

THE ATLANTA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LIBRARY SERVICE—ITS AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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THE last decade has been an era of appraisal. Institutions which could point specifically to clear-cut aims and objectives were found to be much less confused in their programs than those which had not decided definitely where they wanted to go and what were the necessary steps to be taken to arrive there.

Being keenly aware of the probable resulting confusion if aims and objectives were not carefully worked out, the School of Library Service of Atlanta University has made an attempt to set forth the principal goals which it hopes to reach and some of the ways in which it hopes to reach them. These objectives are enunciated with the full recognition that no institution can long remain an active force unless it is sensitive to contemporary life, which implies a willingness to accept change. A program of this kind, therefore, predisposes that the objectives of the School of Library Service of Atlanta University are not static but that they may be altered according to the best judgment of the school in what seems to it to be the present and long-term needs of library service with special reference to the Negro.

Aims and objectives may be arrived at in many ways. A substantial contribution in this direction may be gained by surveying the factors which seem to determine the basic needs involved. Library service is frequently classified according to the following types: college and university; school, including both high-school and elementary-school service; public library service; and special-library service. What, then, are the possibilities for service in these areas? According to the ratings of regional accrediting associations, there are 59 accredited colleges for Negroes in the United States¹ and 102 high schools.² If the total number of colleges and high schools were included, the college figure would

¹ H. W. and Harriett Hurt, *The 1939 college blue book* (Deland, Fla.: College Blue Book, 1940), pp. 240-49.

² Ambrose Caliver, "Secondary schools for Negroes," *School life*, XXV (July, 1940), 308.

be raised to 138³ and the high schools to 2,187.⁴ All these colleges and high schools need library service and, therefore, offer potential openings for trained librarians. If the elementary schools were added to this number, the possible openings for trained librarians would be even more apparent. It is, perhaps, true that only the larger high schools and elementary schools would be able to afford the services of a full-time trained librarian; but, even taking this fact into account, there would still be a large number of possible openings.

The public library field alone is a challenge to the Negro librarian. In 1939, of the 774 public libraries in the South, only 99 gave service to Negroes.⁵ In these 99 libraries only 13 trained Negro librarians were employed.⁶ Here is an opportunity for extensive service by the trained Negro librarian; and, when we consider that in southern cities within the population range of 2,500-100,000 and over there are 570 public library units without service to Negroes, the opportunity for service is greatly extended.⁷ It should perhaps also be pointed out that, since public library development for the entire South is below that of any other section of the country, there is still a virgin field where no service is provided for any part of the population.

The special-library field, though more limited than either of the other types, still offers openings for trained Negro library workers. Negro hospitals, of which there are 111,⁸ are beginning to utilize trained librarians, in the capacity of librarians both for the patients and for the professional staff. Negro business, such as that of insurance, also offers opportunities for the Negro librarian. If we consider the recently organized camp libraries in this special-libraries group, here, certainly, for the duration of the war will be openings for the trained Negro library worker.

Another type of library service which offers opportunities for the Negro is that connected with state library commissions and also with state departments of education in connection with the school library

³ *Negro year book, 1937-1938* (Tuskegee Institute, Ala.: Negro Year Book Pub. Co., 1937), pp. 197-204.

⁴ Caliver, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

⁵ E. A. Gleason, *The Southern Negro and the public library* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), p. 90 (Table 7).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 140 (Table 21) and p. 164 (Table 25). ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 100 (Table 10).

⁸ American Medical Association, Council on Medical Education and Hospitals, "Hospitalization of Negro patients," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, CXV (October 26, 1941), 1461.

program. A recent check of the personnel of state library agencies⁹ in those states where public services are separate for the Negro and the white group shows that at the present time there is no Negro associated with any agency except in the capacity of janitor, porter, or shipping clerk. The Negro's opportunity in this sphere is not confined, of course, to those states with separate public services. It is quite conceivable that a qualified Negro might be associated with any state library agency or school library division of the department of education in any state in the Union. It is also true that at this time there is no Negro employed in a professional capacity in the Library Service Division of the United States Office of Education. State and federal library agencies, therefore, offer another type of opportunity.

Since there are possible opportunities for the trained Negro library worker in all the major types of library service, including those offered by state and federal agencies, it seems evident that any school which attempts to prepare the professional Negro librarian must take this fact into account.

It would seem well, however, to go beyond the potential opportunities which are available to trained Negro librarians and to balance this information with the actual conditions, as evidenced by the present positions which trained Negro librarians now hold. The present largest group of professional Negro librarians came from the Hampton Library School. In the fourteen years of its existence there have been graduated from this institution 183 librarians. Of the 140 graduates of this institution for whom complete information was available, 61 are in college libraries, 22 in high-school libraries, 19 in public libraries, 10 in camp libraries, 6 on the staffs of library schools or departments of library service, 4 in special libraries, 1 in an elementary school, 1 in a combination high school and junior college, 1 in a combination high-school and public library, 12 are out of the field, and 3 are deceased.

The geographic spread of the 125 employed Hampton graduates whose positions are known is shown in Table 1. It is immediately evident from Table 1 that the majority of these professional librarians are employed in those states which provide separate public services for the Negro. When this majority is stated in mathematical terms, we find it to be 85 per cent of the total number.

⁹ This information covers the states of Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. No replies were received from Arkansas, Maryland, West Virginia, and South Carolina.

When this same kind of analysis is made for the Negro graduates of accredited library schools which admit both Negro and white students,¹⁰ a similar pattern is evident. Of 110 Negro graduates from 23 library schools, complete information was available for 98. Forty-

TABLE 1*
GEOGRAPHIC SPREAD OF HAMPTON LIBRARY SCHOOL
GRADUATES, 1941

Southern Area	Number of Graduates	Other Areas	Number of Graduates
North Carolina	25	Indiana	3
Virginia	14	Ohio	3
Georgia	11	New Jersey	2
Alabama	10	New York	2
Missouri †	6	Pennsylvania	2
Kentucky	6	Arizona	1
Oklahoma	6	Kansas	1
Louisiana	5	Massachusetts	1
South Carolina	5	Michigan	1
Florida	4	Virgin Islands	1
Texas	4	British West Indies	1
Arkansas	3		
Mississippi	2		
Tennessee	2		
Delaware †	1		
Maryland	1		
Washington, D.C.	1		
West Virginia	1		
Total	107	Total	18

* This table does not include 43 Hampton graduates for whom no information was available, 12 out of the field, and 3 deceased.

† This state is not southern in the same sense as certain of the other states; but, for the purposes of this article, it may be considered as belonging to the southern region.

eight are employed in the college field, 18 in public libraries, 17 in high-school libraries, 5 on the staffs of library schools, 2 in camp libraries,

¹⁰ The following schools were included in this survey: Carnegie Institute of Technology, College of St. Catherine, Columbia University, Drexel Institute, Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia, McGill University, New Jersey College for Women, New York State College for Teachers, Pratt Institute, Rosary College, Simmons College, Syracuse University, University of California, University of Chicago, University of Denver, University of Illinois, University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, University of Southern California, University of Toronto, University of Washington, University of Wisconsin, and Western Reserve.

1 in a combination high school and junior college, 1 in a special library, 1 in the Library of Congress, 3 out of the field, and 2 are deceased.

The geographic spread of the 93 employed graduates from schools which admit both Negro and white students is shown in Table 2. It is evident from this table that the majority of the Negro professional

TABLE 2*
GEOGRAPHIC SPREAD OF NEGRO GRADUATES OF LIBRARY
SCHOOLS WHICH ADMIT BOTH NEGRO AND WHITE
STUDENTS, 1942

Southern Area	Number of Graduates	Other Areas	Number of Graduates
Washington, D.C.....	12	New York.....	9
Georgia.....	11	Illinois.....	6
North Carolina.....	7	California.....	3
Virginia.....	7	Indiana.....	3
Texas.....	6	Michigan.....	2
Louisiana.....	4	Ohio.....	2
South Carolina.....	4	Connecticut.....	1
Tennessee.....	4	Pennsylvania.....	1
Alabama.....	2		
Kentucky.....	2		
West Virginia.....	2		
Arkansas.....	1		
Delaware†.....	1		
Maryland.....	1		
Mississippi.....	1		
Missouri†.....	1		
Total.....	66	Total.....	27

* This table does not include 12 graduates for whom no information was available, 3 out of the field, and 2 deceased.

† This state is not southern in the same sense as certain of the other states; but, for the purposes of this article, it may be considered as belonging to the southern region.

librarians coming from these schools are located in the South, as is also the case with Hampton graduates. Stated in statistical terms, 71 per cent find their livelihood in the southern region. A Negro library school must, therefore, be aware of this fact.

From this survey there would seem to evolve two major ideas around which objectives might be centered. Negro professional librarians should be prepared for all types of library service, with some emphasis, perhaps, on the college, the school, and the public library fields.

Since the majority of the Negro graduates of accredited library schools seem to find employment in the South, special consideration should be given to an appreciation of the southern area, for, without question, it presents unique problems in regard to the Negro.

Another factor to be considered in the aims and objectives of a library school is the importance of trends in the profession. Library service is a developing science, and any school desiring to train for maximum service must continually keep abreast of the times. A corollary of this factor would be that not only would a vital library school be aware of present trends but it would also look into the future.

The foregoing four ideas, covering the types of service, the principal region to be served, and the contemporary philosophy and standards of the times and an awareness of future possibilities, may well serve as a basis for the promulgation of aims and objectives. With these ideas as a basis, the School of Library Service of Atlanta University sets forth its present aims and objectives.

1. The School of Library Service will provide one year of general instruction, which will serve as a basis for library activity in all types of professional library situations. Included in this general program will be certain special reference to service in the college, the school, and public library fields.

2. Special emphasis will be placed on the library in the southern scene, utilizing in this connection all resources of the School of Library Service and the additional resources of other departments of Atlanta University.

3. The curriculum of the school, as influenced by what is believed to be the best thought in the library world, will be based upon

- a) The importance of principles as well as techniques. An attempt will be made to teach students not only how certain things are done but why they are done and that this "why" is as important as the "how."
- b) The idea that the first year of library school work is a unit designed to prepare the student for library service; it is not a collection of courses.
- c) The place of the library in the contemporary scene. This will necessitate a knowledge of society and of social and economic trends.
- d) The contributions of other departments of the university and of the university as a whole.
- e) The place of a library in a democracy. Here will be set forth the contribution that an accumulation and dissemination of facts and ideas may make toward the ultimate goal of a better world. This implies that, since the

Negro is a part of this world, he should have a right to participate fully in the advantages which accrue from this accumulation and dissemination of facts and ideas.

4. The School of Library Service must have as one of its major objectives a view of the future looking toward the improvement of better general library facilities and in turn improved library facilities for the Negro. In general, all objectives lead toward this ultimate goal, but it is well to state objectives in more specific terms so that they may lead to definite operating policies. This last objective implies a close scrutiny of contemporary conditions and activities, not only for the immediate and practical advantage which may be gained but also as a foundation for a long-term program.