“But if you could see the difference the library and a woman has made in that place!”: Taking Care of Men and Books in World War I

Catherine Campbell

Advised by Meghan Crnic, Department of History and Sociology of Science

University of Pennsylvania

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Introduction

> I sat down to write about books—about the books our boys want, and what that want shows of their splendid brains—their alertness, their ambition, their grip and design upon the future, each in his own way. But I end as we all must end who see them over here—in the overwhelming impression of their clean-minded loyalty—of their intense belief in and love for the people, the ideals, the faith of their own homes across the sea.[1]

Between 1917 and 1920, the American Library Association's War Library Service was responsible for a project of book distribution reaching members of the American military both at home and abroad. More than $5,000,000 dollars in donations (around $120,000,000–$170,000,000 in 2019 dollars) built thirty-two new camp libraries within the continental U.S. and established more than five hundred new library collections in military hospitals, transport vessels, and other spaces. In these libraries, ALA provided for the distribution of between seven and ten million books and magazines, by around 1,200 representative librarians, in support of U.S. personnel involved in the Great War.[2]

The War Library Service was just one part of the work of the Commission on Training Camp Activities (CTCA), an agency established just weeks after the United States' declaration of war in the spring of 1917.[3] President Wilson declared that "the men committed to its [the Federal Government's] charge will be returned to the homes and communities that so generously gave

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[1] Katherine Mayo, "Letter to the Editor: The Army Names Its Choice," *The North American Review* 209, no. 759 (February 1919): 281–284, cited in *Doughboys on the Western Front: Memories of American Soldiers in the Great War*, ed. Aaron Barlow (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2017).

[2] "About ALA: 1917," American Library Association, February 25, 2013, http://www.ala.org/aboutala/1917.

[3] Many important histories exist of the various organizations that constituted the CTCA other than the ALA. One example: Nancy Marie Robertson, *Christian Sisterhood, Race Relations, and the YWCA, 1906–46* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

them with no scars except those won in honorable conflict."[4] Wilson was speaking not of injuries to internal rather than external organs, but rather of the moral degradation that so many Americans feared their sons, husbands, brothers, and friends would undergo during the war. After an easily-remembered, repulsive legacy of Civil War camps—sites of alcohol, petty crime, untoward sex, and profanity—the idea of sending more troops into unreformed training camps was not tolerable to the American public, and especially to the reform-minded politicians and other leaders who took an interest in social policy. Wilson's oblique references to dishonorable scars acknowledged the validity of this fear, and announced tangible action by the War Department.[5]

As soon as the CTCA established itself, and began the movement towards a library service, the ALA moved quickly forward; arrangements for libraries which could serve as book collection centers, for which officials would serve as a camp libraries manager at headquarters, and how the million-dollar fundraising campaign would be run came about even before the War Department had agreed to ensure library buildings in the camps had heat and light.[6] Still, they were not disappointed. This project is titled with a telling quote, which appears in a letter to the director of hospital libraries sent in the fall of 1918. "But if you could see the difference the library and a woman has made in that place!" the librarian E. Kathleen Jones wrote, amidst her

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[4] Woodrow Wilson, "Special Statement," in *Keeping Our Fighters Fit for War and After*, cited in Nancy K. Bristow, *Making Men Moral: Social Engineering During the Great War* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 7.

[5] Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 3–7.

[6] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/17 box 1, cards from Aug 14, 1917; Aug 23, 1917; and Nov 21, 1917.

description of the positive changes wrought by her library service.[7] The librarians who eventually cared for the new collections, and the men who used them, believed wholeheartedly in where they were going: to educate, uplift, and retrain.

There are a few important studies to which this project is heavily indebted. First is the foundational study of the War Library Service, Arthur P. Young's *Books for Sammies: The American Library Association and World War I*, published in 1981. This small volume is the earliest comprehensive history based on the ALA archives, established at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 1973.[8] It details the organization and establishment of the ALA service, the ideologies, political conflicts and logistical issues that inevitably surrounded it, the eventual move across the Atlantic to work with the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) in Europe, and the eventual demobilization. Rooted almost exclusively in the archival material and in published primary sources, Young's book tries to explain the previously untold story of the War Library Service. Still, it presents an important picture of American librarians (and their still-young professional association) eager to seize the moment of the war, and thus to show the country what books and libraries were capable of.[9]

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[7] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/5 box 5, volume 29, Correspondence from E. Kathleen Jones to Caroline Webster, November 12, 1918.

[8] "American Library Association Archives," *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*, https://archives.library.illinois.edu/ala/

[9] Arthur P. Young, *Books for Sammies: The American Library Association and World War I* (Pittsburgh: Phi Beta Mu, 1981). The work of writing the ALA's history is taken up a few years later by Wayne A. Wiegand, in *The Politics of an Emerging Profession The American Library Association, 1876–1917* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986).Though this study ends with the beginning of the first World War, the history of the professionalization of librarianship in the time running up to the War Service, as well as the growing organization of the ALA as an institution, are important to understanding how the Association's actions during the war came about.

Since this project is concerned primarily with the work of the ALA, rather than the entire CTCA, and even more specifically with the librarians who staffed camps, hospitals, and the like, primary and archival sources come from the ALA rather than from federal administration. However, I owe a substantial debt to the scholars who have written histories of the CTCA broadly, most importantly Nancy K. Bristow's *Making Men Moral: Social Engineering During the Great War*. Bristow's study makes the arguments about the larger purpose of camp recreation that I expand on throughout the following chapters.

This project draws much of its primary source material from more "personal" documents of the War Library Service than, for example, Young's or Bristow's studies.[10] In this way, it is similar to Potter's essay "Khaki and Kisses," about British soldiers' reading habits. Potter discusses the British equivalent to ALA service, the Camps' Library scheme, which provided thousands of books to troops.[11] She emphasizes the commonly low quality of the books that reached forces, either via their library service or by individual purchases, though does not categorically object to the popular fiction that predominated over poetry and English classics (still surprisingly popular).[12] For example, she notes that romance novels often normalized, and even honored, men with visible wounds resulting from the war. Some, naturally, did not want the war to show up in their romance novels, as the war was their daily reality, and to hear about it during time meant for amusement was wearying, or at the very least, boring. Nevertheless, patriotic romances, and stories of the war that showed its purpose and heroism, saw unusually

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[10] Examples include personal correspondence, reports written by individual librarians, and the like.

[11] Jane Potter, "'Khaki and Kisses': Reading the Romance Novel in the Great War," in *Reading and the First World War: Readers, Texts, Archives*, Shafquat Towheed and Edmund G.C. King, eds., (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 31–32.

[12] Potter, "'Khaki and Kisses'," 41.

large print runs, reaching the tens of thousands.[13] On the American side, we know less about this kind of experience. Indeed, most of the published journals of soldiers detail their time spent fighting overseas, where these British romance novels may not have been far away; the genre of American soldiers' memoirs is expansive, including everything from self-published volumes assembled by children and grandchildren of veterans, to edited collections published by major academic presses. However, the time these soldiers spent in camps on American soil receives relatively little attention in most books such as these. It perhaps makes sense that camp life would be written about less often; if safer, it was arguably more quotidian than life in the trenches. Still, since so much of American troops' experience of the war happened on U.S. soil, additions to the scholarship on what went on in the camps and cantonments are much needed.[14]

Another important study founding this project is Beth Linker's *War's Waste: Rehabilitation in World War I America*.[15] Today, from Wounded Warriors Project billboards featuring veterans with prosthetic limbs, to the amputee veteran who gave a motivational speech at my own middle school, the story of rehabilitation after the trauma of war is culturally taken for granted in America. However, the changes that were occurring in the sphere of rehabilitation at the time of World War I form important context for understanding why the War Library Service

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[13] Potter, "'Khaki and Kisses'," 36, 37, 41.

[14] For a small selection of this vast genre, see Nels Anderson, *World War I Diary*, Allan Kent Powell, ed. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2013); Everard J. Bullis, *Doing My Bit Over There: A U.S. Marine's Memoir of the Western Front in World War I*, David J. Bullis, ed. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2018); James Herbert Gibson, *Without Fear and with a Manly Heart: The Great War Letters and Diaries of Private James Herbert Gibson*, L. Iris Newbold and K. Bruce Newbold, eds. (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2019); Vernon E. Kniptash, *On the Western Front with the Rainbow Division: A World War I Diary*, E. Bruce Geelhoed, ed. (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009).

[15] Beth Linker, *War's Waste: Rehabilitation in World War I America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011).

had such a wide reach. This project also adds to the more narrow history of vocational training in World War I; previous studies have primarily focused on the aspects of the post-demobilization "reeducation" system that did not work, as opposed to the hospital- and camp-based initiatives that I suggest were effective.[16]

Interested as I am in the caregiving work of women in the past, I began this project by taking up the question of why nurses at the turn of the 20th century were reading to patients as part of their care. More generally, the history of nursing has not focused on the tasks and activities of nurses day-to-day, especially those outside the medical, and this is a major gap in the existing scholarship.[17] Reading the work of those who theorize about caring, an ethic of care, and the work of caregiving, it seems not only historiographically but also philosophically important to attend to this gap: "care" often exists as an abstraction, and making it tangible has long been

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[16] Scott Gelber, "A 'Hard-Boiled Order': The Reeducation of Disabled WWI Veterans in New York City," *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 1 (2005): 161–180. This article does not mention the ALA effort at all.

[17] Charles Rosenberg, "Recent Developments in the History of Nursing," *Sociology of Health and Illness* 4, no. 1 (March 1982): 86; Celia Davies, ed., *Rewriting Nursing History* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble Books, 1980), 14-15. The 1980s saw the rise of the kind of history of nursing that is recognizable to scholars of today. Davies' *Rewriting Nursing History* and the works that cited it were central to this effort. However, as Davies notes in her introduction, the book is building on one particular work, that of Brian Abel-Smith. According to Rosenberg, Abel-Smith's was one of the first entries to the history of nursing not to be written by an advocate. One of the lingering questions Abel-Smith had posed, Davies notes, was about the history of nursing practice, and about "nursing as an activity or skill;" with two decades between the works, Davies acknowledged that this call had not yet been answered.

necessary.[18] Since it is also often analyzed as part of a position of subservience, I was also interested to find out how care can be attached to roles of influence.[19]

Reading nursing history was also crucial to understanding why the librarians' position in hospitals, where they worked alongside and lived with nurses, is so unique. Reverby's classic *Ordered to Care: The Dilemma of American Nursing* took, as Davies' authors had, the newly established feminist understanding of nursing seriously when it was published in 1987.[20] This understanding was focused not on uncovering nurses' quotidian work as an overdue recognition, but on highlighting power dynamics of labor and knowledge, such as those in the relationship between nurses and physicians.[21] In general, who nurses are, and how they are formed, has received drastically more attention in the history of nursing literature than has their work. This fact is noted by several important historians of nursing, such as Patricia D'Antonio as well as Celia Davies, across the last few decades of scholarship.[22] The backgrounds of nurses (race,

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[18] See the wonderful volume edited by Emily Abel and Margaret Nelson, *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), especially the essay by Berenice Fisher and Joan Tronto, "Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring," 35–62. See also Suzanne Gordon, Patricia Benner, and Nel Noddings, eds, *Caregiving: Readings in Knowledge*, *Practice*, *Ethics and Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

[19] Eva Gamarnikow, "Sexual division of labour: the case of nursing," in *Feminism and Materialism*, edited by Annette Kuhn and AnnMarie Wolpe, (London: Routledge, 1978) 96–123; Geertje Boschma, "Ambivalence about nursing's expertise: the role of a gendered holistic ideology in nursing, 1890–1990," in *Nursing history and the politics of welfare*, edited by Anne Marie Rafferty, Jane Robinson, and Ruth Elkan, (London: Routledge, 2005) 175-188.

[20] Susan Reverby, *Ordered to Care: The Dilemma of American Nursing, 1850–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 6, 72–73, 129–30, 204, 207.

[21] Eva Gamarnikow, "Sexual division of labour: the case of nursing," in *Feminism and Materialism*, edited by Annette Kuhn and AnnMarie Wolpe, (London: Routledge, 1978) 96–123; Geertje Boschma, "Ambivalence about nursing's expertise: the role of a gendered holistic ideology in nursing, 1890–1990," in *Nursing history and the politics of welfare*, edited by Anne Marie Rafferty, Jane Robinson, and Ruth Elkan, (London: Routledge, 2005) 175-188.

[22] Patricia D'Antonio, *American Nursing: A History of Knowledge, Authority, and the Meaning of Work* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

class, religion, and the like) have been well documented by historians, and this kind of analysis has been an important way of shining light on the "rank-and-file" nurses rather than writing nursing history only as a story of a few great figures like Florence Nightingale and Ethel Bedford Fenwick.[23]

Finally, this project also relies on the scholars who have made the larger case for analyzing gender in history, such as Joan C. Scott, and studies of masculinity in the era around World War I, including Bristow. One important study of masculinity and war around this time in American history, Hoganson's *Fighting for American Manhood*, focuses on the Spanish-American war rather than on World War I. Hoganson notes that just before the turn of the 20th century, thousands of men had volunteered to serve in that war; the fact that more had volunteered than the forces needed was considered to bode well for the state of American masculinity.[24] Other contributions include Gail Bederman's *Manliness & Civilization* and Kasson's *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man.*[25] Many important scholarly works exist on the subject of women in World War I. Dumenil's *The Second Line of Defense* is an exciting recent contribution, as well as the anthology *Gender and the Great War*, and Lettie's earlier *American*

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[23] See Reverby, D'Antonio, Olson and Walsh, etc.

[24] Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 6, 7–9. In fact, historians consider the Spanish-American War to be historically rather overdetermined, and one study in particular has argued that gender, added to the causation story, unifies many disparate motivations for entry into the war, as well as different backgrounds and political alignments among those who finally fought in it.

[25] Joan C. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1053–1075; Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995); Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants YOU: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001).

Women in World War I.[26] More specialized articles are also numerous, such as studies of women's organizations, uniformed workers, the interactions of gender and class, and the like.[27] However, almost none of these existing works mention librarianship among the many jobs held by women through the war.

Of all the people whose lives were unrecognizably altered by the first world war, librarians would not seem to come first on the list. They may not have been the people on the front lines, participating in a new kind of warfare and fighting "to end all wars." In fact, the group of mostly women who served those fighting in the war, setting up and staffing libraries in transport vessels, camps, hospitals, and convalescent houses, have a fascinating story to tell. In the first chapter of the paper that follows, I will show how the the ALA established the War Library Service as part of the CTCA, defined books as tools of both rehabilitation and moral improvement, and understood libraries to be instrumental in the context of American entry into World War I, and in the care that soldiers received. In my second chapter, I will show how intentional choices of books for war libraries made the American Library Association, and the librarians working in these contexts, into arbiters of the definition of masculinity for soldiers in camps and hospitals. Finally, in my third chapter, I will bring into focus just how unusual the role

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[26] Lettie Gavin, *American Women in World War I: They Also Served* (Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1997); and *Gender and the Great War*, Susan R. Grayzel and Tammy M. Proctor, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[27] See, for a few examples: Margaret Vining and Barton C. Hacker, "From Camp Follower to Lady in Uniform: Woman, Social Class, and Military Institutions before 1920," *Contemporary European History* 10, no. 3 (November 2001): 353–373; Katherine J. Lehman, "America's Changing Icons: Constructing Patriotic Women from World War I to the Present," *Journal of American History* 106, no. 3 (2019): 773–774. This field also naturally extends to other nations that were involved in the war, especially Britain. See Angela Woollacott, "From Moral to Professional Authority: Secularism, Social Work, and Middle-Class Women's Self-Construction in World War I Britain." *Journal of Women's History* 10, no. 2 (June 1998): pages; and on specifically nurses, Christine E. Hallett, *Veiled Warriors: Allied Nurses of the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

that war librarians had was, by comparison to the other women professionals alongside whom they worked.

The American Library Association, as one of "the seven," the member organizations of the CTCA, took its mandate even further than its peer organizations. Far from merely providing recreation in the camps, it undertook to rehabilitate soldiers injured, to prepare the entire force for re-entry into the postwar civilian economy, and to shape and improve the values and habits of a diverse and morally "vulnerable" group into those of a respectable, middle-class, male, American citizenry. To some extent, the books and magazines provided to men were the agents of these desired changes, and my analysis of how books were curated for the camp and hospital libraries in order to contribute to morale and to strong gender roles is new to this field. But above all, I argue that the corps of librarians, in stark contrast to the other women who worked alongside them as nurses, camp workers, volunteers, physiotherapists, and the like, had stewardship of—and thus authority over—the shape of that work. Librarians, especially female ones, used their books and their jobs taking care of American troops to become arbiters of ideal masculinity.

Chapter 1: The American Library Association at War

The Great War is finally drawing to a close, and you, a twenty-two-year-old soldier from Mississippi, have landed in the hospital at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana. The long demobilization process has begun, so camps like yours are still full of soldiers in January of 1919.[28] Some returned weeks or months ago from Europe, some never crossed the Atlantic at all; all told, most points along that continuum are represented. You, a late conscription, have suffered in the war, but most keenly by your fellows' jokes—while doing carpentry work in the camp, you tripped and fell, and a piece of equipment broke two of your ribs and your wrist. Never having seen action yourself, and stuck in the hospital alongside soldiers recovering from injuries caused by German attack, you feel a bit sheepish.[29] Still, your days are full.

As a patient in the hospital, you are generally under the care of the same assortment of nurses and doctors that you saw when you last broke an arm, roughhousing with your brothers when you were six or seven. Then, having a broken arm meant you were stuck in the house with nothing to do. But in this hospital, every few mornings bring not only a visit from the nurse, but also a librarian, Miss Louise Singley, rolling a cart of books and magazines with an ever-changing, and expanding, collection of books.[30] After first offering you adventure novels, the likes of which you had not enjoyed since grade school, Miss Singley brought you a booklet:

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[28] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To the Camp Librarian," January 20, 1919.

[29] This patient is fictional, but stands in for many thousands like him; carpentry work, among many other kinds of labor, was common and necessary in domestic camp environments. See War Expenditures Hearings before Subcommittee no. 2 (Camps) of the Select Committee on Expenditures in the War Department, House of Representatives, Sixty-Sixth Congress, First Session, vol. 2, November 1, 1919–January 17, 1920, Serial 3, Parts 22–37.

[30] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/5, box 5, volume 29, "Hospital Book Truck Blueprint," n.d., 132–133. See ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/5 box 5, Volume 29, "Mailing List of Libraries in Hospitals," January 7, 1919 for information on individual librarians at each hospital.

"Your Job Back Home."[31] You hadn't put much thought into the work you would do back home in Mississippi.[32] The job you had before the war seemed fine, and really, you had hardly started when the war began. Now, Miss Singley pointed out, you're stuck here, in this camp, in this hospital, anyway; what would you *really* like to do? You can start learning now, from books, and later on even training classes will be offered, by the YMCA and the instructors it employed.

And this is how you find yourself spending your days studying to become an electrician. When you return home, you may not have the exciting stories to tell that you imagine your colleagues who saw action might have. But you will have a new set of technical skills, or their foundations, at least. You will be able to marry "up" a bit, maybe even to one of the classy girls you met at dances here at the camp, and provide for a family in the future, if you are so lucky.[33]

You are one of many who have multiple needs from your librarian. You are bored in the hospital, and though you are rarely in pain now, the injury you sustained was certainly painful enough initially that you well appreciated a distraction. When you get well again, assuming you will not be going abroad, you expect to be fairly rootless, as you have lost touch with the friends you had made in your carpentry work (and you have an irrational fear that they don't think so highly of you as they used to.) Miss Singley has made sure you know, however, that as soon as you're out of the hospital, the full camp library will be available to you—just look for the

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[31] "Push the copies of your job back home," in ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "Instructions to Transport Librarians," September 27, [1917], 3.

[32] Bristow, Appendix D: MS was one of the states Camp Beauregard principally drew troops from.

[33] Bristow, 73.

rectangular building with a sign for "LIBRARY" rising over its roof—and its collection is even larger than the one from which she is drawing the contents of her cart.[34]

Young's argument in *Books for Sammies* centers around the idea that the ALA was taking the opportunity of the war in order to raise its status as a relatively young professional association, even trying to make itself more important to the nation than it perhaps was.[35] This is an important point to acknowledge, especially considering the evidence that one of the librarians' goals in their interactions with men was to bring them into their hometown public libraries when the war was over.[36] That said, self-interest certainly did not dictate the set-up of the War Service entirely; indeed, at one point the chair of the publicity subcommittee suggested that enlisted men be used in camps as librarians, and the War Services Committee's swift response was to reject his suggestion, saying that such a step would take men away from military duties.[37] There is a substantial case to be made that the combination of political circumstances into which the War Library Service was born—Progressive reformers in power, a violent "war to end all wars" for democracy, a changing global order, and a rapidly advancing economy—created a need for

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[34] Photographs of standardized camp library buildings and their signage published in Sergio Lugo, *Your Uniform is Your Pass: Soldier and Sailor Welfare Relief and the American Doughboy in World War I* (n.p., 2004), 21–25.

[35] Young, *Books for Sammies*, 1–4, 88.

[36] See Chapter 2 of this paper. There is another bit of rather amusing evidence in archived letters from during the war, that raising the status of the ALA in the public view was important to administrators. As happy to appear in uniform as some may have been, approval of the ALA's choices was not universal. "Please…what would you do to me if I embroidered over the 'A.L.A.' on my sleeve? All these chaps down here think I am from ALABAMA!" Miss Duren, the North Carolina librarian who had sent this note, received a stern but sympathetic response from headquarters: "It is a great chance to educate the public on the meaning of those three words. The Red Cross had some difficulty in teaching the public that 'R.C.' stands for 'Red Cross,' not 'Roman Catholic.' See ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/5, box 5, Correspondence from headquarters (unsigned copy) to Fanny Duren, September 11, 1918.

[37] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/17 box 1, cards from April 4, 1918, 2.

libraries engaged simultaneously with education, vocational rehabilitation, healing, and recreation.[38]

The Experience of a World War I Camp

The year 1917 saw the U.S. entry into the war, and with that, the construction of sixteen new National Guard camps, as well as sixteen National Army cantonments, which soon filled with largely brand-new military personnel.[39] We have a variety of sources from which to learn about what the camps were like day-to-day, including institutional sources like War Department documents and Congressional hearings, as well as individual soldiers' anecdotes and memoirs. There were thirty-two camps overseen by the CTCA within the United States, each holding between around 25,000 and 60,000 people at their largest.[40]

Camp Grant, in Illinois, an "average camp, neither larger nor smaller," was recorded as having a five-page list of buildings and spaces, costing nearly $9 million to construct.[41] It was a home for as many as 56,238 at its height in October of 1918, and when it was newly constructed and at its lowest point in September of 1917, it still housed 13,426 people. Like many of the camps built in World War I, the number of people in the camp was similar to or even larger than the size of the nearest town; in Grant's case, the nearby town of Rockford, Illinois held a

[38] For an in-depth study of the political circumstances of the Progressive era, see Steven J. Diner, *A Very Different Age: Americans of the Progressive Era* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998).

[39] *Order of Battle of the United States Land Forces in the World War (1917–1919) Zone of the Interior*, vol. 3, part 1, by World War I Group, Historical Division, Special Staff United States Army (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1949); cited in Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, Appendix D.

[40] Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, Appendix D. Bristow's information is concordant with the list of camp librarians' addresses kept by the ALA, found in ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/5, box 5, Volume 29, January 7, 1919.

[41] War Expenditures Hearings before Subcommittee no. 2 (Camps) of the Select Committee on Expenditures in the War Department, House of Representatives, Sixty-Sixth Congress, First Session, vol. 2, November 1, 1919–January 17, 1920, Serial 3, Parts 22–37, 2905, 2075.

population of 65,651 in the 1920 census.[42] The list included the sizes of their barracks, mess halls, and lavatory buildings; a muster building; a chapel, mortuary, and post exchange; administrative and office buildings; countless repair shops; medical buildings including four operating rooms and a large operating pavilion, a dental infirmary, a small hospital, a neuropsychiatric facility, isolation wards, an eye, ear and throat building, nurses' quarters, and convalescent barracks as well as surgeons' offices; stables, a lumber shed, a horse-cart building, oil storage, a hog house and animal house, a 20'x42' space for "oat crushing," a contractors' shop, hay sheds, forage, a grain elevator, a blacksmith shop; and more. There were more than 32,400 square feet of kitchen space alone, and a total of more than 7,300 feet of corridors connecting buildings together.[43]

In a Congressional hearing on war expenditures, one Colonel Couper tried to give the subcommittee members a sense of the space by comparing it to Washington, D.C.:

> I think the best idea we can give of that [the timekeeping for work in the camp] is to show by a map which we have here, showing Camp Grant, superimposed on the same scale on a map of Washington, and in order that we…can have an idea of just what it is, if we start at a point between the Capitol and the Library and go southwesterly, in a southwesterly direction to the Seventh Street wharves; thence along the river to Thirteenth Street; thence north to B Street NW.; thence on a curving line which runs just south of the White House and passes westward to a point where C Street NW intersects the Potomac River near the Lincoln Memorial…back to the starting point…you have covered the area on which buildings only are located. That does not include the drill field and the maneuvering grounds.[44]

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[42] Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, Appendix D, 236.

[43] War Expenditures Hearings before Subcommittee no. 2 (Camps) of the Select Committee on Expenditures in the War Department, House of Representatives, Sixty-Sixth Congress, First Session, vol. 2, November 1, 1919–January 17, 1920, Serial 3, Parts 22–37, 2074–2079.

[44] Ibid., 2905.

He goes on to note that the Congressmen's simplistic idea of how to control and judge a large number of workers over a space the size of the whole Washington, D.C. city center, is unfair: "The governmental activities of all of Washington are inclosed in all of that area, and you can see that some man might be loafing in some building, and it would not be fair to say that the whole job was loafing simply because some man in some building was loafing."[45]

Couper may have been trying to make a point about the large size of the area, but his comment about "loafing" troops reflected the most common concern about how troops were spending their down time. This was one of the principal focuses of the CTCA. Alongside his description of the new hostess houses (where women visiting their relatives and friends could be received in "pleasant surroundings," presumably including some degree of supervision,) theaters, athletic facilities and recreational spaces in the nearby towns, Raymond Fosdick, the chairman of the CTCA, includes the libraries. When Fosdick says that "we are developing not only theaters inside the camps, but also libraries," he implies that the primary function of the library was to entertain; however, this was not the message that is embedded in the ALA's own communications to the War Department and the public, and to its librarians.[46] To these external parties, the ALA needed to communicate their effort to send a well-prepared, well-rehabilitated workforce back into civilian life when the war ended. This purpose had clear economic and practical necessity, and the ALA saw libraries as well-suited to meet that need. It also speaks to the reforming and improving capacity of the camps, as both administrators and the public hopefully imagined.

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[45] Ibid., 2905–2906.

[46] Raymond Fosdick, "The Commission on Training Camp Activities," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science in the City of New York* 7, no. 4 (February 1918): 163–170, 163–169 cited in *Doughboys on the Western Front: Memories of American Soldiers in the Great War*, ed. Aaron Barlow (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2017).

What did the Commission ask of the Libraries?

Camp and hospital libraries were designed around this reform orientation, and intended primarily for the troops, whose well-being was at stake. That said, their operation was useful to everyone, and the librarians sent by the ALA had a conscious role in helping camps and hospitals run as smoothly as possible. The needs of "medical staff, nurses, and enlisted men," were all the ALA's concern alike, and librarians could provide "fiction and recreational reading," as well as "books on sanitation, first-aid, military affairs, etc."[47] A professional librarian, with information and knowledge to spare, would have been welcome even without a public mandate for "wholesome recreation."[48] However, examining the records of the War Library Service with these broader Progressive exigencies in mind, we can come to important insights about how the ALA saw its own role, and by extension, the role of the many moving parts of the service: librarians; hospital, transport vessel, convalescent house, and camp libraries; and multi-part administrative apparatus.[49]

Scholars describe the Commission on Training Camp Activities as an effort to convert Americans to a specific vision of citizenship, not only by changing how soldiers spent their time during the war, but also by reshaping what they imagined themselves doing after the war had

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[47] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To the Camp Librarian: Re: Hospital Libraries," April 6, 1918, 2. Emphasis mine.

[48] "War Camp Community Service," 1918, pamphlet available electronically through Adam Matthew, Marlborough, The First World War, http://www.firstworldwar.amdigital.co.uk.proxy.library.upenn.edu/Documents/Details/HIA_WWISC_B021_F023

[49] For histories of librarianship in the United States and Europe, see Michael Harris, *History of Libraries in the Western World* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1999); Pamela Spence Richards, Wayne A. Wiegand, and Marija Dalbello, eds, *A History of Modern Librarianship: Constructing the Heritage of Western Cultures* (Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited, 2015); and Wallace Koehler, *Ethics and values in librarianship: a history* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

ended.[50] Many parts of the CTCA mission had two temporally nested elements like this. For example, the "social hygiene" program, aimed at eliminating venereal disease, was both a program for reducing the occurrences of promiscuous sex and the infections that resulted, and for teaching men to aspire to an ideal of moral manhood. In other words, this program sent a two-part message: don't catch a disease now—we need you to fight—but don't catch one back at home, either: you have a long life of honorable manliness ahead of you.[51] Similarly, the soldier clubhouses, a program of the YMCA, the Jewish Welfare Board, and the Knights of Columbus, provided structured recreation that was meant to feel like a break from camp life, with all its discipline and physical discomfort.[52] This might have included games, books, music, religious meetings, and entertainment, all keeping men too busy for debauchery. But these clubs were also turning men towards respectable, middle-class tastes, which they would take back to their lives and communities, and help to create a more wholesome and culturally unified America.[53]

The principal logic driving the establishment of culturally nationalist CTCA programs was the maintenance of a kind of normality in social relations. For Americans anxious about severing their boys from home, sending them overseas to unknown and culturally uncertain surroundings, this goal was much more pressing than it may sound today. Some argue that programs such as the CTCA organized were intended even more to reassert the association between masculinity and domesticity, than to make military life bearable and safe.[54] Still, even if

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[50] Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 8, 17, 31–32, 36–37.

[51] Bristow, *Making Men Moral,* 32.

[52] Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 41.

[53] Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 41–42.

[54] Elizabeth A. Gagen, "Homespun manhood and the war against masculinity: community leisure on the US home front, 1917–19," *Gender, Place, & Culture* 16, no. 1 (2009), 23.

the new normal presented by camp recreation programs was of course vastly different from the life troops would have recently left, Administration officials saw an opportunity in the shift: to reconstruct the entire force's social and recreational norms in line with a single new, culturally unified, middle-class, virtuous one.[55]

President Wilson was explicitly interested in the masculinity of his fighting forces, and the CTCA exemplified the attitude towards male sexuality that characterized most Progressive reformers.[56] That is, working-class men were understood to be too sexually aggressive by their very nature, while middle-class men had been nearly feminized by their white-collar jobs and increasingly comfortable modern lifestyles. Neither one of these positions was appropriate or acceptable. Recreation, meanwhile, was already being established as a way of building and reasserting masculinity in this historical moment. Working-class men, prevented from using their economic position to assert their dominance (as middle-class men were able to do) by a lack of economic mobility and a recent depression, were in fact the ones leading the way in refashioning recreation time to declare their masculinity in this way. Those middle-class reformers seem to have missed the irony of their effort to co-opt this process to repress working-class cultural norms.[57]

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[55] Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 12–13, 17.

[56] The campaign against Venereal Disease was perhaps the most important part of the CTCA. For a comprehensive history of this fight, see Allan M. Brandt, *No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States Since 1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). For analysis of how the YMCA continued the work of the CTCA by forming a partnership with the US Public Health Service after the war ended, see Alexandra M. Lord, "Models of Masculinity: Sex Education the United States Public Health Service, and the YMCA, 1919–1924," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 58, no. 2 (April 2003), 123–152.

[57] Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*, 8–9; Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 19, 24–26, 79–80, 89, 208; Peter N. Stearns, *Be a Man! Males in Modern Society* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1979), 59–78. See also Thomas Winter, "Personality, Character, and Self-Expression: The YMCA and the Construction of Manhood and Class, 1877–1920," *Men and Masculinities* 2, no. 3 (January 2000), 272–285.

Vocational Materials in the War Library Mission

Once the CTCA had involved the ALA, books came to hold a different role in hospitals, especially as compared to the ordinary camp libraries.[58] Part of the reason for this is that reading, constructed as a basis for learning a new trade after the war, is different from reading as part of healing. The practice of nurses reading aloud to patients, especially the more common private-duty nurses of the nineteenth century but also their professionalized WWI-era counterparts, was well-established prior to the war.[59] An examination of nursing publications from the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th reveals repeated, entirely taken-for-granted allusions to a practice of reading aloud to patients as part of nursing care. At least eight articles are dedicated to choices of books by which patients might benefit, in the first three years of the

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[58] As WWI hospital and camp libraries served people in all the various roles present, it is important to note the history of the difference between hospital libraries for patients, and medical libraries for staff, as well as general libraries containing medical collections, which are meant for the use of physicians but are provided by way of the same funds as support all the rest of that library's collections. For the histories of these, see Marjorie Wannarka, "Medical Collections in Public Libraries in the United States: A Brief Historical Study," *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association* 56 (January 1968), 1–14 and Charles B. Wessel, Jody A. Wozar, and Barbara A. Epstein, "The role of the academic medical center library in training public librarians," *Journal of the Medical Library Association* 91, no. 3 (July 2003), 352-360. We also know, of course, that physicians are not the only ones to have used these collections, to the consternation of some. In one fascinating pre-WWI example, an article about the medical collections within public libraries took up the question of whether books could be harmful, rather taking for granted its answer, in 1902. As the author said, "There is a certain class of readers who frequent these medical sections for the unclean purpose of reading books on certain subjects, or of looking at the plates. This crowd followed the medical books…needless to say they were refused the books, and we gradually got rid of them in that way…we had to keep something like 200V. [volumes] in an inferno under lock and key." G.E. Wire, "Medical Departments in Rate Supported Public Libraries," *Medical Libraries* 5, no. 2 (June 1902), 9–13.

[59] Cultural histories of middle-class reading have not especially studied the use of books in medical contexts, instead focusing on consumer culture and social engagement. See Timothy Richard Aubry, *Reading as Therapy: What Reading Does for Middle Class Americans* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2011); and Janice Radway *A Feeling for Books* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997). For histories of the changes in nursing between the mid- to late-nineteenth century and the early twentieth, see Susan Reverby, *Ordered to Care: The Dilemma of American Nursing, 1850–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Patricia D'Antonio, *American Nursing: A History of Knowledge, Authority, and the Meaning of Work* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); Charles Rosenberg, "Recent Developments in the History of Nursing," *Sociology of Health and Illness* 4, no. 1 (March 1982): 86–94; Celia Davies, ed., *Rewriting Nursing History* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble Books, 1980),

American Journal of Nursing alone.[60] Meanwhile, the way books would be used in rehabilitation, not to mention the concept that the camp administration should be responsible for those rehabilitative efforts, was brand-new.[61]

In the camps, vocational material was "the greatest opportunity of the camp library," taking men who were soon on their way home, "a rapidly transient population, one which will have little interest in the camp or its institutions," and leading them to books that are even "more lasting in value than that which featured the science of warfare."[62] It was books that would help them return to work, as well as bring them through public library doors in the towns and cities to which they were bound.

That troops were not simply amusing themselves with novels was important to the ALA, the military, and the public alike. In *Soldiers, Sailors, and Books*, headquarters reports:

> Soldiers read more than people in civil life, partly because they are away from home and need diversion, and partly because they are preparing themselves for a profession which is entirely new to them. In most camps the call for fiction is a little below fifty per cent. It is rarely above that figure. The soldier reads to learn even more than he reads for recreation.[63]

In December 1918, the ALA sent a letter to certain hospital librarians, informing them that the Surgeon General had "requested us [ALA headquarters] to send you books on the following subjects," before providing a twenty-eight item list of topics from pattern-making and woodworking, to "text books in English for foreigners and illiterates," to commercial geography

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[60] See, for example, L.D.D., "Books to read to patients," American Journal of Nursing 2, no. 7 (April 1902): 515.

[61] Linker, *War's Waste*, 20–34, 69.

[62] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To the Camp Librarian," November 26, 1918, 1.

[63] American Library Association, *Soldiers, Sailors, and Books: War Service of the American Library Association, 1918* (n.p., 1918), 9.

and soils.[64] Per the Red Cross, every hospital had a convalescent house, and every convalescent house has a room with shelves to be used as a library, and to be placed under the care of the ALA. "Books dealing with trades and occupations should predominate here," a memo stated. "When occupational courses are installed, books relating to these courses must be included."[65] This is the first indication of the specific need for libraries in the rehabilitation effort. "Occupational courses," which would require trained individuals on-site to teach them, a time commitment by administrators, troops, and teachers alike, and a financial outlay to start them up, could not be functional from the first day a camp was occupied. A library, assuming at least a small shipment of books and a librarian, chaplain, or YMCA officer could be present, would start the vocational rehabilitation effort immediately.[66] This idea relied on men being able to learn about, and even to independently teach themselves, new skills from the books they requested.[67]

More generally, there was a pressing need for men to be prepared for the economy that would prevail immediately after the end of the war. To this end, the ALA also sent bookmarks, intended to be placed in every single book charged out to those in the camps, as well as posted to every single bulletin board; 5,000 copies was considered merely the "initial supply," and librarians were assured that "you will surely be able to distribute this many." These bookmarks contained the list of books that were available at each camp library concerning occupations that

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[64] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To the Hospital Librarian," December 16, 1918.

[65] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To the Camp Librarian: Re: Hospital Libraries," April 6, 1918, 2.

[66] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/17, card of May 12, 1919.

[67] For the history of the use of work therapy in psychiatric medicine, see Gerald N. Grob, "The Mad Among Us: A History of the Care of America's Mentally Ill." *Social History of Medicine* 9, no. 3 (1996): 480; and David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 2002).

would be in demand following the war.[68] One of several successors to this book list slip would concern “the choice of a vocation, and lists the books in the library which will guide a man in picking out his work.”[69] One notable implication of this process is that a large number of men were expected to select a new occupation from scratch after the end of the war. This speaks to the capacity for self-improvement given to the library context: men would emerge not simply able to continue the labor they had left behind, but newly endowed with a “vocation,” informed by the reforming time they had spent in the camp, under the care and tutelage of the librarians there.

Finally, vocational training was also part of the (literal) picture presented to the public and to government officials about the money being spent on the program and the extent of its work. “We have been told to prepare a corking good album of pictures to be presented to the Carnegie Corporation as an evidence of the work we are doing and the wise expenditure of its money,” wrote the ALA representative in charge of publicity. He was quite serious about the venture. He continues, “this is a far more important reason for having a lot of good pictures than this simple statement indicates. Get some more good ones with life and human interest in them. Pictures showing the use of magazines and newspapers, close-ups of men studying and working with technical books, men reading in barracks and in hospitals, are desired.”[70] In other words, the ALA administrators assumed that those viewing the pictures, both in the military and the general public, would be concerned about the immediate content of the libraries, so it was important to present the technical and vocational training that the libraries could offer. Still, they would likely be satisfied by the obvious, inherent good of all those soldiers, sitting in barracks and hospital

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[68] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To the Camp Librarian," November 26, 1918, 1.

[69] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To the Camp Librarian," November 26, 1918, 2.

[70] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To the Camp Librarian:," May 17, 1918.

beds with books on their laps and in their hands. They were being kept busy, at the very least—if they were spending time with books, they were presumably not spending time on alcohol, prostitutes, "loafing" about the camp—and at best taught, reformed, and prepared for a better postwar society.

Hospital and "Reconstruction" Patients

At the time of the American entry into World War I, a major shift was taking place in how those who served militarily were compensated by their government. President Wilson and his cabinet were interested in realigning veteran's benefits to work more like the benefits all workers were starting to expect. To this end, the administrative home for these benefits shifted from the Pension Bureau to the Committee on Labor. In line with this change, the model of benefits administration shifted from the support pensions that Civil War veterans expected, to one much more similar to workmen's compensation laws.[71]

Scholarship on rehabilitation in World War I focuses on the repair of physical injuries, which had a clear economic imperative.[72] The War Risk Insurance Act, with its mandated, vocationally-focused rehabilitative medical care, made the U.S. government into a direct insurer of both soldiers and material goods, and though it did not end the old pension system, it made it

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[71] Linker, *War's Waste*, 27–28.

[72] Linker notes that "Rehabilitation was (and still is) a form of medical and educational welfare that aims to ameliorate veteran demands for compensation while also lessening the cost of pension and disability payments" in her endnotes to the introduction of *War's Waste*. See also Sara Rose, *No Right to Be Idle: The Invention of Disability, 1840s–1930s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 190–222.

seem "as much out of date as the flint-lock musket."[73] It encouraged men to have families and to work outside the home, and supported them through that process if they returned disabled.[74]

With the federal government suddenly responsible for men's rehabilitation in a much more focused and practical way, the presence of the ALA could not have been more timely. It now mattered not just that men were able to fight, and that they received some kind of compensation after the end of their service, but also that they left the camps with more education than they had come in with. Public Health Service officials were abundantly proud of the progress their hospitals made on this front, in collaboration with the ALA, which provided materials. "Our educational work covers practically all of the ordinary trades and technical subjects, such as are usually included in electrical and mechanical engineering courses," began Major A.C. Monahan in a letter to Caroline Webster concerning the reconstruction hospitals. "We have a large number of men learning to read and write and others with limited schooling who are taking more advanced work."[75]

Not all military hospitals were sites of rehabilitation, or "reconstruction," though many were. That choice was up to the Surgeon General's office, which would then inform the civilian organizations responsible for some of its elements.[76] Furthermore, even hospitals without the time or capacity for a fully formed reconstruction program wanted libraries and librarians, in some cases. The major in charge of the debarkation hospital at Ellis Island, for example, wasted

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[73] Samuel McCune Lindsay, "Soldiers' and Sailors' Insurance," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 57 (1918): 632; cited in Linker, *War's Waste*, 29

[74] Linker, *War's Waste*, 31.

[75] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/5 box 5, volume 29, Correspondence from A.C. Monahan to Caroline Webster

[76] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "Hospital Library Circular, No. 2 (Superseding Circular No. 1)," July 1, 1918.

no time in telling ALA headquarters that even though patients were present there for "a very short time only,…it is our opinion that it would be wise to have one individual interested in and having direct charge of all reading matter."[77]

The rehabilitative education effort was one area with tight collaboration among staff coming from multiple organizations. Educational Officers, provided with topically-organized lists of the nonfiction books with which the ALA had stocked the libraries, were to return these with check-marks by the ones they needed for the courses they planned to offer. In many hospitals, an entirely separate educational library was established, and regular meetings planned during which hospital librarians and education staff could coordinate.[78]

Indeed, that there were in fact trained librarians in the hospital libraries was an important basis for publicity of the War Library Service. Where people may not have trusted soldiers with their books, it seems, they could trust the librarians. Citizens were directed to send their gifts of books and magazines to public libraries all over the country, with a note indicating that they were "For War Service;" ALA administrators explained to the public that the friendly faces who received them there had their analogues in the camp hospitals, where "good reading" was "an aid to speedy recovery."[79] The American people's books were in good hands.

According to the accounts of librarians who worked with hospital patients during the war, the need for their services was unmistakeable. For one thing, library use was huge; one librarian

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[77] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/5 box 5, correspondence from Chester R. Haig to Caroline Webster, November 22, 1918.

[78] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/5 box 5, volume 29, Correspondence from A.C. Monahan to Caroline Webster.

[79] ALA Archives, Digitized documents: Hospital Library Miscellany, "Suggested Copy for leaflet or bookmark, adapted for use on two sides of a slip 3 1/4 x 6 1/4 inches," December 6, 1918, 3.

noted that she kept the reading room open from 9 A.M. to 10 P.M., with the help of soldier assistants, and there was "almost never a time without six or eight are in at once [sic]."[80] "My poor library!" another hospital librarian lamented in a letter. "I've managed to keep a path to my desk but it has been impossible to do much desk work. However I have continued to take books out under the trees (have missed only two afternoons) (this in four weeks) and on the wards and to my surprise and pleasure the circulation last week was the largest yet."[81]

The personal attention librarians were able to give patients was also extremely important to undoing some of what scholars have called the destructive, "de-personalizing" effects of war.[82] In an account of library work in a psychiatric hospital, a resident librarian tells of the real need patients expressed for her services:

> It is into such places that the librarian goes daily with the magic page that will transport the readers to a stream abounding in sport, or to the West full of adventure and romance, thus conferring the boon of shortening a long day. To hear the greeting: 'Here she comes now.' 'What have you got today?' 'Got a detective story?' 'I want a Popular Mechanics.' 'Next time you come, bring me a funny book.' 'If it wasn't for these things I know I should die,' spurs one to do even more for them the next time.[83]

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[80] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/5, box 5, Correspondence from Elizabeth Pomeroy to Caroline Webster, Mar 26, 1919.

[81] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/5 box 5, volume 29, Correspondence from E. Kathleen Jones to Caroline Webster, October 31, 1918.

[82] John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 222.

[83] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/15, Miss Olive Mayes, "Library Work in U.S.P.H.S. Hospital #49, Philadelphia, Pa," December 1, 1920, 1.

Chapter 2: “Libraries for Men”

In the introduction of “Your Job Back Home,” a widely-used informational pamphlet aimed at soldiers, the ALA writes, “The American Library Association, which supplied books and magazines to the soldiers, sailors, and marines during the war, has discovered that American men read under all circumstances; and read all sorts of things.”[84] Of course, the ALA did not merely “discover” the tastes of their libraries’ patrons: they intentionally stocked their libraries with certain books, and excluded whole categories of others. They also submitted to military censorship of the materials they provided.[85] Indeed, most of the remainder of that very pamphlet is dedicated to recommending specific books. Still, this phrasing reflects their eagerness to appear that they wanted men to read and to use the libraries, no matter what they read.

In fact, librarians were not uninterested providers of whatever books were available, to whichever men happened to stop by a camp library. The librarians that worked in the camps and hospitals of the first World War had specific ideas about what material was appropriate for soldiers to read at various times and in various situations. Furthermore, they believed that the right books, in the hands of men primed to make optimal use of their contents, could do substantial good for the nation after the war. It was thus essential both that troops read these right books, and that they kept reading them after the war.

In some ways, it is actually fair to say that librarians were “discovering” the reading habits of American men; public libraries at the beginning of the twentieth century had a widely-

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[84] ALA, “Your Job Back Home,” 8.

[85] Young, *Books for Sammies*, 47, 52–55. Notices about what material was being censored came to librarians via circular letter, just as information about uniforms or shipping instructions did; see, for example, the list of prohibited books in ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, “To the Camp Librarian or Supervisor,” July 31, 1918.

acknowledged femininity problem. As far as many people were concerned, the predominance of women in visible library work, as well as the perceived distance between the spheres in which women and men operated socially—much less worked—meant that libraries were necessarily considered "out of touch." One columnist added, unhelpfully, that "a woman can no more select books for a man than she can cigars or neckties."[86] Another publication stated confidently that "in general, women read for culture, men do not read at all."[87] Those without the interests of libraries in mind used this norm for profit; the Congress Hosiery Company used library books, as well as office supplies and telegrams, to put advertisements featuring the low price of hosiery into the hands of the "business girls who are the patrons of the circulating library for the most part."[88] But as some prominent male librarians worried, the result of this "effeminized" state was "a distinct limitation of the efficiency of the library. The problem appears to be to find means to induce wage-earning men, craftsmen and workers in trades to patronize the library in the interests of their own advancement in position and culture."[89]

Despite their poor record with the nation's men, the War Library Service, as an operation of the ALA, was an important chance for American library to shine.[90] By its work with the Commission on Training Camp Activities, the ALA put its librarians in a position of unprecedented access to the minds of the nation's men. The troops would have novels and classic

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[86] "Libraries for Men," *The Independent, Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, History, Literature, and the Arts* 58, no. 2950 (June 15, 1905): 1374.

[87] "Women and Libraries," *Zion's Herald* 84, no. 24 (June 13, 1906), 739.

[88] "Telegrams, Library Books Utilized by Office Hose Shops," *Women's Wear Daily* 40, no. 92 (May 9, 1930), Section 2, 6.

[89] "Women and Libraries," *Zion's Herald* 84, no. 24 (June 13, 1906), 739.

[90] Arthur Young has made this argument about the role of the War Library Service in the ALA at large. See Young, *Books for Sammies,* 95.

works to keep them occupied and out of the bars and brothels; they would have encouraging, happy, “virile” stories to lift their spirits and make them effective fighters, even if injured or sick; and they would have educational and vocational training books to make them into productive providers. For the continuation of this last purpose, public libraries were already standing quietly in communities all over the country, even if they had gone unvisited by most of the men who ended up in the camps. Only the “connection between the man and the book” was lacking.[91]

What is Appropriate Material?

Outside of military censorship, which does not seem to have been the most predominant force controlling the content of libraries, a complex understanding of what was appropriate for men to read reigned in camp and hospital libraries. The appropriateness of library material—whether it should come to, or stay in, these libraries—was determined principally by its influence on morale, and on gendered expectations for both the present and future of soldiers’ activities and roles.

After their casual assertion that they had “discovered” the reading interests of men, the ALA briefly summarizes the provision of technical and military books by the Library War Service, before continuing:

> Now the thoughts of the men are turning to the home jobs, and the American Library Association desires to help the men get the books they need about those jobs, just as it helped them to get the books needed about the war jobs.This illustrated book makes a few suggestions of specific books on certain subjects—practical books written by practical men. All the books mentioned and scores of

[91] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, “To the Camp Librarian: Re: Hospital Libraries,” April 6, 1918, 1.

> others of the same practical character are available in the camp, hospital, public and college libraries of the country.[92]

A close reading of this paragraph of that section reveals several themes. First, the ALA assumes that “the thoughts of the men are turning to the home jobs.” This is not necessarily true about everyone reading “Your Job Back Home;” a circular letter to transport librarians in September 1917 instructed them to “push the copies” of the pamphlet, suggesting that the administration saw vocational books as the easiest, or perhaps most persuasive, gateway into regular library use for soldiers. “The pictures will interest the men and the message it contains is worth delivering to them,” headquarters wrote.[93] Soldiers in 1917 might be more than two years away from returning home, even if they could not have predicted how long the war would last. Even more important, they seem to have had their focus on whether they would “ever see” the excitement of active service, much more than they did on the work, novel or not, that they would resume in civilian life.[94]

Second is the rather unsubtle suggestion that the books the ALA can offer are “practical books written by practical men. All the books mentioned and scores of others of the same practical character are available.”[95] In case troops did not notice that the lists had practical value to their jobs both at war and at home, staff at headquarters thought they had better reiterate it, using the word “practical” three times in two sentences, and describing both the books and their

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[92] ALA, “Your Job Back Home,” 8.

[93] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "Instructions to Transport Librarians," September 27, [1917], 3.

[94] James Herbert Gibson, *Without Fear and with a Manly Heart: The Great War Letters and Diaries of Private James Herbert Gibson*, L. Iris Newbold and K. Bruce Newbold, eds. (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2019). Countless examples of this kind of record include incidences of troops hoping that they will eventually see action while stuck in long stays at camps or in transit.

[95] ALA, “Your Job Back Home,” 8.

authors, men to whom troops could presumably relate.[96] Furthermore, librarians, especially the female ones, were to "avoid the paternal attitude" that might accompany directly telling troops what they could and should read, but not only because it would appear condescending: men knew what was good for them, and they would seek it out themselves.[97]

Third, the orientation toward a future use of libraries outside the camp is clear in this passage. First, the implication that these soldiers should expect to return home to their old towns, schools, and libraries, is a step towards morale on its own; qualifying that expectation with the possibility that they might become permanently disabled or die would have sent a far different message. However, by informing men, who might never have gone to their public library, that it contained the same kinds of books as the camp library they had come to know and rely on, they also implicitly normalize and encourage lifelong library usage.

Curation by librarians affected a vastly greater range of books than the military could have known about, much less objected to. Still, inappropriate material was occasionally the subject of censorship.[98] "Certain books not suitable for the camp libraries are thrown out," the ALA assured the public in their publication *Soldiers, Sailors, and Books*, detailing censored pro-German, pacifist, and defeatist books.[99] "No book setting forth the undiluted horrors of war…

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[96] Ibid.

[97] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "Instructions to Transport Librarians," September 27, [1917], 3.

[98] Examples of books removed at the orders of the military were *A German Deserter's War Experience*, *Bolshiviki & World Peace*, and Ambrose Bierce's *Can Such Things Be?* See ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To the Camp Librarian or Supervisor," July 31, 1918.

[99] "Defeatism" refers to "behavior or attitudes indicating that one expects defeat or failure, or that one is ready to accept it;" according to the *OED*, the term was invented during World War I. See "defeatism, n," *OED Online,* Oxford University Press, https://www-oed-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/view/Entry/48747 (accessed December 17, 2019).

may be sent to a camp library."[100] This reason for the removal of certain books is the most well-studied; in discussions of information access and war, questions of direct, officially-mandated censorship is never far behind.[101] For the public, censorship of news reporting in World War I began immediately. Information about the failures of each of the national armies, major disasters like epidemic disease and food shortages, and pacifist activities was limited throughout the war.[102] The ALA was, as might be expected for a body of librarians, shy about War Department-directed censorship; notes like "Please do not give any publicity to this letter" are found on some circulars detailing volumes prohibited for military reasons.[103] However, censorship also occurred along less obviously military lines, such as the suppression of published jokes or cartoons about unfaithful wives, which might make soldiers untrusting or uneasy about their families at home.[104]

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[100] American Library Association, *Soldiers, Sailors, and Books: War Service of the American Library Association, 1918* (n.p., 1918), 7.

[101] See, for example, Eric Novotny, "From Inferno to Freedom: Censorship in the Chicago Public Library, 1910-1936," *Library Trends* 63, no. 1 (Summer 2014): 27-41. For broader history of censorship in the First World War, see Eberhard Demm, *Censorship and Propaganda in World War I: A Comprehensive History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019); Alan Axelrod, *Selling the Great War: The Making of American Propaganda* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); David Welch, *Germany and Propaganda in World War I: Pacifism, Mobilization, and Total War, London 1914* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2014); and Philippe Knightley, *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Kosovo* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2004).

[102] Eberhard Demm, "Censorship," in International Encyclopedia of the First World War, Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, eds.

[103] Librarians as a group have a cherished history of fighting censorship and ensuring equal access to information regardless of political circumstances, even at great danger. See Wallace Koehler, *Ethics and values in librarianship: a history* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015); Kate Adler, Ian Beilin, and Eamon Tewell, eds, *Reference Librarianship and Justice: History, Practice, and Praxis* (Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2018); and Colleen Alstad and Ann Curry, "Public Space, Public Discourse, and Public Libraries," *Libres* 13, no. 1 (March 2003): 1–19. ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To the Camp Librarian or Supervisor," July 31, 1918.

[104] "Jokes about the infidelity of wives was another thorny problem because many soldiers, absent from home for a long time, did not trust their spouses. Classical comedies by Eugène Labiche (1815-1888) and Georges Feydeau (1862-1921), and frivolous medieval chansons by François Villon (1431-1463) were therefore either suppressed or modified. Nevertheless, some jokes and cartoons could slip through." Eberhard Demm, "Censorship," in International Encyclopedia of the First World War, Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer, and Bill Nasson, eds.

This kind of censorship is more closely analogous to the kind of restrictions and emphases that influenced camp and hospital library collections much more ubiquitously, and which are not part of scholarly discussions of censorship per se.

They go on about books which are not illegal, but are obviously inappropriate:

> Other well meaning people have been careless in their selection of gifts of books. Soldiers do not want to read Ruskin's "Sesame and Lilies," the "Elsie Books," the *Undertaker's Review*, or the *Housewife* or *Home Needlework*. Soldiers are vigorous, red blooded men, not mollycoddles. People should not think of camp libraries as dumping grounds for literary trash. They should give good books or none at all.[105]

The ALA is quick here to characterize the books they reject as "literary trash," and to suggest that they remove donated materials from the collection because the books were in physically poor condition, or were categorically without merit, but both the reason they present for the rejections, and the collection of examples they offer, belie their motive. The overly specialized *Undertaker's Review* aside, the other two periodicals are meant for women, though presumably full of useful information. These are not then "literary trash," but rather inappropriate for the men to read, because soldiers are not (and will never be) housewives.

The "Elsie books," referring to the *Elsie Dinsmore* series, were popular and culturally influential over generations, so they should likewise fall outside that hasty designation.[106] But librarians assuring a camp environment fit for "red blooded men" were not allowing those men access to moralistic, sentimental books for little girls; they would run no risk of a camp full of

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[105] American Library Association, *Soldiers, Sailors, and Books: War Service of the American Library Association, 1918* (n.p., 1918), 7.

[106] See the extensive literature on the life of the *Elsie Dinsmore* book series, for example: LuElla D'Amico, "What would Elsie Do?: Educating Young Women About Moral and Academic Power in Martha Finley's Nineteenth-Century Elsie Dinsmore Series," *Children's Literature in Education*, May 5, 2018: 1–15.

"mollycoddles." Such books were not necessarily trash—they were an important part of the cultural landscape of Christian religious education, especially for girls, from the 1860s through this period—but they were all wrong for these men's development as soldiers and manly citizens.[107] With reading and libraries already coded as feminine, and librarians eager to convince men otherwise, removing children's books intended for girls from a batch of donations would always have been an intentional step by library staff, not a simple matter of housecleaning.

Sentimental material was not always purged, however, depending on its subject and the effect it was perceived to have on troops. Some cases follow the example of *Elsie Dinsmore*; for instance, in July 1920, a request was placed for a romance novel called *Pink Gods & Blue Demons*, by Cynthia Stockley. A memo sent to the librarian at Fort Stanton listed it as omitted from the order, alongside books not yet published or out of print, for the following reason: "We cannot find any reference to this book in our various book reviews, and the author is hardly one to be included in our recommended lists." No alternatives were provided, and no reason was stated to be passed along to the soldier who, we must imagine, had wished to immerse himself in the romantic landscape of the Rhodesian diamond mines.[108] Oddly enough, however, as long as the author was male, or the story seemed sufficiently robust and muscular, many books stayed available. "All soldiers read love stories and some read nothing else," the ALA writes. Listing a number of "favorite" authors, they continue, "[these authors] tell stories in vivid, virile fashion. They buck a man up. The more of this kind of fiction that goes into camp the better. Avoid sending novels that have unhappy endings…Keep them smiling, is the thought we have to hold

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[107] D'Amico, "What would Elsie Do," 2.

[108] ALA Archives, 89/1/15 box 2, Memorandum, August 4, "Report on list of 25 titles"

towards our men."[109] One might say that denying their requests for romance novels was not the obvious way to "keep them smiling," but there were limits, and the stakes for soldiers' manliness were high.[110]

Books for Healing

A whole separate set of criteria arose for books used in hospitals, as sick or injured men were understood to have substantially different needs from their vital, battle-ready counterparts. Sometimes, appropriateness for this group came in the physical format. As the ALA tells the story, Rudyard Kipling suggested that special scrapbooks be created for sending to military hospitals. "In many places groups have been organized for the sole purpose of making, under local library direction, hospital scrap books." They go on to describe these volumes, which are more distinctive physically than in any other way, but have broad appeal nonetheless. They

> weigh about one ounce, for very sick men cannot handle a heavier book. The best of these booklets are made up along special lines, some humor, some adventure, sea stories, gardening, inventions, mechanics, electricity, some pictures. 'All classes of men enjoy these scrap books,' writes a supervisor of hospital libraries, 'surgeons, nurses, patients, even the nervous and mentally affected.[111]

This is important evidence that the question, of whether a particular book could help a man heal, was on the minds of people both inside and outside the library system. It would comfort the scrapbook-makers to know that "the nurses often help the men select books, as they know individual needs. They take care that the nervous patient does not get too exciting a book, and

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[109] ALA, *Soldiers, Sailors, and Books*, 9.

[110] See Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man*, 203–215, for discussion of how even fictional stories with sentiment and romance in their plots could easily reflect masculine ideals.

[111] ALA, *Soldiers, Sailors, and Books: War Service of the American Library Association* (n.p., 1918), 18.

that the men with weak eyes do not read too much. The nurses also help the librarian in her understanding of the men and their needs."[112] If reading could be harmful, whether psychologically or physically, then it was crucial that only the right kind of healing material reached patients.

Other times, the disqualifying feature of a book was not in its format but its plot. Hospital librarians did not simply supply whatever men asked for, out of some kind of motherly concern for their sick charges. In the spring of 1920, a patient at the Public Health Service Hospital in Norfolk, Virginia requested books in the "Gypsy Series," by E.S. Phelps, with the request passed through a Red Cross worker. The librarian there received a curt letter from ALA headquarters: "The book department reports they [Phelps' series] are decidedly 'mushy' books for girls and doubts the need for them in a Public Health Service Hospital. Will you please take up the matter with the Red Cross Director and find out why she wanted them and whether her request seems reasonable?"[113] Even a man lying ill or injured in a hospital, it seems, could not have the books he remembered from his childhood Sunday School if they would not "buck him up."

A librarian at Fort Stanton, Miss Hopkins, issued one memo revoking an order because of an entirely different kind of impropriety. "I came across a criticism," she wrote, "of the following book ordered for the U.S.P.H., Fort Stanton, New Mex. which prompted me to withdraw the order card…Though it was recommended in our reviews, I am sure it is not at all the kind of

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[112] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/5, box 5, "Library Service in a Base Hospital," Ola M. Wyeth, Camp Wadsworth, S.C., n.d, 2.

[113] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/15, box 2, correspondence from Caroline Webster to Miss Mary Pretlow, April 6, 1920.

book for hospital readers."[114] The book? *The Crescent Moon*, by Francis Brett Young. A novel, *The Crescent Moon* met the ALA criteria for literary quality, and may have even made it into camp libraries.[115] Fort Stanton, however, was home to a Tuberculosis hospital, and despite the fact that books were "badly wanted" there, Young's book is not a happy, romantic story.[116] It ends with the principal couple stranded in an unknown part of Africa, where they know that the hero will soon be a prisoner, and though "a white woman is safe anywhere in Africa with white men," his love is unwell and must find her way alone.[117] The narrator concludes, "for this unimaginable parting I have no words; for, as you may guess, they never met again."[118] Miss Hopkins seems to have considered that this kind of book was more likely to put TB patients in a state of fear and despair, than it was to inspire them to health and a return to their duty. In that case, the Medical Officer in Temporary Charge sent a thank-you letter to ALA headquarters stating that "I extend my hearty appreciation and thanks, especially for your desire to furnish standard books of high moral standing." He was too busy to notice the details of every piece of correspondence coming through his office, he explained.[119] It is all but implied that the careful guidance of a woman at the ALA is what saved the moral well-being of his patients.

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[114] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/15, box 2, Memorandum from Miss Hopkins to Miss Webster, August 5, 1920.

[115] A contemporary review characterizes the book as "mystically suggestive of its night and twilight atmospheres," and describes its subject: "German and British colonial methods,…native uprisings, and… English country heroines;" see G. H. C. *The Sewanee Review* 30, no. 2 (1922): 252.

[116] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/5, box 5, correspondence from E. Kathleen Jones to Caroline Webster, November 30, 1918, 3.

[117] Francis Brett Young, *The Crescent Moon* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1918), 273.

[118] Ibid., 274.

[119] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/15, box 2, correspondence from F.A. Ashford to Caroline Webster, August 10, 1920.

Making Libraries Relevant

"It is the popular idea that the men in camps and hospitals read chiefly for recreation," began one hospital librarian in an account of the service offered at Camp Wadsworth, South Carolina. "True, they do crave stories of adventure, especially exciting Western stories; but a surprising amount of serious reading and study is done." Given that the CTCA was established primarily with the "down time" of camp life in mind—the time when soldiers' tendencies toward alcohol and untoward sex might be indulged—it is not obvious that material for "serious reading and study" would be part of the libraries' mandate. This is especially the case in a hospital environment, where the library patrons are limited by illness or injury. However, there is a strong sense throughout this kind of document that the librarians did not want men to leave the camp environment and then never touch another book. They wanted men to have a concept of libraries that encompassed the practical, the intellectual, the recreational, and the emotional.

An ideally relevant library would also engage in preparing the new political order. Important changes were happening, both in America and abroad, as American troops back to civilian life. For example, the League of Nations, the post-WWI international organization that pre-existed the United Nations, was forming as demobilization got underway. Anything the ALA could do to expand men's understanding of the changed world, seemed a worthy use of resources. Camp librarians were also sent a shipment of books from the "Missionary Educational Movement Library on the Negro," which included Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery* as well as six other prominent books, alongside bulletins of the proposed constitution of the League of Nations.[120] This was never the sole goal, however; in the same shipment came the "General

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[120] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To the Camp Librarians:," March 28, 1919.

catalog of sport goods" from Abercrombie & Fitch Company, an outfitter.[121] Nevertheless, men who were knowledgeable about and comfortable with the new organization of national and world power, and who could trace that knowledge back to a library that had filled the need of the moment, would be more likely to come to the library again when conflict or social change upended their worlds again. They would see libraries as educational resources that were accessible, current, and capable of adapting, not a well-catalogued roomful of "playthings for women."[122]

Reaching Men in Civilian Life

When an exhibit was planned for the ALA Conference of Library War Service work, the ALA headquarters at the Library of Congress requested materials representing "unique local practice of any kind," as well as "records of questions asked," and "general orders from the Commanding Officer re the Library" for the exhibit.[123] This implies that the ALA did not perhaps know the full extent of the local variation in how the dozens of camp or hospital libraries were running, and the range of needs they were being called upon to fill. This many libraries, functioning on the same general template and with a fair degree of similarity in their populations and contexts, could serve as a valuable natural experiment for headquarters to gather information about these variations. Since the camps each housed men primarily from one region of the

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[121] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To the Camp Librarians:," March 28, 1919. The history of Abercrombie and Fitch was a place I did not expect my thesis research to lead, as I knew the company to be the preferred clothing store of some of my middle-school classmates. A&F supplied the approved high-necked blouses that ALA librarians wore—though most twelve-year-old girls of today would likely shudder at them. More details about the company's history as a sporting outfitter are available in the *International Directory of Company Histories* for all who care to follow my rabbit-hole.

[122] "Libraries for Men," *The Independent*, 1374.

[123] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To: A.L.A Representatives/Subject: Library War Service Exhibit," May 19, 1919.

United States, this was also a chance to learn about the needs of male readers in different parts of the country. The ALA had the goal at this time of eventually establishing many new libraries, mostly in the South and the Southwest, in communities that lacked public library facilities, and leftover books and resources from the War Library Service would provide a starting point.[124] Thus a source of new data about how those previously underserved populations could and would use libraries was essential to their future expansion, which was clearly a goal; one librarian remarked in a letter to the director of hospital libraries that "Well, this little old war has put the A.L.A. on the map, anyway, even if we haven't done so much as we wanted to."[125]

That hope, to take remaining books and establish more libraries, reflected their principal underlying belief: that the nation would be better off with more libraries, more reading and books, and more interactions with the thoughtful librarians that brought books and citizens together. To that end, libraries in the camps and hospitals were also there because the ALA (as well as the other civilian organizations which were active under the CTCA) saw the time drafted men spent in the camps as a valuable and unique moment of access to influence over their activities. In other words, the inherent good in books and libraries—the education they could provide, the moral lessons they could teach, and the cultural values and practices they could present and normalize—could spread further during war than any ordinary time. "We'll put it up

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[124] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, untitled, April 1919. "If books remain after those needs [of the War and Navy departments, which hoped to continue library service to both the Army and Navy] have been met, it is very possible, in fact probable, that the Committee will consider favorably placing the books in certain communities not possessing libraries or library facilities, especially communities in the South and South-West, these being portions of the country which have the fewest libraries." For a study of the effort to increase library access in the South, see David M. Battles, *The History of Public Library Access for African Americans in the South: Or, Leaving Behind the Plow* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009).

[125] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/5, box 5, correspondence from E. Kathleen Jones to Caroline Webster, November 30, 1918, 3.

as a safe guess that the average man has done more general reading since he has been in the army than he ever did in a like period of time before in his life," began a newsletter column in 1919. "Now, Buddy, don't start in about that year you reviewed the 5th grade—we said 'general reading,' the kind you do without being persuaded. The kind that does you the most good, let's say."[126] A report from a visit to a hospital library also clearly demonstrates the goal of eventually educating men (in this case, mostly tuberculosis sufferers) by their exposure to libraries during wartime:

> While recreational reading is the greatest immediate need of the patients, the librarian would also be able to work with the vocational director organizing classes…With the stimulus furnished by the classes and by directed reading, some of the more ambitious men may be influenced to take advantage of the educational opportunities offered by the government on their discharge as arrested cases.[127]

Thousands of men had their reading habits and tastes created, adjusted, and manipulated by their wartime library usage. The ALA could thus gather valuable information to align existing public libraries with the reading needs of a population they desperately wanted to reach. Having taught men which books were manly, they could now confidently await greater patronage, as long as they kept bringing in the books that the men wanted to continue reading at home. "You want to see it, Bill, that your Smithville Public Library has beaucoup Tarzans and Zane Grey

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[126] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "Conversation Centers on Home and Camp Libraries: Willie Avers as How the Home Burg Librarian Will Have to Step to Beat A.L.A.," undated [1919, sent enclosed in circular letter "To the A.L.A. Representative," September 19, 1919].

[127] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/15, box 2, report of August 19–30, 1919 visit to Fort Stanton by Fannie Cox, 2.

books," that same column finished, referencing popular "manly" adventure stories of the war and the following decade.[128]

The Library War Service also pursued an aggressive outreach effort to men who had already returned to the civilian world, but who were in hospitals rather than back at home. "We have been told that, as a result of injuries received while in the service, you are at present in the hospital under treatment," ALA Hospital Libraries officials wrote in a 1919 form letter to patients. "Perhaps you find the days a little long and often wish for something to make the time pass more quickly." The letter goes on to remind the recipient about the library war service, and then to reassure him that

> we are just as anxious that you be supplied with reading matter now… this service will be continued as long as you are in the hospital. When you leave, your Public Library would be glad to help you. If you happen to be in a community where there is no public library, write to the American Library Association, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.[129]

There are several aspects of this letter that do not make practical sense. For example, if many hospitals already had libraries, and communities had public libraries, it would be admittedly inefficient for the ALA Headquarters, still under the burden of transporting books and staff during demobilization, to fulfill personal book requests for men scattered through dozens of different cities. If read through the lens of a need to maintain the presence of the ALA and libraries more broadly as relevant and easily-accessed institutions, however, the strategy behind

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[128] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "Conversation Centers on Home and Camp Libraries: Willie Avers as How the Home Burg Librarian Will Have to Step to Beat A.L.A.," undated [1919, sent enclosed in circular letter "To the A.L.A. Representative," September 19, 1919]. On the cultural significance of *Tarzan* as a story of white masculinity, see John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), PAGES.

[129] ALA Archives, Digitized documents: Letters, 1919, form letter ("We have been told that, as a result of injuries received…"), 7.

this kind of effort is revealed. Furthermore, veterans who had seen their time in the war (and perhaps their jobs and hobbies after its end) shaped by library usage could be powerful advocates for the expansion of library services postwar.

Chapter 3: Librarians, Nurses, and the Work of "Taking Care Of"

It is a cold January morning in Camp Gordon, Georgia, in 1919. Miss Louise McMillan, who has left a job as a staff librarian in a public library in her small midwestern hometown, awakens and takes her uniform off its hanger. On goes the sport blouse, and the standard natural-color dress that headquarters had made to Miss McMillan's measurements from $10 worth of pongee. She puts on her brown cotton stockings and her oxfords, and as she ties their laces, she is momentarily glad—as every morning—that unlike her general camp counterparts, as a hospital librarian, she is spared heels. Off the bureau she takes her brown Windsor tie, and fastens it around her double collar, before buttoning her belt and the cuffs of her long sleeves. Quickly making the bed, she takes the photograph of her younger brother, who faces an unknown fate in France, out from under her pillow and slips it into her dress pocket, buttoning it in securely and feeling its stiff fold in her even stiffer skirt.[130]

The whole Red Cross House is slowly coming to life, with the night-time nurses returning for a meal and bed, and most of the rest awakening and dressing just like Miss McMillan. She puts on her sweater and goes to the large but still-empty recreation room, where she knows a large fireplace will be breaking the January chill. As she has gotten up earlier than usual, she sits down at the piano and plays for a few minutes, enjoying a bit of solitude before a busy day in the wards.[131]

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[130] Specific details of uniforms, including colors, materials, and instructions to different kinds of staff, are drawn from archival sources. See ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "Hospital Information Circular: Uniforms," June 10, 1918.

[131] Miss Louise McMillan really was the hospital librarian at the camp in Camp Gordon, Georgia, in the winter of 1919, and she really did live in the Red Cross house alongside the nursing staff at the camp. I have imagined what her life details might have been like. ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/5, box 5, "Addresses for Hospital Librarians," n.d. [January 1919], 1. Description of Red Cross House from *Manual of Red Cross Camp Service*, 1919, accessed in *Medical Services and Warfare* database, 42–44.

Miss McMillan is just one of the long list of hospital librarians that worked under American Library Association directions throughout the war. Like many of her counterparts at other camps, she lived in a Red Cross House. Others lived either in a military Nurses' Quarters building, or in a "convalescent house," another Red Cross building which housed mostly patients and their visiting family but also some female camp staff.[132] Most of the hospital librarians and camp library assistants were young women, and thus it made much more sense for them to reside among all the other women, than it did to conjure appropriate quarters for them elsewhere out of the overwhelmingly male camp environment. This relatively convenient situation could be seriously disrupted in hospitals that stood apart from camps. In one case, a hospital needed a resident librarian, and the Medical Officer in Charge wrote directly to the Assistant Director of the ALA to make the request. However, in his letter, he stated that "there are no quarters available, or likely to be available, for a woman, but quarters for a man could be arranged at any time."[133] In another case, an officer's wife was forced to board a librarian, despite the discomfiting situation for all involved.[134] Even when the ALA was aware of the need for a librarian, they would not compromise the morality of their staff with an unacceptable housing arrangement, patients' education and rehabilitation needs notwithstanding.

Nominally, while she lived in the Red Cross building, a librarian surrendered a certain degree of oversight over her "personal and social relations" to Red Cross authority; as the

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[132] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/5, box 5, "Addresses for Hospital Librarians," n.d. [January 1919], 1.

[133] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/15, box 2, correspondence from R.L. Allen to Ola M. Wyeth, November 20, 1919.

[134] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/15, box 2, correspondence from Julia C. Stockett to Caroline Webster, April 10, 1920.

Library War Service stated to its staff as early as their second circular letter in July 1918, "it is felt that for the best interests of the Librarians themselves and to secure a united and orderly conduct of the Red Cross house, all its occupants should be subject to one central authority."[135] Much of how Miss McMillan could conduct her personal life, then, would be similar to the nurses next to whose bedrooms she found hers; they were a workforce of largely young, middle-class, white women; they had access to the same food, visiting hours, and rules. They also had the same entertainment options, the piano above being only one—each recreation room was also dictated in the *Manual of Red Cross Camp Service* to contain a victrola, plus a small library of its own, as a matter of standard issue.[136] Most important, the cultural values that guided their upbringings, and led them—as opposed to their brothers, for example—into the fields of nursing and librarianship in the first place, are substantially similar.

It is interesting to note that both wore uniforms in their roles in the camps, and some scholars insist that women working in military settings wanted to wear uniforms, of their own accord.[137] Uniforms, they argue, had been used to distinguish Florence Nightingale's middle-class nurses from "camp followers" known to the British armed forces before and into the

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[135] *Manual of Red Cross Camp Service*, 1919, accessed in *Medical Services and Warfare* database, 134–135.

[136] Ibid., 42-43. Nursing became dominated by white women from middle-class backgrounds around the same time as it professionalized, and came to be seen as a specifically "scientific" profession; Patricia D'Antonio, *American Nursing: A History of Knowledge, Authority, and the Meaning of Work* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 24.

[137] Margaret Vining and Barton C. Hacker, "From Camp Follower to Lady in Uniform: Woman, Social Class, and Military Institutions before 1920," *Contemporary European History* 10, no. 3 (November 2001), 353–54. For additional history of women and uniforms, see Elizabeth Ewing, *Women in Uniform* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1975); and Valerie Steele, "Dressing for Work," in *Men and Women: Dressing the Part*, Claudia Brush Kidwell and Valerie Steele, eds., (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989). Vining and Hacker list the American Library Association in their appendix list of WWI uniforms held at the National Museum of American History, which featured in a 1929 exhibition by the Colonial Dames of America. In the text of the article, however, they are generally referring to nurses as examples, as well as more general volunteers such as Red Cross workers.

Crimean War. Furthermore, the nationalistic and even literally militaristic character of many voluntary organizations created in the second half of the nineteenth century, such as the Red Cross, the United States Sanitary Commission, and the Women's Relief Corps, made uniforms seem like a natural part of life in service.[138]

Despite the similarities in how and where nurses and librarians lived during the war, not to mention how they looked, the archives tell a story of their work lives that is entirely different in a crucial way. Unlike nurses, who largely experienced military authority as one more layer in the already-complex hierarchy under which they ordinarily worked, the mostly female librarians who staffed the camp and hospital libraries during wartime saw their work lives change dramatically from home. In this chapter, I argue that as librarians became more proximate to their nursing counterparts, in their lives, their work settings, and orientation as caregivers, they gained the ability and autonomy to take on intellectual and ideological work they could not so readily influence at home.

How did Miss Louise become a librarian?

The overwhelmingly female workforce in both nursing and librarianship was not a matter of chance. The period at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth represents three important sequences of events. First, nursing was professionalizing, moving into hospitals and out of homes, and gaining prestige and middle-class status.[139] Second, librarianship

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[138] Vining and Hacker, "From Camp Follower to Lady in Uniform," 354–358.

[139] See Susan Reverby, *Ordered to Care: The Dilemma of American Nursing, 1850–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Martha Mathews Libster, "Spiritual formation, secularization, and reform of professional nursing and education in antebellum America," *Journal of Professional Nursing* 34, no. 1 (2018): 47–53; Patricia O'Brien D'Antonio, "Historiographic Essay: The Legacy of Domesticity: Nursing in Early Nineteenth-Century America," *Nursing History Review* 1, no. 1 (1993): 229–246;

was professionalizing (the ALA was established in 1876), branch libraries were being built rapidly to accommodate growing urban populations, and women were taking on the majority of library work, as well as administration for the first time.[140] Third, those who would be young women and workers in WWI were being born, brought up, and educated, by mothers who saw an entirely different twentieth-century future for their daughters than their own mothers had seen for them.

As it happened, the training process for both nursing and librarianship placed new nurses and librarians inside a hierarchy that would closely match the workplaces they could expect to enter. In contrast to today's university-based baccalaureate nursing education programs, early nursing schools were run inside hospitals, and from the beginning, the students formed the majority of the labor force for those hospitals. There, they were at the bottom of a chain of command that had more highly trained women immediately above them, and male physicians above those. Even once they had finished their training, they would find themselves subject to authority from others, and often from men, most of the time. Furthermore, nursing work at this time was far closer to domestic service work, with plenty of changing beds, cleaning wards, bathing patients, restocking supplies, and other tasks that today have been transferred down the hierarchy to lesser-trained staff like nursing assistants and even volunteers.[141]

These similarities, among other aspects of nursing work, lead one scholar to note that the "good nurse" and the "good woman" were essentially identical in the characteristics asked of

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[140] Digital Public Library of America, "A History of U.S. Public Libraries," Online Exhibition, https://dp.la/exhibitions/history-us-public-libraries/community-services

[141] D'Antonio, *American Nursing*, 25; Reverby, *Ordered to Care*; Tom Olson and Eileen Walsh, *Handling the Sick: The Women of St. Luke's and the Nature of Nursing, 1892–1937* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004), 109.

them. She aligns the authority of male doctors over female nurses with the authority of male heads of households over female family members, and draws out the similarities between the domestic labor assigned to nursing as a profession, with the categories of work expected of women in the home.[142] Other scholars make a similar argument, adding that nurses have been understood as taking over care otherwise performed by mothers, who might be overly compassionate or ineffective, and explaining how in some cases women moved back and forth between paid nursing work outside the home, and unpaid work within the domestic context.[143]

It requires only a small logical jump to see how the "good librarian" would be similar. Though there were no bedpans or laundry changes, library work, especially for those who were public-facing staff rather than head administrators, has certain similarities to managing a hospital ward or a household. Mundane, repetitive tasks, which need to be constantly re-done and maintained, would take up the majority of a librarian's time, such as checking books in and out, labeling them, and shelving and re-shelving them. A cheerful, ready response would be needed to any request, no matter how large or small. Furthermore, much like early nursing schools, most early library schools were subsections of working libraries, not graduate programs operating within universities. Those faculty who worked teaching library students, the analogues to the

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[142] Eva Gamarnikow, "Sexual division of labour: the case of nursing," in *Feminism and Materialism*, edited by Annette Kuhn and AnnMarie Wolpe (London: Routledge, 1978), 96–123. This essay explores the division of labor in medial institutions by gender, with the important valence of class, between the beginning of Nightingale's training efforts and the 1920s, when nurses' professional associations and such were fairly firmly established. It is significant in its particular feminist critique of the ways nurses were subordinate to physicians, and how the moral characteristics of a good nurse positioned the role. It is especially useful to this project in its analysis of the limits imposed on training of nurses, and whose benefit those limits were meant to serve.

[143] D'Antonio, *American Nursing*, 44, 81.

trained nurses teaching and managing students on ward work, would be largely women as well, but again as in the hospitals, directors and heads of these schools were almost all men.[144]

These norms did their job, and the gendered hierarchies seem to have remained in place, at least until a decade before the American entry into World War I: the vast majority of librarians in the United States were women. According to one 1907 article reprinted in the *Library Journal*, when the Census Bureau made a study of the jobs held by women at the turn of the century, 3,122 out of a total of 4,184 "librarians and assistants" in the country were women. The article goes on to articulate that the true case is even more disparate than the raw numbers make apparent: "Of the more than three thousand women so employed it is probably that nearly all perform work which really affects the service of the library...of the one thousand persons of the male sex enumerated by the census, many are chief librarians, a comparative few are principal assistants, or heads of departments, while no inconsiderable number are pages, so the real disproportion is doubtless greater."[145] In other words, the librarians that people knew—those doing public-facing, direct-service library work rather than holding administrative positions or other behind-the-scenes management—were close to all female. However, those librarians worked each day under the direction of department heads and chief librarians, who would have held authority to make the more substantial decisions about how the library functioned, and who were close to all male.

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[144] Digital Public Library of America, "A History of U.S. Public Libraries," Online Exhibition, https://dp.la/exhibitions/history-us-public-libraries/profession-women/library-schools.

[145] "Women in Libraries," *Library Journal* 32, no. 11 (1907), 504. A scan of the original census document the article references is available in the Census Bureau archives online at https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1900/occupations/occupations-part-2.pdf. Unfortunately, the Bureau did not separate librarians and library assistants out as a category in any reports available from the 1910 and 1920 census, so no data nearer to the exact year of the war is available.

Unlike in nursing, where primary sources from Nightingale forward are dotted with references to the perfect, womanly instinct for nursing care, this article does not hold these mostly women librarians in special esteem purely on the basis of gender.[146] The author notes that these better-known librarians are the ones who "appear in the public rooms of the building and to the great part of its patrons, establish the reputation of its management for intelligence, literary information and courtesy, or their opposites."[147] Furthermore, to the audience of the *Library Journal*, they conclude, "not a few persons will consider that the weight of feminine influence in American libraries is largely that of numbers alone—that the ratio of three to one is more numerical than real, and that ability and achievement are and have been the basis of authority without regard to questions of sex."[148] But this ambivalence about the importance of gender seems to have been practically a tradition. A generation earlier, in an address titled "Librarianship as a Profession for College-Bred Women," to the Association of Collegiate Alumnae in 1886, A.M. Melvil Dewey, the founder of the first library school in the country, had mostly used the pronoun "he" to refer to a librarian in the abstract. Every so often, however, he slips: "The librarian is in hourly contact with <u>her</u> constituency of readers, advising, helping, and elevating their lives and exerting a far-reaching influence for good not to be exceeded in any

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[146] For example, see Estelle Hall Speakman, "Womanliness in Nursing," *American Journal of Nursing* 3, no. 3 (December 1902), 181; Florence Nightingale, *Notes on Nursing: What it is and What it is Not & Notes on Nursing for the Labouring Classes*, Victor Skretkowicz, ed., (New York: Springer, [1860] 2010), 49. For a more complete exploration of this idea, see Jennifer Joann Fenne, "Every Woman is a Nurse," PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2000.

[147] "Women in Libraries," *Library Journal* 32, no. 11 (1907), 504. Emphasis mine

[148] "Women in Libraries," *Library Journal* 32, no. 11 (1907), 504.

profession open to women or to men."[149] That he could not help but imagine a woman doing the "hourly contact" work had its basis in the real library workforce, both as it was beginning to exist, and even more as it would solidify over the next few decades.

We have no reason to suspect that Dewey drew parallels himself between libraries and hospitals, or between librarians and nurses, or could have imagined a Miss Louise McMillan living and working in Red Cross-funded facilities alongside her nurse friends in a military camp in Georgia. But certain passages Dewey used to describe the ideals of library work could be substituted easily into a contemporaneous text on nursing a hospital ward, especially at a moment when middle- and upper-class women saw themselves, by professional energy and feminine instinct for propriety, bringing spaces like wards and libraries out of their dark ages of dirt and disorganization.[150] For example, Dewey asks his listeners to picture:

> the library as it should be and in many cases will be...the building and rooms attractive, bright and thoroughly ventilated, lighted and warmed, and finished and fitted; to meet as fully as possible all reasonable demands of its readers; the books all within reach, clean and in repair…in charge of librarians as pleased to see a reader come to ask for books or assistance as a merchant to welcome a new customer; anxious to give as far as possible to each applicant at each visit that book which will then, and to him, be most helpful.[151]

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[149] A.M. Melvil Dewey, "Librarianship as a Profession for College-Bred Women," (Boston: Library Bureau, 1886), 18. Emphasis is mine. This is the same "Dewey" for which the Dewey Decimal System is named, although the American Library Association has recently moved to strip Dewey's name from their top leadership medal because of his record of racism, sexual misconduct, and anti-Semitism. Find the ALA resolution at http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/governance/council/council_documents/2019_ac_docs/ALA%20CD%2050%20Resolution%20on%20Renaming%20the%20Melvil%20Dewey%20Medal.pdf

[150] Susan Reverby, *Ordered to Care: The Dilemma of American Nursing, 1850–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Charles Rosenberg, "Recent Developments in the History of Nursing," *Sociology of Health and Illness* 4, no. 1 (March 1982); and Celia Davies, ed., *Rewriting Nursing History* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble Books, 1980).

[151] Dewey, "Librarianship as a Profession," 11.

This hearkens easily to the calls that hospital wards dispense with their associations with the "Mrs. Gamp" figures, that lower-class, slovenly, untrained nurse of Dickens' *Martin Chuzzlewit* who served as a common allusion in this time. Indeed, both the social class and the environment Mrs. Gamp implied were objectionable. Clean spaces, and specifically well-ventilated and well-lit ones, carried an association with health that included, but went beyond, infection control.[152] Furthermore, the expectation for solicitude, with the requirement that a librarian be "anxious" to be "helpful," was held for nurses as well as for librarians.[153]

Librarians' Hospital Work

There is ample evidence, then, that the girls who would grow up to become nurses and librarians were brought up in a culture that saw these, among a fairly few options, as well-suited roles for those with their gender-determined gifts and abilities.[154] Furthermore, hospital and library work were changing, throughout their youth and young adulthood, to include middle-class women of their age and upbringing as an intentional matter; to bring those who would have an improving influence on patients and patrons alike into spaces where their qualities, of "truthfulness and love which is infinite in its tenderness," as well as their "beautiful common-

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[152] Charles Rosenberg, *The Care of Strangers: The Rise of America's Hospital System* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 122–141; D'Antonio, *American Nursing*, 46–49.

[153] See, for example, Josiah Oldfield, "The Nurse of the Future," *Westminster Review* 164, no. 6 (December 1905): 655–662.

[154] For an important study of young women's education in early 20th century America, see Karen Graves, *Girls' Schooling during the Progressive Era* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998). This book focuses on the development of different high school curricula for different populations of students, between 1870 and around 1920. It focuses on St. Louis, but its lessons are broadly applicable as they concern the "domesticated citizen," or the young woman correctly educated for the role her sex would play. A related work on the development of European mothers is Rebecca Rogers, *From the Salon to the Schoolroom: Educating Bourgeois Girls in Nineteenth-Century France* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005).

sense which does the drudgery of life in a spirit of uncriticizing helpfulness," could serve to their fullest.[155]

Some of the most striking archival evidence to be found on the War Library Service came not when the ALA was telling librarians what work they should be doing, but rather what they should not. To be sure, the range of tasks expected of the librarians that worked in hospitals and camps was impressive and time-consuming. Visiting wards, arranging for volunteers and collaborations with the other civilian organizations present, preparing book-lists, recommending books, and in some cases even making parts of their own uniforms, occupied ALA representative staff, and the circular letters indicate that headquarters was never shy about suggesting additional work to be done.[156] However, they are equally clear about what was beneath librarians' professional status, outside the reasonable expectations for their wartime self-sacrifice, and beyond (or below) their scope of responsibility.

Librarians sent by the ALA were there to fill a specific need, not necessarily to be expansively involved in everything the camp or its command did. For one, their mandate to acquire needed materials did not even extend to requisitioning medical reference books for the physicians, as those were provided by the Surgeon General's office, on the request of the commanding medical officer at any given base.[157] Librarians were also not obligated to publicize the ALA's efforts as such, though they did work to publicize library services, within a particular hospital or convalescent house, for example, to the fullest possible extent. In a telling instance, a

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[155] Estelle Hall Speakman, "Womanliness in Nursing," *American Journal of Nursing* 3, no. 3 (December 1902), 181.

[156] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, volume I.

[157] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To the Camp Librarian: Re: Hospital Libraries," April 6, 1918, 2.

circular letter from Herbert Putnam, General Director of the Library War Service, directed librarians that "if the wording of the [vocational] booklists and the style of the annotations suit you, publish them as they are, as your own release, without giving credit to Headquarters."[158] Perhaps he knew librarians as a type well enough to suspect they would be overly fastidious about attribution, or perhaps he was simply overriding usual norms for the wartime situation. Either way, he was not so interested in the image of the ALA, as much as in ensuring fullest possible usage of the Service. "Please make every use you can of the camp paper to further the campaign," he added; one imaginable symptom of that uniquely feminine "uncriticizing helpfulness" is not being sufficiently forceful in advocating for inclusion in this almost entirely male-run publication.[159]

Most crucially to the comparison with nurses, was a direction that hospital librarians, unlike their civilian library staff counterparts, were not to while away their days on the vast quantity of menial labor required in preparing and maintaining library materials. "The hospital librarian should spend practically none of her time on the work of cataloging, pasting labels, etc," one memo specifies.[160] In other words, the opportunity cost of wasting their presence was far too significant for them to do that work.

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[158] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To the Camp Librarian," November 26, 1918, 3.

[159] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To the Camp Librarian," November 26, 1918, 3. See, on the papers mentioned, Maj. A.G. Crane, S.C., *Physical Reconstruction and Vocational Education, The Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War, Volume I, Part 1* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1927), 226–28. https://history.amedd.army.mil/booksdocs/wwi/VolXIII/Ch09Pt1rev.htm. These papers were massive and often actually profitable enterprises, which were thought to contribute to morale, teach soldiers publication and other vocational skills, and send information to relatives and friends. They operated under the Army Surgeon General's office, and included content written by that office, for the sake of consistency.

[160] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To the Camp Librarian: Re: Hospital Libraries," April 6, 1918, 1.

This is an extremely important difference. This group, of mostly women librarians, was coming into war library work largely out of ordinary library jobs throughout the United States. As the Census data showed a few years earlier, the vast majority of these women would have been previously working in subordinate staff roles, not administrative positions. That is, at home, they spent their time doing exactly the tasks that the ALA was now telling them they were not to do. In essence, these women made significant gains in the status of their work, simply by moving into military hospitals rather than public libraries.

Understanding the significance of this leap means asking what work they did instead. To be sure, they were not clearly taking up the positions of directorship that their male colleagues held at home. Indeed, it seems from the documentary evidence that those jobs are not even likely to have existed, as the staffs of camp libraries were too small, and the resources that the ALA could provide were stretched too thin to accommodate much administrative apparatus. The exception here is the position of Camp Librarian, which was almost always held by a male librarian, but evidence suggests that direct supervisory relationship that these people held was much looser than that which most staff were used to.[161] Furthermore, headquarters had even

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[161] See Young, *Books for Sammies*, 32–33. Recall, from Chapter 1, the comparison of a camp to a reasonably-sized town; in a public library, there might be several administrators even at an individual branch, who would interact with any given lower-level staff member daily. This could not be the case for a hospital librarian, who would be working in a physically separate location and who would have her orders understood to be rubber-stamped by the camp librarian. For additional evidence toward this case, see ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "Hospital Library Circular, No. 2 (Superseding Circular No. 1)," July 1, 1918, which notes that the Medical Officer did not hold authority over the books brought in, as "any request for books or supplies sent in directly by the hospital librarian <u>will be understood by Headquarters to have had the approval of the camp librarian.</u>" In other words, the camp librarian, who held authority from the ALA over the hospital librarian, controlled book orders, but the Medical Officer, who held authority from the War Department, controlled access to patients, and could theoretically have denied the librarians ward access. The emphasis is in the original here; I have found no documentary evidence that this became a problem for librarians, such as notes of revocation of ward access or letters about restrictions, except in the case of isolation wards. These have special provisions, but remain under the care of the librarians.

indicated that “in all points of service, the hospital library should be carried on with the least red tape.”[162]

Descriptions of the work they were to do show a very different picture from the job descriptions these women were likely used to, though those outside the world of libraries might not have understood exactly how. A hospital librarian’s work, per the ALA, “is to make the connection between the man and the book; it is for her to reach the man with the book that is needed; and in doing this, she must visit the wards, carrying books, reading aloud, telling stories (if her talents lie in this direction).”[163] Librarians knew that their healing presence became familiar and important to men in hospitals. A librarian at the Norfolk Public Library indicated in a letter that her staff had finally made arrangements to visit the nearby Public Health Service hospital with reading materials for its patients. “I will try to send the same person every week as I think the men look forward to seeing a friend whom they know, rather than a mere bearer of books.”[164] If the books themselves were what mattered, the person bringing them would not. Patients, however, benefited most by the connections they developed to the librarians who cared for them.

Librarians were also not to put themselves at risk in the way that the troops themselves or the healthcare workers were. The circular letters are explicit that they were not to be in contagious disease wards, but rather to communicate with the ward-master to make sure that the

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[162] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, volume 1, “To the camp librarian re: Hospital Libraries,” April 6, 1918, 1. See also a librarian’s wonderment that a system with so little bureaucracy could work so well; ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/5, box 5, “Memorandum Re: Hospitals,” n.d., 6.

[163] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, “To the Camp Librarian: Re: Hospital Libraries,” April 6, 1918, 1.

[164] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/15, box 2, correspondence from Mary Denson Pretlow to Caroline Webster, March 19, 1920.

service continues as usual, and the patients there have books and magazines too, even though they must be burned after their use.[165] A "night letter," or telegram, was sent in October of 1918 (the beginning of the devastating "Spanish Flu" outbreak) explaining that "[ALA] staff should render all permissible service to quarantined companies supplying magazines and books to be destroyed or fumigated later keep all legitimate work going take every precaution giving best care to staff sick."[166] In other words, amidst the outbreak of worldwide contagion simultaneous to war, library service remained essential, but care for these caregivers was paramount. Similarly, librarians who had been in service in the camps for many consecutive months were "strongly advised" to take a brief vacation.[167] Their illness or burnout should be absolutely avoided, not considered a justifiable side-effect of the work they were called to do.

Caregiving and Power (Or, How They Got Away With It All)

This is even more surprising when we look into public opinion on women working during the war. Clearly, women filling jobs previously held by men, who were away fighting, was an economic and practical necessity. Though recent studies of this aspect of the war have focused on European rather than American examples, men held varied opinions during this time, especially on women taking on factory work. Those who approved saw repetitive, difficult work, over long hours, to be a fitting sacrifice women made for their country; or else as appropriate for women because of the relative drudgery—much like the household labor that women already had

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[165] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To the Camp Librarian: Re: Hospital Libraries," April 6, 1918, 2.

[166] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, telegram, "To the Camp Librarians addressed," October 9, 1918.

[167] ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To Hospital Librarians: Vacations," July 1, 1919.

to perform, except perhaps better for them because of its regulated nature—it represented. Those who disapproved saw motherhood as the primary task of a nation's women no matter the political context.[168] Of course, women leaving home to do library work in a camp or a hospital, or even on a vessel transporting troops across the Atlantic to fight in Europe, had an entirely different experience from those at home that took up factory jobs. But it is important to note that whatever work women did, the men around them understood and approved of it through the lens of its appropriateness for their gendered roles.

One group of scholars has defined "taking care of" as distinct from the other three areas of caring, "caring about," "caregiving," and "care-receiving."[169] "Taking care of" requires the central skill of judgment, about both predicting which resources will be needed by the person, and about actually commanding those resources, and is thus an inherently powerful position.[170] A great number of people would have "cared about" the troops in a camp hospital, from the people in the nearest town, to their families at home, to the officers who dictated their days, and even to the individual service members, who cared about one another.[171] Nominally, "caregiving" work, defined as an even more involved layer than "taking care of," and including continuous, concrete, skill-led commitment of time and labor, could be said to have been performed by

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[168] Deborah Thom, "Gender and Work," in *Gender and the Great War*, edited by Susan R. Grayzel and Tammy M. Proctor (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 58–59.

[169] Fisher and Tronto, "Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring," 40.

[170] Berenice Fisher and Joan Tronto, "Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring," in *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives*, edited by Emily K. Abel and Margaret K. Nelson (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), 42–43.

[171] Fisher and Tronto even state that "in ordinary usage, the expression *caring about* is often used to suggest love or affection...caring about is an orientation rather than a motivation." "Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring," 42.

nurses, by those who prepared and served food, by volunteers, and by many others.[172] At home, when librarians were responsible for the day-to-day labor of keeping a library running, they would have been much closer to this category: their labeling, cataloguing, and request-answering was this kind of "continuous and dense" work.

Following this theory of care, then, we see the difference between the experience of the nurses, and the librarians who slept in the rooms next door and worked alongside them in the hospital wards. Nurses have always done "caregiving" work, and the WWI camp setting asked this of them as well. But librarians were actually asked to step out of the "caregiving" and into the "taking care of;" out of the weeds, so to speak, and into the level where one is assuming responsibility for the performing of caring work, and the acquisition and appropriate distribution of resources for that caring work, in general.[173] Hospital librarians' workdays would have fit this description well.

Picture a librarian like Miss McMillan speaking with a serviceman about what kind of work he wanted to do after the war. Perhaps she asks him what he used to do, and perhaps he held a factory job, where he had begun working at a young age, and where he knew the people around him well. Perhaps he has been injured in the war, and is recovering in a home-front hospital, as tens of thousands of men did after WWI. His grandfather may have been injured in the Civil War, and may still have been collecting a government pension as compensation, but under a new federal commitment to rehabilitation and to a future of veterans' productive labor, or even further military service, after a war injury, he is part of a generation that expects to return to

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[172] Fisher and Tronto, "Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring," 43.

[173] Ibid., 43.

work.[174] Perhaps Miss McMillan has given him a copy of "Your Job Back Home" to read, and is now asking him about learning a new skill, one which fits his different capabilities after the injury.[175] She might have stood by his bed, asking him about the various bookmarks slipped into camp library books he has checked out lately, each featuring lists of vocational offerings held by the camp library.[176] Practiced at public-facing library work, she listens to him muse about not being able to go back to his old job, where he had ended up alongside many other young men he knew almost as an inevitability, and hears his genuine curiosity about beadwork and basket-making.[177] This is, without a doubt, an interaction of "taking care of" this soldier.

And so as librarians exerted their influence over which books were acceptable for men to read, which were sufficiently "virile" and adventurous, and which would encourage in them a healthy, masculine energy for war, work, and life, they were mobilizing their job to "take care of" to reshape men's notions of what manly citizenship should look like. The CTCA found in these librarians a set of determined agents for the kind of Progressive-era cultural change they were so anxious to bring about. In innocuous, feminine uniforms, and both proximity and kinship with their nursing colleagues, and in a role that sat firmly within the female-coded bounds of care work, these women posed no obvious threat. Still, as far as the ALA was concerned,

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[174] For a study of the new regime of rehabilitation and reconstruction in World War I, as compared to the Civil War, see Beth Linker, *War's Waste: Rehabilitation in World War I America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 10–34, 79.

[175] ALA, *Your Job Back Home*, 10.

[176] These bookmarks contained the list of books that were available at each camp library concerning occupations that would be in demand following the war. There were many sets of these; one of several successors to this book list slip would concern "the choice of a vocation, and lists the books in the library which will guide a man in picking out his work." ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To the Camp Librarian," November 26, 1918, 1.

[177] ALA Archives, Record Series 9/1/15, box 2, correspondence from Mary Denson Pretlow to Caroline Webster, July 8, 1920

librarians in camps and hospitals were primarily working parallel to the Morale Branch of the Army, the CTCA administration, and the YMCA Educational Bureau—all of which were at least mostly, or even exclusively, male.[178] But in gaining access to an intimate set of interactions, in a rare moment of the war's personal, economic, and social impacts on these men's lives, these librarians also had the power to change how men saw their own masculinity, as well as their place in middle-class American society. In a position of "taking care of" rather than direct "caregiving," they were doing intellectual and ideological work that, had it been recognized for the kind of powerful job it was, might even have been restricted to men.

Of course, we should not be deceived, in our examination of the autonomy and authority inherent in this work done by women, that the double standards and patriarchal assumptions of the era were somehow suspended. One British soldier's letter quoted in multiple works of WWI gender scholarship is particularly galling, enjoining a girlfriend to "remain a woman," not to let him return to find her anything but "the same loveable little woman that I left behind—not a coarse thing more of a man than a woman…don't spoil [your nature] by carrying on with a man's work."[179] And even these hospital librarians had to put up with occasionally being made into secretaries for impatient medical officers, as the librarian at Camp Doniphan, Kentucky found in

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[178] Invitation to a conference that would be attended by these various groups of staff in ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/55, "To the Camp Librarian," January 20, 1919.

[179] British letter quoted in both Deborah Thom, *Gender and the Great War*, 59–60; and Janet S.K. Watson, "Khaki Girls, VADs, and Tommy's Sisters: Gender and Class in First World War Britain," *International History Review* 19, no. 1 (1997), 49. I have found no evidence that the situation was substantially different for American women or soldiers.

the summer of 1918.[180] But simply because women stayed in line with the norms for their sex, committing both to work as librarians, and to this sacrifice for their country that those excluded from direct military service could still make, does not mean their work represented subservience or powerlessness. They had autonomy, authority, and a consciousness of the essential nature of the care work they were there to do, and clad in stiff brown pongee from head to toe, they wasted little time.

[180] "The medical officer desiring these two books [a dermatology book and a book on complications of Gonorrhea] will not wait for their receipt thru the Surgeon General's Office and desires us to get them at all costs. Trusting that the books my be sent with no further delay."
ALA Archives, Record Series 89/1/5 box 5, volume 29, Correspondence from L.L. Dickerson to ALA headquarters, July 23, 1918.

Conclusion

Two characters' fictionalized, but plausible, lives rose up in the preceding pages. One was a young soldier, and the other a young librarian; one man, one woman. Both had their lives uprooted by the war, and though neither was ever "on the front lines," both certainly saw loss, grief, and suffering. Both would have emerged from the war with a new sense of their vocation, and with a different perspective on how their gender left them fitting into postwar society.

Most people, asked about women in world war I, will have no trouble calling to mind nurses in turn-of-the-century uniforms, only two generations removed from Clara Barton. Fewer are familiar with the women's organizations in which civilians volunteered for the war effort. Still, the roles in which we conceive of women taking part in a military context, a century ago, involve caregiving work. I have argued that we must understand librarians as caregivers in the camps and hospitals of World War I, and that we should conceive of them as holding genuinely autonomous, powerful, and independent roles, which made them and their work different. It mattered that librarians were women because of the kind of work librarians did: they were in a position to contribute to the makeup of the postwar economy; to thousands of mens' understanding of their roles as masculine citizens; and to the role libraries would continue to play in society, as well as the groups of people they would be able to effectively serve, when the war ended.

We no longer expect books to be part of our experiences with healthcare. Even in 1918, in an article advocating for motion pictures in hospitals, we find, "no patient feels in a fit condition to undertake the necessary mental work involved in reading; he wants this done for him…By the photoplay he can be taken through the realms of romance and forget his pains and

troubles."[181] Projecting forward in time, one current scholar on bibliotherapy—the field that arose after WWI to refer to the use of books in treatment—cites the rise of TV as a major contributor to the eventual demise of patients' libraries in hospitals.[182] There is fairly abundant current literature in nursing journals about distracting patients as part of making medical procedures easier and less painful, especially for children. However, books are only mentioned in these studies for very young children; one recommends picture books for toddlers, but TV, music, and video games take their place for preschool and school-age children.[183] Adults, too, seem not to expect that reading will be part of hospital care provided to them. The clearest example of this comes in the context of spiritual care. A study of patients who had received the care of a chaplain during a recent hospitalization asked about the reading of scripture or other religious texts, but grouped scripture together with prayer. Despite this aggregation, this option was only the third most cited as a reason patients wanted to see a chaplain.[184]

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181 Ernest A. Dench, "Entertaining Hospital Patients by Motion Pictures," *The American Journal of Nursing* 18, no. 6 (March 1918), 465.

182 Dufour, "Reading for Health," 56.

183 Susan E. Thrane, Shannon Wanless, Susan M. Cohen, and Cynthia A. Danford, "The Assessment and Non-Pharmacologic Treatment of Procedural Pain from Infancy to School Age Through a Developmental Lens: A Synthesis of Evidence with Recommendations," *Journal of Pediatric Nursing* 31 (2016), e26. Recent studies on adults tend to use new technologies, such as virtual reality (VR) headsets, considering them to have the most significant capacity to remove the patient from the world of their injury, and to reduce the brain activity connected to their pain. See Linzette Deidré Morris, Quinette Abegail Louw, and Lynette Christine Crous, "Feasibility and Potential Effect of a Low-Cost Virtual Reality System on Reducing Pain and Anxiety in Adult Burn Injury Patients During Physiotherapy in a Developing Country," *Burns* 36, no. 5 (2010), 659, as well as this recent *New York Times Article*, Jane E. Brody, "Virtual Reality as Therapy for Pain," *New York Times*, April 29, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/29/well/live/virtual-reality-as-therapy-for-pain.html. Ernest Dench would be gratified to see that the "photoplay" had been so improved on.

184 More important (and popular) reasons were "Remind me of God's care and presence," and "Be with me at times of particular anxiety or uncertainty." See Katherine M. Piderman, Dean V. Marek, Sarah M. Jenkins, Mary E. Johnson, James F. Buryska, and Paul S. Mueller, "Patients' expectations of hospital chaplains," *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* 83, no. 1 (2008), 62.

By contrast, we might still turn to books and libraries for our own moral improvement, as the popularity of self-help and "lifestyle" books demonstrates. It is certain that libraries have maintained their efforts to aid their patrons' health. The "Healthy Library Initiative," in Philadelphia, is just one example, which provides resources and services to people in the community, using public libraries a common access point.[185] Libraries may be less recognized as caregiving institutions today, than they were when they were employing dozens of hospital staff and providing rehabilitation care to injured soldiers, but their orientation towards holistic well-being continues.

Lastly, some of the most exciting current theory and scholarship—much of it collaborative—on social justice, gender equity, the role of our social identities in caregiving work, and the like, is coming from librarians and nurses. Recent volumes like *The Feminist Reference Desk* and the *Feminist and Queer Information Studies Reader* left me grateful that my studies in the history of medicine had led me into the work of such compassionate, self-aware, empathetic scholars, and excited about the future of holistic caregiving work.[186] I can only hope to eventually be the kind of caregiver that makes "a difference...in that place!"

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[185] Find the Healthy Library Initiative website at http://www.healthylibrary.org/.

[186] Kate, Adler, Ian Beilin, and Eamon Tewell, eds, *Reference Librarianship and Justice: History, Practice, and Praxis* (Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2018); Colleen Alstad and Ann Curry, "Public Space, Public Discourse, and Public Libraries," *Libres* 13, no. 1 (March 2003): 1–19; Celia, Emmelhainz, Erin Pappas, and Maura Seale. "Behavior Expectations for the Mommy Librarian: The Successful Reference Transaction as Emotional Labor," in *The Feminist Reference Desk: Concepts, Critiques, and Conversations*, Maria T. Accardi ed. (Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2017); Patrick Keilty and Rebecca Dean, eds, *Feminist and Queer Information Studies Reader. (*Sacramento, CA: Litwin Books, 2013).

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