Children of Immigrants and Multiethnic Heritage: Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States

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The life of an immigrant child, or the child of immigrants or immigrant descendants, and the role the library has played or might play in that life are the subject of this paper. While there are children of migrants all over the world, this report is confined to children in countries where the parents have settled permanently; of these, England, the United States, Canada, and Australia are considered.

The Children

Although all immigrant children have in common the uprooting experience (and even that experience can vary considerably), there the similarities end. Immigrant children are of all ages, of all cultural, economic and educational backgrounds. An immigrant child's identity must be plotted on a number of axes—poor/rich, primitive rural/megalopolis urban, nonliterate-oral/multilevel academic. The child may come from a country whose social values, language and history are very similar to the new land's, or from one whose values and attitudes are at total variance and whose language is completely unknown in the new land. Once externals are adapted, the immigrant child may look like a long-established citizen, or may be eternally "visible." The British have a phrase for the latter group: "immigrants born in Britain." Today, more and more immigrant children belong to this group—the visible minority.

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The Immigrant Experience

"The cultural shock that children suffer is more serious than their parents'. They lack the experience and information which would help them interpret their new life. This is where books can help those children who can read and are lucky enough to find them. Reading recreates the old life and interprets the new one." These words were written of older children; toddlers are usually at home anywhere if they can communicate with their playmates. Learning the dominant language as quickly as possible is always essential for a settler. In each of the four countries studied, libraries help with classes (usually for preschoolers), furnish language-learning materials—print and audiovisual—and easy-reading materials. Sometimes they provide rooms for classes, and even teachers. The schools, of course, are the prime source of English-language instruction. Within months, the newcomers are treated as part of the class and with it, they visit the library, where, until recently, all books were in English. Parents and friends, however, may live in a completely ethnocultural environment, where English is seldom heard.

In addition to many language difficulties, there are cultural ones. Cavendish has reported to Patricia Bradbury the severe problems that West Indian children suffer when they come to school in Canada: "In Jamaica, punctuality is not a priority. Classes are huge and learning is done by rote. Jamaicans come from a strong oral tradition. They are used to listening globally and all talking at once. These children are operating from different spatial and temporal perceptions, as well as from a different educational background." In 1960 the American scholar Joshua Fishman noted, "As a nation we have paid infinitely more attention to the Americanization process than to the self-maintenance process." This has assisted upward mobility, but has entailed personal loss. Years before, Maslow identified certain "needs" of everyone, including children. They include the need to know, the need to succeed, and especially the need to belong. Children of immigrants were denied these in greater or lesser degree in most countries. Belonging was almost impossible for the visible minorities. Even if outward appearances were no bar, the dominant Anglo-Celtic population looked on all others as outsiders.

Acculturation Process

Forced to unlearn much of their old cultures, the immigrant child's performance in a changed milieu—regardless of innate ability—has
often been poor, and teachers have expected little. Many parents set no
expectations or resent the compulsory education which keeps their
children from working. With low motivation to learn and limited
ability to express themselves through the new language, the young
people have been channeled into preparation for simple clerical and
manual jobs—or unemployment.

At home there is a growing gulf between the parents, firm in their
old ways, and their children, who feel more and more part of the new
society whose ways and values are so different. In their school expe-
rience, where they mix with children of all tongues and where English is
the only common language, they forget their home speech. Thus, in
spite of the parents’ efforts to pass something of their cultural heritage
to their children, by the time a generation has grown up, much may
have disappeared, particularly where upward mobility in occupational
and material status is a characteristic of the national group. The evolu-
tionary process of assimilation has begun. The children of immigrant
children acquire a smattering of the home culture, but often find it
impossible to communicate with the original immigrant grand-
parents—or if the language is not a barrier, to have anything to commu-
nicate. To this third generation, cultural background has become a
matter of history, something to be learned formally from a teacher.

Children between Two Cultures

In each of the four countries under study, there are large population
groups which do not use English as the home language and which were,
until recently, outside the socioeconomic and educational norm: in
Australia, the aborigines; in Canada, the native Canadians (Inuit, or
Eskimos, and Indians); in the United States, the American Indians, the
Latinos, and the Cajuns in French-speaking Louisiana; and, under the
English government, the Welsh. In addition to these are pockets of
language groups which are part of the general community but retain
their ethnolinguistic individuality. Among these are, in Australia, the
Germans of the Barossa Valley and the Italians of North Queensland; in
Canada, the Acadians and Franco-Canadians throughout the west, and
the Mennonites in Ontario; and in the United States, the Chinese on the
west coast and the Pennsylvania Amish. In each country, of course,
black population groups also present particular problems—and
solutions.

Children of indigenous peoples and of descendants of French and
Spanish colonists existed until the past few decades between two cul-
tures, unable to participate fully in either. "Generations of oppression
have led to a feeling of discomfort about their roots as well as anger toward the dominant society."14 Children interpreted the rejection of their language—they were taught in English—as the rejection of their culture. They ended by rejecting both cultures, thus hampering their personal growth and achievement. Many could speak neither the home language nor English well.

Only recently has the realization grown that there are societies which should not be expected to integrate or assimilate, whose language has every right to an equal footing with English. Recognizing in the last two decades that a country's citizens should feel pride in both the mother culture and that of the dominant group, governments have enacted legislation (e.g., the 1968 U.S. Bilingual Education Act and the 1971 Canadian multiculturalism policy declaration) whereby the original cultures were raised to a position of esteem. "Heritage" of every sort became something to study and be proud of.

The Library and the Community

To many librarians the world of "newcomers" has been completely unfamiliar. The average professional librarian throughout the first half of the twentieth century was white, Anglo-Celtic and generations removed from other lands. It is not surprising, then, to hear librarians comment that although they now have multilingual books, a multilingual staff and a multilingual program, the level of use is disappointing. The situation is exceedingly complicated. On the one hand, there are the immigrants from countries with well-developed public libraries, especially those in northern Europe. They use libraries as a matter of course, but often do not know they can find books there in their mother tongue. For these people, libraries organize ethnic events where the library's collection is promoted. Such programs foster understanding of and pride in one's heritage. But there are other immigrants who do not read, distrust anything organized by authorities, or simply are unfamiliar with free library service. They may fear the costs for lost cards, damaged books, and especially fines, so they prohibit their children from using the place. A parent is often unaware of what one can expect or ask of a library, even though his child may bring him a brochure in his home language or take him there.

Today many community libraries make no rigid division between children's and adult areas and materials. For the immigrant families who do most things together, this is especially helpful. Some librarians now keep the children's services available at night, and also direct
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programs to the family group. Newcomers need to know a great deal about their new community, their new work situation, their new homemaking. Children can provide the bridge to that knowledge. "Members of the ethnic communities contribute their full share to taxes for library service and no library board can be fulfilling its mandate which fails to provide ethnic communities the full service to which they are entitled."5

Libraries, though, should not rely on chance. Optimum use of their materials entails extensive involvement with the community. "The key strategy for board, administration and staff is their interrelation with the community in which they operate and the involvement of the potential users in each stage of the process of developing multilingual/multicultural public library service."6 Through contacts with community agencies, persons of various ethnocultural backgrounds can be formed into citizen advisory committees. In the library itself, staff members drawn from the larger immigrant groups are essential not only for their command of the language and literature, but for their understanding of, involvement in, and empathy with the groups being served.

Evolution

Until very recently, the library served the immigrant and his family with a fine collection in English of books and nonbook materials. Then, after World War II, the immigrants, in large numbers from culturally sophisticated backgrounds, flocked into libraries. In America, branch librarians, who had seen the use of Polish, Russian and German collections die with their users, became aware of new demands, as did urban planners, family social workers, churches, psychologists, the press, writers, television and radio programmers, and members of all the professions that do work with and about people. The realization grew that these were multicultural, multilingual societies in which they were living, and that they had unknowingly believed the walled-off enclaves of the white, Anglo-Celtic race to be the right and proper world.

Two views of minority ethnic groups evolved: either the minority culture was something extra to the dominant one and had to be absorbed, or minority cultures could exist side by side to create a multicultural society, each regarding with tolerance and understanding the other cultures in their midst. From such understanding grew an awareness of the cultural needs of all citizens, including immigrants, and of the numbers and kinds of books needed.

Many similarities can be traced in library programs which evolved in the four countries. Differences, however, in their history and develop-
ment are sufficient to suggest that each be considered separately, leaving the synthesis of similarities to the reader.

THE STATE OF THE ART

Australia

Multiculturalism is a phenomenon which burst upon Australia in the 1970s. Unlike the United States, with its long history of tides of immigrants from many cultures who came and were assimilated, Australia was, until 1947 (when the government adopted a policy of encouraging immigration), for all intents and purposes British. Thus, Australia's major multiethnic experience has been compacted into the past thirty years. Australia's library history, too, is brief. For example, not until 1946 did the state of Victoria, a leader today in services to migrants (the Australian term for newcomers) pass enabling legislation for the support of public libraries. A "total population" ideal of service became a guiding tenet:

As the government immigration policy has broadened to include non-English-speaking migrants, many libraries, particularly in the inner-city areas, have been concerned that their "total population" ideal of service necessitated firstly the purchase of books and related materials in the language spoken by migrants, and secondly a community information thrust to present the facilities offered by the library to these ethnic groups, most of whom would not have had the experience of modern library service in their country of origin.

In the early 1970s the Library Association of Australia commissioned a pilot survey of library services to migrants in New South Wales. The survey, carried out in 1972-73, highlighted the following needs:

1. material to assist migrants and their children to learn English as a second language, including graded readers, special dictionaries, tapes, discs, and films;
2. information about Australia, i.e., life, customs, flora and fauna, rules and regulations, community and government services, etc.;
3. material to allow migrants to maintain contact with their own culture and country, particularly books and magazines on their country in English, as well as recreational material in their own language; and
4. material in English of only moderate difficulty to assist students of all ages in their studies.

At the time of the survey, holdings of foreign-language books were minimal. However, the findings sparked a number of programs, mostly
supported by state libraries. In 1974 the Australian government provided A$94,000 for the acquisition of books in foreign languages for libraries in the western suburbs of Melbourne. The collection at St. Kilda Public Library, one of the Melbourne group, comprises recreational reading in Czech, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, and Yiddish.

Materials

A difficulty encountered by all is the acquisition of suitable, well-produced children's books in many of the languages needed. Problems of selection and acquisition are exacerbated by distance from sources of supply. Relatively few countries have extensive children's publishing, and in many cases the quality is poor. Several efforts were made to produce materials in Australia, or if abroad, by Australians. Two firms, Ashton Scholastic and Childerset, have published about twenty titles in five or six different languages. Libraries, at times in collaboration with schools, have produced various audiovisual materials, especially stories on tape. There is a specialist children's bookshop in Victoria, The Little Bookroom, with an extensive ethnic section. It provides lists of bookstock available in German, French, Dutch, Italian, Greek, Spanish, Maltese, Arabic, Turkish, and Yugoslav languages.9

As in other countries, the need is chronic for suitable graded English texts to be used with older children, teenagers and adults who are learning to read English. Bibliographies include American, British and Australian materials, but even so, the need continues.

Access

Figures are not given of the number or ratio of children's books in community languages available in public libraries, possibly because they depend largely on the distribution schemes of the Victoria and New South Wales state libraries. In 1974 the State Library of New South Wales initiated the Foreign Language Books Lending Service to provide a necessary backup service to public libraries. Blanket-order arrangements exist with booksellers in about fifteen countries. Booksellers are instructed to include one-third children's books, attractive and well illustrated, approximately one-quarter "easy" books, and the rest distributed over other age groups.10 The books, on arrival, are packed in boxes of thirty each, with the ratio of one-third children's books maintained. In 1978-79 there were approximately 17,000 volumes in twenty-six languages, and 700 boxes were lent. A similar box service is run by the State Library of Victoria.11
Other states have been less active, largely because their migrant populations tend to be scattered. The mobility of these groups, the varying levels of literacy, and the lack of awareness by many of the concept of free public library service present difficulties for all libraries.

Community Relations
In Australia, it is generally recognized that the public library must go into its community if its services are to be fully used, particularly in a community of migrants unfamiliar with the range of services available. Libraries working with different ethnocultural groups arrange ethnic events to display a group's particular heritage. Such events attract families to the library, and parents are delighted to find children's material in their own language. Beyond the walls of the library, bookmobiles carry a quota of foreign children's books and material for learning English.

The general community is made aware of books, reading and libraries in various ways. Ethnic radio stations and the Migrant Education Television teach English as a second language, and there is an extensive ethnic press used for library communications. Members of the various ethnic communities come from all socioeconomic levels and so readily become part of their community activities. Libraries draw extensively on their help. Indeed, at times it has been their efforts, rather than the library's, that have brought about enriched services.

The Second Culture
Like indigenous peoples elsewhere, the aborigines, particularly the urban aborigines, have not been perceived until recently as a group needing a library service geared to their ethnocultural background. Recognition of the situation is growing. Of particular interest is a pilot program supported by the Library Council of Victoria. The Swan Hill Regional Library Aboriginal Outreach Project has engaged an aboriginal field worker who not only has brought the library to aborigines, but has brought to the library understanding of the requirements of the aborigines.

Canada
In Canada, members of each succeeding wave of immigrants accepted the fact that they had come to a new country giving them land, jobs and freedom, and that if anything more was desired, the responsibility for obtaining it was theirs. This was the national understanding
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by old-timers and newcomers alike, and librarians, too, felt this way. Children's library service was for everyone. Parents were expected to borrow on their own cards books for their preschoolers. Teachers brought their classes to the children's library where every child, including the immigrant, got a card—so how would anyone be neglected?

The implications of the post-World War II mass influx of immigrants were first recognized by branch librarians who included children's books in the "Foreign Literature" collections. Canadian children's librarians since the turn of the century have chosen from many lands the English versions of tales, myths and stories, and there is little evidence that they attempted to do otherwise. Even today, we find that "the library's approach to children's services is to serve young library users in English."12 Casual evidence may be misleading. Have librarians' objectives changed, or are they still providing materials mostly in English? Some indication of the Canadian situation can be obtained from Wertheimer's reports.

In 1978 every major language of the globe apparently was represented in Canada. The greatest number are concentrated in Toronto where, for example, in a primary school of 225 pupils, 58 languages are to be found. At one branch library, the heaviest use is made of materials in Italian, Punjabi, Urdu, Portuguese, and Hindi; at another, nearby, in Chinese, French, Spanish, and Urdu. Libraries in the Maritime Provinces report not only the use of Dutch and German materials, but also those in Lebanese, Chinese and East Indian languages. On the Pacific Coast, librarians include materials for German, Italian, and Dutch as well as Chinese and East Indian children.

The extent to which libraries should attempt to provide books in minority languages has been debated. With the establishment of the Multilingual Biblioservice,13 the problem is modified. Time and time again, libraries report little demand, reporting at the same time miniscule bookstocks. However, there is decreased demand in some Toronto branches even though a strenuous acquisition policy and ethnic programs exist. Although there is a decrease in the immigration rate, the reason for nonuse might lie in the lack of multilingual staff with whom children can talk in their mother tongue. Reports were inconclusive. Certainly, on occasion, in spite of multilingual materials, story hours and staff, programs have failed. Without a knowledge of the nature of the potential clientele, no assessment can be made. On the whole, reports from libraries where programs were directed toward specific language groups did not indicate success or failure, but since a number of such programs are being continued, the librarians must find some grounds for not abandoning them.
There are, however, frequent comments on why English is the chief medium of service: "Immigrant children, with the encouragement of their parents, adapt quickly to the English-speaking environment."¹⁴ "We no longer have programs for a specific group. The other children would ask, 'why isn't there a program for me?' and with so many languages and with perhaps not many children in each, it is much better to have everything in English."¹⁵

Heritage Languages

There is, interestingly, a new group of children using the multilingual collections. The retention of original languages is now encouraged in Canada, despite warnings that maintenance of ethnic identity can be divisive. In 1969 the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism stated that multiculturalism, as well as multilingualism, was desirable and enriching, not only for the individual but for the Canadian society as a whole. Alberta in 1971 legalized instruction in languages other than English and was later followed by Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Ontario passed enabling legislation in 1977 for municipal school boards to establish classes in "heritage languages." The desire to retain and foster the heritage language varies from nationality to nationality. "Chinese, Greeks, Italians, Poles and Ukrainians...exhibit the most widespread support for language retention."¹⁶ In Canada, these groups have Saturday schools for the teaching of their language and history. The study of heritage languages has brought to the library many English-speaking children of all ethnic backgrounds. For these beginners, the library has emphasized picture books and easy readers. For children who need more advanced reading, a number of English and ethnic firms in Canada publish books specially written for this group.

The Oral Tradition

Children's librarians have long depended on the oral presentation of literature. Across the country, stories are told and puppet shows presented in the library, at community centers and in parks in various community languages. Also in use is dial-a-story, where the telephone activates tapes of foreign-language stories recorded by members of the ethnic community. Completely nonverbal is Edmonton's storytelling in sign languages for the deaf.

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In Canada, library service provided to this group varies. Children of French heritage who live outside Quebec are now benefiting from the
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national concern over French studies. The children of native Canadians who still live on reserves are increasingly receiving library services. Basically the responsibility of the federal government, "funding for library service comes primarily from the various provincial governments, with additional grants through special agencies such as Wintario, and from local councils, including band councils."17 (Wintario is a lottery run by the Province of Ontario. The large profits, after the winners are paid, are allocated to nonprofit community recreation activities.) Although the provincial regional libraries are mainly responsible for overall administration, more and more native involvement is becoming part of library service. To persons of an oral heritage, the absolute importance of working out objectives and procedures through personal contact, and not by written communication, is well proven.

Native peoples have so far not been recognized as a special component of the urban mosaic needing library service planned with them in mind. Some urban librarians are concerned, however. In addition to the special collections on the culture of native peoples, which is found by them to be somewhat too research-oriented, the usual community library stock of how-to-do-it books, home and child care, sports, etc., are provided.

In the Maritime Provinces and Ontario are pockets of black families whose ancestors were refugees from American slavery. A report from the Halifax City Regional Library states: "The library does need to build up a better collection of material for Canadian black children. The problem with books for black children is that there are so few books written with Canadian black children featured; books about black children in the United States are available."18

Also in Canada are large numbers of children from the West Indies. Though both Canada and the West Indies are "British," their social patterns and values are widely divergent. That, coupled with the low socioeconomic status characteristic of semiskilled, moderately educated families, often destines children to a life of alienation and unemployment. In Toronto the public library has a West Indian collection and frequent Caribbean programs of all sorts. The board of education holds classes in English as a second dialect, where what is known in the West Indies as "standard English" is taught.

United Kingdom

Over the years, the pattern of library service to immigrant children in England has exemplified the traditional evolution of adaptation and
assimilation. Britain has been the haven of refugees for centuries, and these refugees have often maintained oases of the language and culture of the old land by providing private schooling, libraries and ethnic centers. If immigrants remained permanently, their offspring eventually became part of the British fabric. Particularly during and since World War II, many refugee children arrived from Europe under very traumatic circumstances. Often their reception and life in Britain was not much better, and sometimes even worse, than what they had known before. Simsova, herself such a refugee, refers to the nightmare experience and, in passing, to the solace reading brought.

Three waves of immigration followed World War II: East Europeans, the majority indistinguishable from the indigenous population; immigrants from west and south Europe who became the “minority minorities,” including Italians, Greek and Turkish Cypriots, and Maltese; and immigrants from the colonies and former colonies. At first they were received as welcome additions to the lower half of the labor force. But as they settled into more and larger enclaves, thus retaining their cultural identity, and as unemployment grew, factions of native Britons developed, violently antagonistic to these visible minorities. The inhospitable environment exacerbated the negative aspects which immigrants, and especially teenagers, so often experience. Blacks and Asians are still commonly referred to as “immigrants” despite the fact that more than 40 percent were born in the country. What has been written of the children of “guest workers” in Europe can also be said of Britain’s nonwhite immigrants. In fairness, however, one must remember the findings of a 1951 survey: “Half the population of this country had never met a coloured person in their lives.”

British librarians usually identify four or five distinct minority ethnic groups of children as targets for special library provision: the West Indians, thought of as underachievers and nonreaders, lost between two cultures; the Asians, firmly enmeshed in their parents’ culture with expectations of success in school and business, and supported by various self-help institutions, but headed for the immigrant parent-child gulf which the library can do so much to bridge; the Chinese, whose parents encourage learning at weekday and Saturday schools and who would rather keep to themselves; and the “minority minorities,” presenting the same challenges as they do in Canada or Australia. For these groups, librarians have attempted with varying degrees of success to provide books. A bibliography of press clippings reporting multicultural library activities would include dozens of entries—little grains of sand, if not yet making a pleasant land, at least building a nationwide foundation.
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The early 1970s was, in England as elsewhere, the period in which professional awareness of librarians' responsibilities toward ethnocultural minorities began. In 1973 the Library Association, prompted by librarians and remedial teachers from schools and penal establishments, established a Sub-Committee on Books for Slow Learners. Two years later, in November 1975, the subcommittee sponsored a conference on "Library Service in a Multi-Racial Community." Two papers concerned children's services and reading. One, on the Birmingham Public Library with its large Asiatic library, told how no books are provided for children in Asian languages; in fact, provision is concentrated on books in English suitable for non-English-speaking children, and on books which reflect a multicultural society. Another paper stressed the lack of suitable material for children. Here, however, the speaker vehemently condemned the color bias and racial prejudice of some standard English children's books. While the distressed conferees murmured dissent, other speakers accused libraries of being "conservative, racist and middle-class." In defense, librarians emphasized that they were handicapped by a dearth of appropriate publications.

A second conference, "Library Resources for Our Many Races," was held in May 1976 under the same auspices. It was prompted by the Library Association's Panel for New Readers. Once more, the theme of "no books for children" was emphasized. Regarding adult multilingual books, the consensus was that "there is an inadequate offering of books in many libraries."

In 1976 a Joint Working Party of the Library Advisory Council and the Community Relations Commission published their report, Public Library Service for a Multi-Cultural Society. It attempted to provide guidelines for library authorities on multiracial provision. Two recommendations of interest were that library authorities conduct their own surveys of local needs, and that they have a definite policy for dealing with biased and inaccurate material. The report emphasized the value of interdepartmental cooperation and the training of staff.

One of the Library Association's centennial publications in 1977 was a policy statement, "Public Libraries in a Multi-cultural Britain." It begins: "This paper is directed to all librarians...all have a part to play in the provision of library services for a multi-cultural Britain." Among "special needs" indicated is that of children from ethnic minorities "for some knowledge of their own culture, social and historical background....Books can serve...to meet a need to know who they are and where they come from....The argument for the provision of books for children in their mother tongue is overwhelming. It seems foolish to
encourage children to throw away a skill that is part of their natural inheritance. They should...retain a measure of national identity."

It is not clear to what extent libraries should follow the injunction to provide children with books in their mother tongue. Clough and Quarmby surveyed 397 children in the Greater London conurbation. Of these, 63.5 percent were born in England. Although 54.9 percent had a second spoken language, 97.7 percent preferred to read in English. However, books in the second language were not too readily available, and only 15.9 percent were literate in the second language.

Despite good intentions to provide ethnic materials, the question may prove academic. Minority groups have low priority in the allocation of library services. In 1976 warnings of scarce resources were being made, and they can be detected in the literature since then. Surridge in 1980 has warned: "now [that] public libraries are once again faced with having to make really severe cuts in expenditure, public librarians should...think fundamentally about what they are doing and why....We must make certain that the service to the 'disadvantaged' becomes part of the core of the library service." This is as important to fight for as the general reference and information services.

From the literature on the provision of library service to children of ethnocultural minorities in England, the impression is left of librarians working in an extremely stressful social climate with inadequate resources of staff and materials. The advances which have been achieved would now seem threatened by stringent financial cutbacks.

**United States**

Tracing aspects of library services in the United States is akin to the study of developments on a continent with many diverse countries. There are, of course, overall trends. The federal government's legislation and funding affect all. There are national library associations, national committees. But justice cannot be done nor due acknowledgment made to the many achievements of the past and present in a paper of this nature. Only a few significant highlights can even be mentioned.

The growth of library service in the United States early in the twentieth century extended through outreach programs to the disadvantaged, the urban poor and immigrants. Foreign-language collections were established in cities with large immigrant populations, then chiefly from Central Europe. Americanization, linguistically and culturally, was the keynote, one which became strident during World War I, when it was discovered that many thousands still had not become
American citizens. This urging toward assimilation faded during the 1920s; services were severely eroded during the poverty of the 1930s; and by the 1940s, interest had so dwindled that the ALA Committee on Work with the Foreign Born faded from the scene. Throughout the whole period, stringent controls were imposed on immigration; the clientele was no longer there in significant numbers. During these years immigrants maintained many features of their previous lives, but where their lives mingled with those of the established inhabitants, the face of conflict was apparent. Children suffered all the traumas, frustrations and alienation common to immigrants elsewhere.

A change began in the 1950s with a Supreme Court decision supporting the equal rights of blacks. "The rights of minorities became more than words....The rights of the individual, ethnic pride, heritage, were recognized as a new social value which led to a new sensibility and awareness reflected in children's books." Expressing in practice the intent of the equal rights concept led to programs for the functionally illiterate and the disadvantaged, and to a war on poverty—all supported by various library programs. Federal legislation made aid available under various programs. The library profession recognized the situation, choosing as the theme for the 1968 ALA Adult Services Division preconference "Voices from the Ghetto." Many American librarians appeared to be unaware of the ways of a life of poverty. Thus, we find programs such as "Getting into the Ghetto" and Cleveland Public Library's "Toward Understanding and Overcoming Poverty in the U.S." Yet, "the subject of ethnic-group use of library resources was a comparatively new concern of organized librarianship in the mid-1970s." It was found to be wrong to think that the disadvantaged were only the blacks and Latinos. At the same time, Americans of diverse origins became more vocal in their requests for library services.

Hundreds of libraries were involved with both English-speaking and bilingual children. The chief thrust was toward their command of English, the tool of learning, business, everyday existence. Unlike the goals of earlier periods, librarians wished also to take care of the needs of the total child, to provide materials to help in the appreciation and knowledge of his heritage. The first concern was multilingual collection building, and for that, bibliographic guides were essential. The profession's important and unique contribution was the preparation of many helpful lists and buying guides.

There was no neglect, however, of outreach programs, of "ethnic events." The role of these has been as much to foster understanding in the majority group, to build bridges between it and the many minority
cultures which they surround, as to involve and support members of the minority communities.

Conclusion

The problem common to all services for children of ethnocultural minorities is books—the books themselves and their availability. The stimulation of authors, the identification and support of sympathetic publishers, and the listing and annotating of published titles is surely a fertile field for library cooperative effort. The provision of rotating bookstocks, such as the Canadian Multilingual Biblioservice, to accommodate shifting demands arising from changes in ethnic concentrations and problems of cyclical demand, in association with the need to examine thoroughly optimal disposition of shrunken budgets, appears to be a topic requiring urgent joint study and action.

References

6. Ibid.
9. Dunkle and Gamali, op. cit., p. 3.
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15. Cox, Rita, to Wertheimer.