Sex as a Variable: A Bibliography of Women in Libraries 1975-1985

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Researchers looking into the status of women in libraries have almost 110 years of published material available to them through three main sources.


The volume presents over forty essays on women in libraries including an address by Melvil Dewey entitled "Women in Libraries: How They Are Handicapped." Also contained here is Anita Schiller's clear call for research in her "Women in Librarianship." The final essay is Weibel's "Toward a Feminist Profession." The second half of the book offers annotated citations to literature published on women in libraries from 1876-1976.


The ALA Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship (COSWL) supported this work in light of its charge "to promote and initiate the collection, analysis, dissemination and coordination of information on the status of women in librarianship." Formatted to conform with the arrangement of its predecessor, On Account of Sex adds to the 1876-1976 material and continues with annotated citations of material published between 1977 and 1981. The introductory essay characterizes the "demi-decade" as a period of feminist activism in libraries.

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Collectively, the Weibel, Heim, and Phenix sources contain approximately 2100 citations. In *Role of Women*, the first 100 years are represented by just over 1000 citations. The next five years, gathered together in *On Account of Sex*, contain 660 citations. The supplemental bibliographies account for another 300 citations in three years. Clearly, publication activity has heightened since the early 1970s when Anita Schiller and others called for research on the status of women in libraries and librarians rode the wave of feminism throughout the decade.

The context of these carefully counted bibliographic units is yet to be explored. Our 110 years of published materials need some measure of qualitative arrangement, other than in the natural chronological progression we now find them. *Role of Women, On Account of Sex*, and the COSWL bibliographies deliver comprehensive, chronological, and extensively indexed accounts of all published material from which a researcher could extract all citations which would provide a basis for any kind of inquiry into the status of women in librarianship. This bibliographic essay will provide a general overview of the many kinds of material from the last decade (1975-1985) which have been gathered in the major bibliographies on women in librarianship, and then proceed to extract from them the major publications which focus on the status of women in libraries.

**Surveys**

Probably the richest literature from which to extract empirical data about women in libraries is survey research. Surveys of librarians provide us pieces, glimpses, and a patchwork of information about librarians who belong to a particular association, live in the same geographical area, work in a similar institution, or perform a type of service.

Much of the documentation cited is not directly related to primary research on women. Schiller has noted: "References to women in librarianship can be uncovered in hundreds of reports, surveys, and articles. Yet this subject is rarely the primary focus of investigation. Only a handful of studies pinpoint this subject at the start or begin with the question 'What is the status of women in librarianship?'" As awareness
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of the "disadvantaged majority" of women in libraries has grown in recent years, most researchers now recognize that when data are analyzed by sex of respondents, significant differences are found between men and women library professionals.

A partial picture of women in libraries emerges from overall studies of librarians which are regularly produced by various professional and educational organizations. For example, cited in the published bibliographies on women in librarianship are reports from the National Center for Education Statistics HEGIS/LIBGIS data on types of libraries (e.g., academic, public, school) and other reports of master's and doctoral degrees conferred. Another organization which provides librarian data by sex is the College and University Personnel Administration (CUPA) Administrative Compensation Survey. (Washington, D.C.: CUPA). The Association of Research Libraries publishes the ARL Annual Salary Survey (Washington, D.C.: ARL), which reveals sex and salaries of librarians in ARL libraries by position. Annual "placements and salaries" articles appear in Library Journal. These data provide information on new master's-degree recipients, placement, and salaries by sex. The placements and salaries surveys are published in Library Journal and reprinted in the Bowker Annual of Library & Book Trade Information. Data on library school students and faculty appear in the annual statistical report of the Association for Library and Information Science Education (State College, Pa.: ALISE). The status of media professionals is described in the Educational Media Yearbook (Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited).

Aside from the annual publications, library associations can be depended on periodically to poll their memberships. There are survey data from the American Library Association, American Association of Law Librarians, American Society for Information Science, Association for Educational Communications and Technology, Society of American Archivists, Special Libraries Association, and the Medical Library Association from which to glean information about the status of women library workers. Several state and regional publications are also likely to gather data about the sex and status of librarians who hold particular positions in a particular geographic region.

Kathleen Heim has contributed a comprehensive outline of survey research in her article.


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In her essay she notes that "the absence of a single set of demographic indices to describe the library profession is a major obstacle to studies of the library work force. Each new scholar must piece together incompatible reports and surveys in order to begin to develop a research model for a particular problem." 

Additionally, as survey researchers begin to narrow the types of variables which delineate the professional activities of librarians, a number of studies have appeared that focus on a particular aspect of library professional activity. These studies look at directorships, mentoring, authorship, tenure, sabbaticals, job mobility, or other factors that contribute to the measurement of professional success. In the final analysis, there are only two kinds of librarians, male and female. Only those research reports which ask or answer Schiller's question "What is the status of women in libraries?" are included here. Several valuable surveys, cited in the published bibliographies, are therefore excluded.


Three offshoots of this major study are:


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Other articles that describe the findings of this major survey include:


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Sharma, Prabha, and Wheelock, Gerald C. "An Examination of the Position of Female and Male Librarians in Academic Libraries in Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi." Southeastern Librarian 33(Fall 1983):65-68.


History

The largest body of literature on women in libraries is that which provides a historical context to women's status in the profession. Included are both the longer histories of women in libraries and the shorter era of women's activism in libraries. Part of this history is the age-old image problem, and its relationship to women librarians; materials which examine this in a political or economic context also are included:


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Career Paths, Patterns, and Assessment

Most surveys of librarians provide empirical data that describe the status of librarians at one point in time, and do not provide longitudinal data about how they got where they were and where they may want to go from there. Notable exceptions are the Heim and Estabrook project and the Canadian study of career patterns already cited in the “Survey” section. The following materials represent survey research which attempts to draw a clearer picture of the status of women in libraries by comparing the different career patterns of women and men in libraries. Within the context of career patterns, some researchers have selected mobility as a specific variable. Another aspect of employment in libraries as it relates to women is the availability of part-time work.
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Many of the citations in the women in libraries bibliographies that contribute to information about women librarians and their careers are those which describe the Career Development and Assessment Center for Librarians (CDACL) established at the Graduate School of Library Science at the University of Washington in Seattle. The CDACL was set up precisely because career assessment is especially beneficial in a feminized profession. Those citations are not included here.


Dale, Doris C. Career Patterns of Women Librarians with Doctorates (Occasional Papers No. 147). Urbana-Champaign: Graduate School of Library Science, University of Illinois, 1980.


Taylor, Marion R. "Mobility and Professional Involvement in Librarianship: A Study of the 'Class of '55.' " In *Status of Women in Librarianship*, pp. 321-44.


Women in Library Management

There are few women in top management positions in libraries. Some researchers have contributed to the knowledge we have about the status of women in libraries by studying management positions and the few women who hold them.


Clarenbach, Kathryn F. "Women as Managers: Does It Make a Difference?" In *Women and Management: Theories, Skills and Values*, pp. 101-08.


Dworak, Marcia. "Women in Public Library Management: How Do They Measure Up?" *Public Library Quarterly* 1(Summer 1979):147-60.


Heim, Kathleen M. "Factors Contributing to a Continued Status Differentiation Between Male and Female Librarians." In *Women and Management: Theories, Skills and Values*, pp. 3-13.


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Status and Activities

Other sources which tell about women in libraries are those which report the activities of women librarians who have joined together to fight discrimination against women in libraries. Heim and Phenix have pointed out that "from 1977 to 1981 library women joined in coalitions to fight for ERA, pay equity and expanded human services for women." Library women also worked on professional issues such as the need for better advertising positions, enhanced women's involvement in professional activities, and documentation of inequities.4

Much of the documentation of this activity is ensconced within the reports of association conferences. The ALA conference reportage appears in national library periodicals such as American Libraries, Library Journal, School Library Journal, and Wilson Library Bulletin. The Library of Congress Information Bulletin is also a source of information about national conferences. State conferences are reported in state journals and newsletters, and other library associations report in their association journals. There are also library women's groups active in Canada, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, to name a few. The citations which lead to news notes and offer only a few sentences on the activities of women in libraries are not included here. Neither are "News in Review" articles which are also likely to mention women's progress in libraries on an annual basis, nor the ALA Yearbook of Library and Information Services which has included an essay on the status of women in libraries each year since the founding of COSWL in 1977.

The most in-depth information about the activities of library women's groups comes from the journals and newsletters they themselves publish. The following is a list of those publications.


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FLINT News, June 1984-. Write to Yoko Taguchi, Kyoto Seika College, Kino, Iwakura, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto 606, Japan.


SAA (Society of American Archivists) Women's Caucus Newsletter, 1975-, edited by Daria D'Arienzo, Robert Frost Library, Amherst College Archives, Amherst, MA 01002.


Women in Libraries (Newsletter of the SRRT Feminist Task Force). 1974-, edited byKay Jones, University of New Mexico Library, Reference Dept., Albuquerque, NM. (Subscription information from Leslie Kahn, 2 Manchester 2A, Newark, NJ 07104.)

WLW News/Views/Reviews for Women in Libraries 1976-, edited by Carol Starr and Helen Josephine. (Women Library Workers, 2027 Parker, Berkeley, CA 94704.)

Wisconsin Women Library Workers Newsletter 1976-, edited by Ann Clark. (Wisconsin Women Library Workers, P.O. Box 1425, Madison, WI 53701.)

Directories

Over the years, women in libraries have found several ways to create alternative networks. Newsletters, journals, and directories have regionally and nationally linked feminist librarians.

The first directory of this kind was the concept of the SHARE (Sisters Have Resources Everywhere) directory. SHARE directories have been published in California, Wisconsin, and Illinois. Five editions of the SHARE Directory have attempted national scope. The most recent was published in 1985 by the Illinois Library Association, Women's Concerns Task Force. They are all cited below in chronological order.


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Another directory that has paralleled the development of the SHARE directories is the Indiana Network Directory, which has been published in Indiana since 1980. Citations are in chronological order.


The ALA Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship, recognizing that women in libraries were organizing on a number of levels, and responding to its charge to “coordinate the activities of ALA units that consider questions having special relevance for women...and to establish contacts with committees on women within other professional groups...” began to publish a directory of these women’s groups. The directory contains the activities of the groups and the names and addresses of the contact persons.


The literature on women in libraries could be placed into many categories and/or subclassifications other than those found here. Survey data, historical research, and specialized inquiry into career pattern and management techniques are only convenient, broad categories used for selection in this bibliography. Here, only an overview of the research
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and reports exclusively dedicated to the status of women in libraries are included. For example, several essays on topics other than those in this bibliography appear in volumes such as Heim's *Status of Women in Librarianship* or special journal issues on women (notably "Beyond Awareness: Women in Libraries Organize for Change," *School Library Journal* 23[Jan. 1977], *Wilson Library Bulletin* 52[Dec. 1982], and *Librarians for Social Change* [no. 1, 1982]). They were excluded because the primary focus only touched on the topical categories listed here.

Literature on pay equity—the most urgent personnel issue for librarians in the 1980s—has been omitted because the outcome of that particular struggle will affect women and men alike, and will do no less than enhance the status of the library and information professions.

Another topic, that of intraoccupational segregation and its contribution to the wage and status gap among librarians, offers a new target for research. The impact of more men in children's librarianship, or of an influx of women in archives, media centers, or as ARL directors would provide an appealing topic to explore.

Library researchers will continue to investigate sex, the one binary variable which all librarians hold in common, as long as it continues to be associated with the nature of a librarian's contribution to the profession.

**References**
