look at the NYPL system during the Depression using the documents from this study, as well as the Haygood survey of NYPL use from 1936, described in Kramp (2010), and to compare this to recent data.

Similarly, there is a body of research related to the concept of library as place. Most (2009) and Wiegand (2011) both describe this concept in relation to rural libraries. Wiegand's (2011) study is historical, while Most's (2009) relies on observation, survey, and interview data, and both contain useful information for understanding the role of the

library in the community. Using the story of Ernestine Rose and the Harlem library, one could draw comparisons between the historical and modern library, by viewing the 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch through the lens of library as place (as Wiegand, 2011, did with rural libraries), and using modern-day data collection to understand Harlem libraries and their role in the lives of today's residents, as Most (2009) did. As the 135<sup>th</sup> Street branch as it was no longer exists, this may be done by looking at the Schomburg collection, or could be expanded to include the libraries of Harlem as a whole.

### **Theory Testing and Development**

This dissertation has successfully shown that the theory of Information Worlds and the CHI model can be applied to historical materials. It also serves as a response to Wiegand's (2000) call for the inclusion of theory into historical work. The theory of Information Worlds, in particular, meshed beautifully with the content of the documents, and all those that were appropriate for coding could be used with this theory.

There are two important directions that future Information Worlds research in this area could go. The first of these would involve fleshing out the worlds of Harlem during this time period. The present study was limited in its ability to describe these worlds because it only examined documents related to one world (the world of the library). As such, the boundaries with other worlds appeared, but fully understanding or defining those worlds was not possible. Exploring additional Harlem records, either within the library (such as the papers of Regina Anderson Andrews consulted in Whitmire's 2012 study), or in other repositories (such as the remainder of DuBois' papers), to fully describe the worlds of each of the actors mentioned in the course of this study.

Doing so would involve accessing a wide variety of materials beyond the scope of the present project, but would also provide a new and valuable way to conceptualize the Harlem Renaissance and the evolution of the Harlem neighborhood during the tumultuous



1920s-40s. To do this, one would look at records beyond those held in the NYPL and Schomburg repositories that are related to the individuals who appear in these worlds (literary figures, academics, etc), and comparing them to the worlds described here, in order to situate those individuals within the different worlds more completely, and to understand how and whether they exist within multiple worlds in this context. Some records that were not accessed for this study (e.g. Regina Anderson Andrews' papers at the Schomburg) would also be valuable to reexamine under this lens, even though they have been looked at in the context of this time period and institution previously. One could also look at the wealth of newspaper articles related to this topic, and compare the worlds described in their coding with the worlds found in the coding of repository documents.

In particular, DuBois and Rose's split in the 1930s, and her seeming distance from the African-American community, was a topic only briefly addressed in the records, but one that merits additional digging, perhaps through the collections of Rose's personal items mentioned in Sandford (2011) although there does not appear to be an indication that these records contain additional information. DuBois was only one of many people in the Harlem community whose work focused on African-American equality, and there may be further insights to be found by looking at records from throughout the activist community, which may help shed light on Rose's involvement (or lack thereof) in community activism during the entire course of her career. In addition, outlining community activism, and the multiple prongs of community activism that existed, more completely (e.g. different groups of residents as described in Hughes, 1944) would be of benefit to researchers and to modern-day individuals interested in activism historically.

The world of the library could also be examined through the application of Information Worlds theory to the repositories' curation of documents. For example, within the concept of Information Behavior, one could describe information archiving practices,

most notably the organization of collections as a way of understanding the “world” of the library. In addition, the types of information that are saved versus those that are not (e.g. saving correspondence but not saving acquisition records) would provide a sense of Information Value. For example, DuBois’ letters mention meetings and events not present in records held by NYPL.

The second possible direction would be to examine other historical topics to provide further evidence for the applicability of this theory. One could build on the present study, as suggested above, by examining documents related to other information worlds, or to branch out to other cities during this time period, or to New York history in different time periods. Researchers in other fields could also use the Information Worlds theory in their work. For example, researchers in English or a related field might use Information Worlds as a framework for studying Carl Van Vechten’s *Nigger Heaven*, as a way to outline the different worlds (and the perceptions accompanying those worlds).

The CHI model was also applied successfully to the documents, and it was found that the concepts outlined in the model did appear. One key future direction for this model lies in additional development, refinement, and the possible creation of a more formal theory. Harvey and Reed (1996) refer to models as “well-formed metaphors and analogies...rich in the conceptual materials upon which they can draw and are freer to organize those materials in a manifold of different directions” (p. 309). This model was useful for focusing and organizing thinking, and future development may result in a theory used for more in-depth explanatory and predictive purposes.

The CHI model showed that the concepts of innovation and adaptation, as well as impact and perceptions, were useful frameworks through which a change event could be understood. The model, and subsequent theory development and testing, would also benefit from drawing in and considering additional definitions of change from multiple focus areas.

This would serve to create a comprehensive understanding of how change is envisioned across the whole of Information Studies and historical literature, and allow the author to articulate commonalities across those definitions. Many definitions were consulted for this study, but they were restricted to somewhat general directions that could be applied to a historical study. This future direction envisions a much broader-scale investigation of change definitions from areas that include social informatics and other seemingly unrelated areas, in order to understand what insights these might bring to discussions of historical change.<sup>49</sup>

### **Additional Directions**

In addition to work focusing on further development of this specific topic, or the further development and testing of the two theories, this study has implications for broader research that could be of benefit to the field as a whole. As described above, social justice is an important component of future research, and while the Harlem library can serve as a focal point for discussions of certain social justice issues, it can also serve as an example in broader studies that discuss these issues across the field, and pull from multiple modern and historical examples to guide that discussion.

More work is needed to fully describe the worlds of the Harlem residents and library staff, by explicitly focusing on social justice and/or on theory, as described above. A study, or series of studies, that maps learnings from historical studies to present day libraries is

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<sup>49</sup> One example is this definition: “We espouse the 1991 OECD definition of innovation as: ‘an iterative process initiated by the perception of a new market and/or service opportunity for a technology-based invention which leads to development, production and marketing tasks striving for the commercial success of the invention’”(Garcia & Calantone, 2002; p. 112). While focusing on a different area, the concept of finding new ways to meet a need resonates with the concept guiding CHI.

needed, particularly because Ernestine Rose and the librarians and patrons with whom she worked have so many lessons to teach us about creative and user-centered approaches to librarianship, about administering a library and fostering connections, and about how good intentions do not substitute for truly engaging with and addressing concerns.

One example of this would be articulating the ways that privilege functioned in the library, both on the part of staff and patrons. For example, Rose was an educated white woman, and so was able to walk away from working with the African-American community if she so chose, whereas African-Americans in the library would have to interact with racial inequality no matter how uncomfortable or challenging that was. In addition, Rose's networking with community groups meant that the people she was interacting with were individuals in some sort of leadership position, and who also had the time and resources to participate fully in community building (rather than, for example, patrons who had to fill their time with multiple jobs to support themselves).

This is not to minimize the work of Rose and other privileged people who were a part of the library (like DuBois), but to complicate assumptions about their motives or approaches to community involvement by acknowledging the myriad contexts and power dynamics operating in their lives. Future research could address this more completely by drawing from contemporary literature on racial, economic, and gender privilege from fields such as women's studies and sociology.

These same approaches can be applied to the study of social justice issues in the field more generally. For example, the Harlem library can be described through the lens of De Jesus (2014)'s conception of the library as a space that either supports or resists oppression. It can also be compared to modern innovative libraries, such as the Ferguson Public Library, which served as a refuge and educational space following the killing of Michael Brown and the protests that followed (Kellogg, 2014).

Similarly, the theoretical approaches used in this study can be applied to documents from modern-day libraries. The Ferguson library, which received widespread recognition and praise for its efforts (Kellogg, 2014), would be an example of a library that could be studied. The field may benefit from the use of Information Worlds and CHI as frameworks for articulating Ferguson Library director Scott Bonner's approach to services, as a way to create frameworks for effectively serving other communities.

Future research can also use the approaches from this dissertation to study other marginalized groups. This could be done by looking at the local level or at the national level. For example, the Spanish-speaking community of Harlem was not focused on in this dissertation, and services to this community were not the focus of the records examined. Future research could use content analysis and the Information Worlds and CHI theories to describe services to Latino residents, perhaps by looking at records from other branches as well. This research could be expanded to describe services to immigrants from Central and South America on a national scale, which would also identify additional directions for further research.

## **Conclusion**

Ernestine Rose was an innovative and community-focused individual who worked hard to shape the Harlem branch as a welcoming community space. Library records and secondary literature paint her as a complex individual, but also as one who was passionate about and dedicated to the community she served. Using historical research, and introducing theoretical analysis into this work, this project hoped to describe the library and its history in new ways that could be of value to researchers and practitioners. Ultimately, the study was successful in addressing the research question: "How did the Harlem library develop under Rose's leadership?" This study used accepted historical research practices to provide a narrative history of the library during Rose's time there, and

used two theoretical frameworks to contextualize that history. It was found that the library developed in a variety of ways during this twenty-two year span, including through the integration of staff, introduction of new programming, and the establishment of the first African-American history and culture research collection to be held in a public library. Researchers can use this as a precedent for bringing theoretical work into the study of historical subjects, and practitioners can use it to inform their decisions about community service. In both cases, researchers and practitioners can look at Rose's passion for her work as an inspiration, as it was this passion that drew the author to this subject.

## APPENDIX A

### INFORMATION WORLDS GENERAL CODEBOOK

This codebook presents conceptual and general operational definitions for the fundamental concepts and sub-concepts of the Theory of Information Worlds as well as codes for each. It is intended as a general codebook that is equally applicable across multiple social contexts and research projects, and was developed during summer 2014 by Professor Gary Burnett, and three doctoral candidates, Jonathan Hollister, Jisue Lee, and Julia Skinner (collectively known as “Three J’s and a G”), for use in the qualitative coding of data for three dissertations:

1. Jisue Lee, studying political discourse in South Korean political tweeting;
2. Jonathan Hollister, studying digital literacy practices of role-players in online gaming communities; and
3. Julia Skinner, studying the Harlem Public Library under the leadership of Ernestine Rose from 1920-1942.

The concepts making up the Theory are not mutually exclusive categories, but interact with one another within any given Information World. For example, an individual, operating as a specific Social Type at a Boundary between two Worlds, may engage in specific behaviors (Social Norms) in such a way that those behaviors reflect a certain set of Information Values, and may also simultaneously engage in specific Information Behaviors. Thus, coding practices using the Theory should always allow for the use of as many codes as are relevant at any given time in the coding of data.

This codebook remains silent on issues such as appropriate units of analysis, which should be determined relative to the details of a specific research project.

A second version of this codebook was also prepared, which integrates examples and specific operationalizations from each of the three research projects mentioned above, as an example of how the theory may be used within the context of a specific setting and a specific project.

**Social Types:** Role(s) fulfilled by an individual in an information world as determined, in part, by how others in that world view them.

- Explicit status(es)/title(s) (Achieved status or appointed title of individuals)
  - What are the professional roles or occupations?
  - How are social types and identities expressed and managed?
    - Examples: Use of naming protocols/norms (e.g. first name basis or the use of titles/credentials/ranks)
- Implicit status(es) (How others see the individual; may be seen through explicit statements or inferred through observation of how the individual is treated)
  - Do others say anything directly about someone (e.g. “he’s an idiot”)?
  - Are there other behaviors that suggest a role (e.g. others world members consistently defer to a particular individual’s opinion)?
- Team/community role (Role on a team as a function of status, system, or community)
  - What activities/responsibilities are exhibited through explicit or implicit roles? Are the activities undertaken by an individual seen as appropriate (for that individual) by others?



- Are there context-specific, behavior-defined types/roles (e.g. question asker/answerer, troubleshooter, skeptic, trusted expert, experienced guide)?
- Hierarchy (Power relationship[s] between social types in a given information world; may be explicit or implicit)
  - Where does the social type exist in the line of command or in the chain of social status?
  - What and how much authority/power/oversight does this social type have over others?
  - Are there power conflicts? Who or what instigated changes in the power dynamics? Why and when did the conflict begin?
- Gender (Presented gender identity of the individual)
  - Are social types within the information world gendered?
  - Are different genders portrayed or treated differently? (may be implicit or explicit)
  - Are issues of gender role explicitly discussed?
- Race/Ethnicity (Stated racial and/or ethnic identities of the individual)
  - Is there observable privilege or discrimination? (May be explicit or implicit)
  - Are people of different racial backgrounds or ethnicities treated or portrayed differently?
  - Are issues of race/ethnic role explicitly discussed?
- History/Backstory (The role[s] an individual has played over time)
  - Are there any statements about an individual's past reflecting either continuity or change of role over time (e.g. "he used to be king, but now he's just a troublemaker")?

- Other social types (Social types that cannot easily be determined because they are not explicitly stated and/or cannot be inferred through observation; when an individual simultaneously seems to play conflicting multiple roles; or in situations when existing Social Type codes do not seem appropriate; this code should, whenever possible, be used with one of the following sub-codes, or a new sub-code to indicate why the social type is “other”)
  - Ambiguous or Amorphous: Social type seems unclear or fuzzy; or social type never stated, and cannot be inferred by observation
  - Complex: There seems to be a conflict between an individual’s explicit role and his/her socially defined role; an individual is seen as several seemingly very different types (e.g. someone is a tyrant and also a weak leader, simultaneously)

**Social Norms:** Agreed upon behaviors are those that are common and accepted practice within a world, and are enforced by actors within that world. In a research project, explicit statements may be made about behavior, or patterns that are influenced by others in the world may be seen in behavior.

- Explicit norms (Formalized statements that clearly articulate norms for a behavior, either by affirming the behavior in question or by indicating its inappropriateness)
  - Are there explicitly stated and enforced rules or laws?
    - Examples: FAQs, Acceptable Use Policies, other formalized rules or laws
  - Are these norms community or system based (i.e., are they established by a legal authority charged with making the rules, or are they determined by group consensus or by some other informal process)?

- If there is a legal authority, how is that authority determined? Is it imposed from outside of the community or chosen [or elected] by members of the community? (This speaks to the linkage between Social Type and Social Norm)
- Do group members have explicit permission to engage in any non-normative behaviors under certain circumstances?
- Do group members have explicit permission to discuss unrelated topics? Are there topics that are forbidden?
- Implicit norms (Behaviors or sets of behaviors that recur over time and are reinforced by the community, either through explicit statements of reinforcement, or by observable acts of approval or disapproval)
  - How are these norms expressed? Are they openly discussed, or are they largely “invisible” (i.e., simply accepted as “the way things are” and never mentioned)?
  - Do group members tolerate non-normative or “unacceptable” behaviors under certain circumstances?
  - Is off-topic discussion tolerated by community members? Do members engage in or complain about such tangents?
- Enforcement mechanisms (May be explicit or implicit)
  - Sanctions: Are there explicit sanctions for violating social norms? Are there degrees of severity in these sanctions (e.g. a short “time out” vs. expulsion from the community)?
  - Reinforcement: Do you see evidence of reinforcement or encouragement of certain behaviors over others?

- Expression: This addresses Social Norms related to communication practices, with an emphasis on the tone and interactive aspects of communication.
  - Does there appear to be a preferred tone of communication? Is the tone serious? Jocular? Disagreeable? Etc.

**Information Behavior:** Any potential normative behaviors regarding the use or nonuse of information.

- Information Sources (Where information comes from)
  - Where are individuals or groups getting their information?
    - Examples: Sources may include formal sources such as articles, books, newspapers, websites etc.) and informal or interpersonal sources (friends, family, hearsay, etc.)
    - Within the world, is information that is sought, shared, or exchanged drawn from a wide or narrow range of sources? Are those sources formal, informal, interpersonal, or some mix?
- Information Seeking (Explicit actions or behaviors that involve an actor actively searching for information)
  - How do individuals or groups search for information?
    - Examples: Questions posed to resources (including other persons), active searching for information using digital or print resources
- Information Sharing (Active offering or distribution of information to others; posting to wikis, community sites, databases, helping others find/use information)
  - Do members share information within the group? With other groups/worlds?
  - How and to what extent do members share information? Is it common? Rare?

- Examples: Helping others locate information either as an information professional or more informally as friends; answering questions; sharing strategies and advice.
- Information Exchange (Active trading or interactive “swapping” of information)
  - Exchange is distinguished from Sharing because it involves a back-and-forth between two or more individuals (or a “quid-pro-quo”), whereas Sharing takes place without expectation of recompense
- Information Use (Using information for a particular task or goal)
  - How do members apply information in their activities? Use of information may be context-specific.
    - Examples: Modding/Add-ons, writing wikis, webcasting, answering questions, giving reports
- Information Archiving (Storing, managing, and curating information resources)
  - Does the group (or individuals within the group) catalog, store, or curate data or information? If so, how? Does the group actively use such resources, or do they seem to be ignored?
    - Examples: Creating reference guides, databases, favoriting tweets or creating user lists
- Information Avoidance (Explicit or implicit avoidance or nonuse of information - tied to information value [preference of information sources] and social type [preferred bias])
  - What types or sources of information are avoided or unused? Is this due to active avoidance, disinterest, or ignorance? Laziness? Other reasons?
    - Examples: Consistent avoiding information from biased sources; selective information sharing within and between groups; a particular

information source is openly disparaged (e.g. “Snopes is nothing more than a liberal propaganda outlet”); statements of distrust or skepticism about the quality, accuracy, or value of information”)

- Information Channel (normative preferences for particular channels of communication and information behavior)
  - Do group members prefer particular media for communication and various forms of information behavior? Do they have access to or use multiple channels for information activities and communication?
    - Examples: Certain types of information behaviors take place only in specific synchronous meeting spaces.
    - Note: This may be very simple in some circumstances (e.g. for a group interacting via Twitter, that group’s preferred Information Channel is, clearly, Twitter)

**Information Value:** A commonly accepted hierarchy regarding the variable importance or unimportance of different types of information. Information Value includes a spectrum of values, from high value (e.g., something that is very important to a world) to no value (something perceived as worthless or not deserving attention), as well as a variety of ways in which value can be perceived (e.g. economic vs. artistic value). Value can be contested -- that is, there may be disagreements within a world about the degree to which something is of value, and/or how it is or is not of value.

- Explicit statements of value (Direct, clearly stated assessments of value)
  - Are there formal statements or guidelines about what the world “officially” considers to be important (or worthless) information?
    - Examples: FAQs, Collection policies, Mission statements etc.

- Do community members overtly discuss levels or types of value? Are there consistent themes or patterns to these discussions?
  - Examples: Direct criticism; “that’s not important;” “this is really helpful;” stickied forum post, favorited/RT tweet or liked FB post, shared/repeated hastags
- Implicit indicators of values (Can only be inferred from observations and themes that recur within a world)
  - Are there recurring themes across the ways members of a world respond to an information behavior or information source?
    - Examples: Repeated or recurring references to the same topic, information type, or concept, lacking explicit statements of value but clearly of value by virtue of the amount and consistency of attention paid
    - Note: Even if something is explicitly dismissed as being unimportant, or if there is disagreement about it, it can be said to be *\*important enough\** to argue about
- Types of value (What follows is a partial list of different types of value/value judgments. Note: References to value may be explicit, implicit, or even metaphoric [e.g. “We profited from knowing that” to mean “We learned a lot from knowing that”]. Each of value type can also include its inverse -- e.g., something is perceived to be of economic value because it is a *\*threat\** to profitability or because it is perceived to be a threat to cultural stability)
  - Economic value (something is valuable because it is perceived to be profitable in an economic sense)

- Cultural value (something is of value because it's of interest to or important for many members of a world)
- Ideological value (something is of value because it supports a particular political position)
- "Truth" value (something is of value because it is perceived by members of the world to be true)
- Rhetorical value (something is of value because of how it is presented and/or argued, regardless of whether it is true or accurate -- e.g. "I like the way you said that")
- Source value (something is of value because of its source -- e.g., "if so and so said it, it must be important"); this could also be called "Authority value".
  - Is there one individual whose statements are highly regarded in this world?
- Entertainment value (something is of value because it's fun, exciting, or otherwise entertaining)
- Aesthetic value (something is of value because of the craft, beauty, and/or artistry involved in its production)
- Affective value (something is of value because it makes people feel good)
- Moral or Ethical value (something is of value because it is moral or ethical -- it is the "right thing to do")
- Intrinsic value (something is of value because "everybody knows" it is important without even thinking about how or why it is important).
  - Are there things that are valued based on tradition or shared importance, without anyone pointing to concrete evidence?



- Contextual value (something is valuable within a specific time, place, or situation, but otherwise may be of limited value)

**Boundaries:** Lines at which Information Worlds come into contact with one another, where communication, interaction, or information exchange may or may not take place between those worlds. Boundaries may be permeable or impermeable, virtual or physical, etc.; worlds may be contiguous (as in two nations that share a border), embedded (as in a state that is wholly included within a nation), contested (as in border disputes), etc.

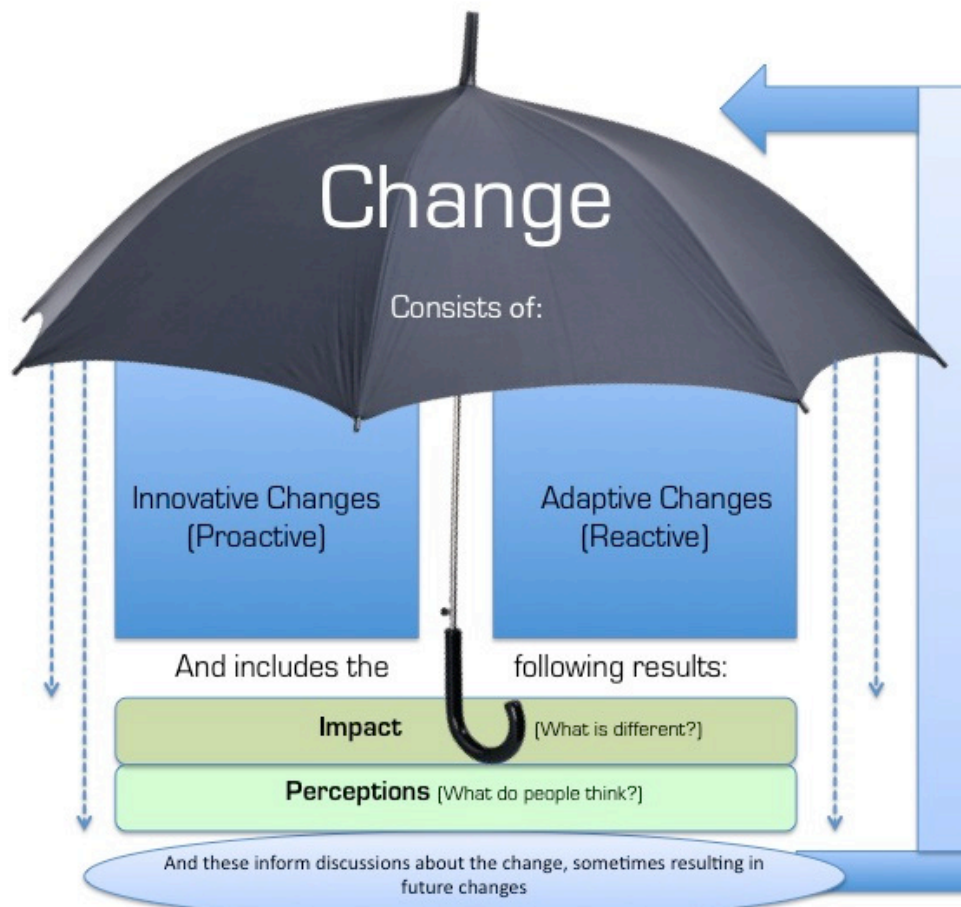
- Explicit boundaries (Clearly stated or posted boundaries between groups)
  - What are the physical boundaries (boundaries determined by space or area; physical area, architectural design)?
  - Are there systematic boundaries (boundaries as determined by the governing system, geopolitical borders, “physical” confines of a virtual worlds)?
    - Does a group clearly state that there is a boundary between them and another group? Does the group engage in labelling practices or name-calling aimed at groups it perceives as “different” from itself?
    - Does the group have a specific name or tag that clearly differentiates it from other groups?
- Implicit boundaries (Boundaries between groups that are not necessarily stated, but are still understood by groups; these boundaries may be due to differences between the groups or variations in interaction styles)
  - What makes this group unique compared to similar groups?
    - Activity-based (boundaries as determined by the type/location of a particular activity; most likely must be inferred during content analysis)

- Differences (disparities due to sociodemographic backgrounds such as geopolitical, nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, education level, library affiliation, etc.)
- Interactions (Areas of interaction/communication between distinct groups that are not necessarily sustained; may be based on context-specific activity)
  - Does this group interact with other groups? If so, how? If not, why not?
    - Conflicts (Conflict between groups across boundaries may be a part of normative activities of the world [e.g. politics, science, philosophy])
      - Are there disputes with other groups? Why? If not, why not?
    - Synergies (Cooperation of distinct groups across boundaries for a common goal or task; collaboration, group events, group storytelling, etc.)
      - Do groups work together? Why? If not, why not?
- Time (Boundaries may shift, be created, or be destroyed over time)
  - How have boundaries changed over time? Have they changed during the study? Has access to information/resources or other groups changed over time?
    - Historic (Past explicit boundaries)
      - Do group members talk about about how their relationships with other worlds (i.e. outsiders) have changed over time?
      - Do group members avoid talking about sensitive issues pertaining to their group and its relations with others in the past?

- Current (Boundaries as they exist in the current state, during the data collection period of a research study)
  - Do group members talk about their attitudes toward outsiders and/or their closeness to / distance from other groups?
  - How do group members treat new members who come to the group from outside? Do their treatments suggest a desire for porous boundaries or a desire for closed boundaries?
- Future (Boundaries that are explicitly planned to change - potential future or implicit boundaries are inductions)
  - Are there planned mergers? Is there a succession or strategic plan in place?
  - Do current interactions (conflicts or synergies) suggest potential boundary changes?

# APPENDIX B

## CHI MODEL



CHI model, created by author

## APPENDIX C

### TABLE OF RESOURCES CONSULTED

Table One shows each repository, the total number of items consulted in each, and the number of these items coded for each theory. For some of the repositories, many of the items were copied for consultation later and were found to be either out of scope, or items that would assist with contextualizing the library but were not appropriate for coding.

<b>Name of repository</b>	<b>Number of items coded for IW</b>	<b>Number of items coded for CHI</b>	<b>Total number of items consulted</b>
NYPL Manuscripts and Archives: First Visit	1	0	24
NYPL Manuscripts and Archives: Second Visit	9	7	103
Schomburg Center	24	20	185
Municipal Archives	1	1	30
Columbia University Archive	1	0	40
WEB DuBois papers	48	41	53

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Julia Skinner was born in Boulder, Colorado. She was raised with a love for art, libraries, and the outdoors that she has carried with her throughout her life. She moved to Des Moines Iowa and attended Drake University for one year before moving to Iowa City, where she received her Bachelor's in Psychology, her Master's in Library & Information Studies, and her graduate certificate from the Center for the Book. She currently lives in Tallahassee, Florida with three cats, a lizard, and a nice vegetable garden.