

The History of PNLA in Washington State

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Introduction

I begin this piece by acknowledging that I currently reside on the unceded territory of the Coast Salish peoples, who have called this land home from time immemorial. I would like to pay respects to the Duwamish tribe, who continue to battle tirelessly for federal recognition, and I offer my sincerest gratitude to those who have stewarded this land, both past and present.

As someone who was born and raised here in Washington State, not a day goes by that I am not awestruck by the beauty of where I live. The varied terrain is uncommonly beautiful and our urban centers are vibrant. The Pacific Northwest is memorable, unique in its environment and history. I believe that Washington residents (newcomers included) carry with them a special sense of place, knowing and imagining our region as something to be loved and preserved. We are unique, and our relationships with our surroundings and with each other are undeniably reflected in our care for our region's libraries.

As the oldest regional library association in the United States, the Pacific Northwest Library Association (PNLA) has built upon traditions of good will and self-reflection. The organization has developed a social justice mindset and continues to prioritize historically isolated and marginalized communities, such as rural and tribal communities. Within the organization, Washington State has long proven itself to be a leading regional force in Northwest libraries. The following account is a brief overview of Washington's history with PNLA, in hopes that future generations of Northwest library professionals may glean meaning and wisdom from their Washingtonian predecessors.

Libraries in Washington Territory

Washington Territory's first official library was the Territorial Library, established in 1853 (*Pacific Northwest Libraries*, 7). At the time, Governor Isaac I. Stevens reported that 2,000 volumes of materials were ordered for the library, and by 1889, when Washington Territory became a state, the library was home to 10,448 volumes (8). Catholic Missionaries and their influence were present in the Northwest by 1825, and in 1865 the Vancouver Catholic Library Association was established. The Vancouver Catholic Library was most active between the years of 1870 to 1886 and contained over 1000 volumes of materials, which included contemporary religious and historical writings (13). The Steilacoom Library Association was established in February of 1858, and to fund its public library, the Association raised money by hosting popular balls, lectures, and debates (8). Other notable early library endeavors included the Walla Walla Library, established in 1865, the 1868 creation of the Seattle Library Association, and the establishment of the Tacoma Public Library in 1886 (14-19).

One of the biggest challenges early libraries faced was the physical distance separating the Pacific Northwest from the central and eastern parts of the United States. The relative isolation of the region

and its reliance upon its own resources stood as a large impetus for establishing a regional library association. In spite of their relative remoteness in relation to other dense parts of the country, the residents and libraries of the Northwest were committed to providing library services to the region's communities.

The First Years

Charles W. Smith, one of the original and most commemorated members of PNLA, began a career in libraries in 1905 when he arrived in Seattle to work as an assistant for the University of Washington Library. Smith authored "The Early Years of the Pacific Northwest Library Association," an invaluable resource for understanding the beginnings of PNLA. At the time of its publication in 1949, fewer than twenty of the original eighty-five PNLA members were living, and only a handful still worked in libraries (Smith, 2). Smith recognized the need to document and preserve the history of the organization, not only for the benefit of current members, but perhaps more importantly for the following generations of PNLA members. His work still stands as the most comprehensive documentation of PNLA's early history.

Smith wrote that by 1909, the Washington State Library Association (WLA) was already up and running. Its President, William E. Henry, arranged a WLA conference to be held during the famed Alaska-Yukon Pacific Exposition (AYP), and it was set to take place in Seattle from June eighth through the tenth (2). Henry invited librarians from various Northwest states and British Columbia for this annually-held conference, and sessions were held on the second floor of University of Washington's Denny Hall. The conference included programs that discussed important issues libraries that faced, as well as speakers that were remembered as both inspiring and provocative.

Among the notable events of the conference was a presentation by Tacoma Public Schools primary supervisor Isabella Austin, titled "What the School Needs from the Library." The presentation had such an impact on attendees that the paper from which it originated was printed in full in the September 1909 issue of *Library Journal* (4). In addition to quality content, attendees were offered the time and space to engage and discuss hot topic issues at length. After a full day of entertainment and discourse, the agendas for evenings were left open for attendees to explore the AYP (4).

At the 1909 conference, President Henry proposed of the idea of the Pacific Northwest Library Association. Henry's creation of a committee to develop the organization, along with the marked excitement of those in attendance, sparked the official beginning of PNLA. Charles W. Smith spoke highly of President Henry, attributing the success of the first PNLA conference to Henry's meticulous planning and leadership skills (96). Attendees recalled Henry's skills as a facilitator; he was known to be someone who could insert well-timed witticisms during heated discussions, successfully easing any tension felt in the room (96).

It was clear from the earliest proceedings that collaboration was a high priority for members. Cornelia Marvin, another original and admired PNLA member, recalled that librarians of the region knew the potential of unity and strength between Pacific Northwest librarians, and it was thought that a regional organization would garner tremendous support from the public (6). Others in attendance of the first conference acknowledged the groundwork that WLA had completed by combining the holdings of

thirteen Northwest libraries into one collection. The value that annotated bibliographies of materials relating specifically to the Pacific Northwest would have for the region could not be understated, and the project to create a regional system of bibliographies under the purview of PNLA began.

Despite the exciting opportunities underway, the creation of PNLA was met with some trepidation. Mabel Zoe Wilson, a librarian of the Western Washington College of Education, recalled a division of opinion amongst Northwest librarians when it came to merging the already established state association with a new regional one (6-7). Originally she felt a deep chagrin at the idea, however in 1910 she sang praise for PNLA and its ability to help her meet her goal of collaborating with Washington public school teachers. PNLA was a new and innovative endeavor, and since its creation, librarians in Washington have continued to put into practice the ideas and principles that first established PNLA's strength as a regional force.

The years following the initial conference saw rapid growth in PNLA membership. During the following decade, membership grew into the two-hundreds, with its annual conferences subsequently growing in scale. As the grandeur of conferences increased, so did the opportunity for exchanging ideas, cooperation, and inspiration. Charles W. Smith believed even the time spent preparing for a presentation at a PNLA conference was valuable for its positive impact on professional and personal growth (16). National conferences had been previously viewed as impersonal, and some state associations were too small to provide much value. This was not the case for PNLA conferences. The early PNLA conferences were remembered as characteristically friendly (8), with a collaborative spirit taking hold and ample opportunities to experience the uniqueness of each host location. Local entertainment, community drives through cities, and post-conference outings throughout the outdoors were paramount to networking, relationship building, and cultivating unity and morale within the profession.

Washington was a particularly formidable force in the early days of PNLA. During the second annual meeting, which was held in Portland, Oregon, State Librarian J.M. Hitt delivered the report for Washington and shared that library facilities were increasing in numbers across the state, in both Western urban and Eastern rural parts (Hitt). Hitt noted that short of public schools, there was nothing that united Washington residents more than public libraries (Hitt). He described the unity of Washington residents and their support of establishing public libraries to serve their communities, citing challenges only in keeping up with demand for more libraries.

Libraries were booming in the state--the libraries of Seattle, Spokane, and Tacoma were noted for their impressive growth, and a new Carnegie library was opened in Ellensburg. The Yakima Valley was slowly growing, with the small town of Prosser barely established before its residents began requesting library materials, and the women of the small Columbia River community White Salmon were remembered for how their tireless work to establish a public library.

The University of Washington School of Librarianship was founded in 1911 and saw its first graduating class in 1913 (Gershevsky, 33). During the seventh annual PNLA conference, held in Everett, Washington in 1916, University of Washington Library President Henry described his vision for the future of the school. Though it was located at the University of Washington, he saw its potential as a force that encompassed the spirit and participation of all libraries in the Northwest (PNLA Proceedings

1916-20). The creation of the school and its legacy in the region cannot be understated, and it still stands as an instrumental institution that helps shape the field of librarianship today.


Even with all of their grandeur, the early years of PNLA were more than just annual conferences. For example, one of the earliest and most ambitious PNLA committees was the Publicity Committee (Smith, 16). During the 1914 conference, the creation of the committee was proposed to ensure that regional work done in libraries was shared widely, and that printed materials such as posters could be sold to libraries in the northwest and beyond (16). The committee was formed and the first few years of its campaign were considered to be wildly successful. For example, two thousand copies of a Seattle-printed poster were ordered and distributed nationally during the year of 1916. In 1918, the committee spearheaded a campaign by mailing several thousand printed notices urging librarians throughout the country to advocate for a cohesive library publicity movement (Smith, 17). The Publicity Committee's efforts were so influential that in 1919, ALA was compelled to hire several staff members to advertise library services to the public, thereby increasing awareness of, and participation in, library services by the broader public.

Early librarians in Washington viewed their roles much the same as our contemporary colleagues do, with a sense of responsibility to society, to community, and to themselves (PNLA Proceedings 1916-20, 22). As with today, providing information access to communities and individuals was seen as the crux of the Washington librarian's purpose. Having the best collection of books or the finest building could not come close to the connections made between librarians, communities, and individuals (25). One early example of community building in Washington libraries came from Helen Johns of the Longview Public Library and the University of Washington Library. Johns provided a detailed and sensational first-hand account of the Longview Public Library's beginnings in the April 1951 issue of PNLA Quarterly (Johns, 117-121).

Johns recounted driving into the twilight town of Longview in December of 1925. Her room at the Monticello Hotel also served as her office, as the library building was still under construction. She noted her typewriter on her desk against the window, abounding with what seemed to be a never-ending supply of paperwork. During the early days of the town's library, idle time was scarce; work continued on seven days a week with no vacations. Johns still needed to hire professional and clerical staff, recruit for a janitor, select and order materials and supplies, as well as get to know the town and its communities--and all within a very short window of time.

Johns humbly acknowledged the multitude of help she received from her PNLA colleagues. Cornelia Marvin, who was by that time known as Mrs. Walter Pierce, loaned clerical workers to the new library, and Elizabeth Fox, Reference Librarian of the Library Association of Portland, helped with reference material selection. Judson T. Jennings and Ruth Worden of Seattle also offered their wisdom during the stressful planning stages. Johns also reminisced about the difficulty of recruiting librarians during the mid-1920's, and expressed her joy and relief when she hired Ethel Ross from Everett as a circulation staff member, and well as Ethel Miller, a new graduate of the University of Washington Library School, as a cataloging librarian.

To celebrate the monumental opening of the library, a lively community party was held at the newly



constructed building and its grounds. The event was not without mischief--Johns coolly mentioned that after the reception it was noticed a workroom typewriter and Johns' personal silver spoons had gone missing. Library folk reading today would certainly agree with Johns' sentiment that it was but a small price to pay for such a meaningful and overall delightful event.

The opening of the Longview Public Library proved to be an asset to the local community and its growth. Johns described how real estate agents used the library to promote the area to potential residents, how women's organizations made use of the library to host clubs and gatherings, and how youth would play on the steps of the building. She fondly remembered the library as touchstone of the community; it was a place for the townspeople to find refuge from troubles and as a place to explore their interests, curiosities, and imaginations.

Tumult During the Depression

Throughout the early 1920's, librarian salaries were particularly low. Work was overly available, with some positions even going unfilled for lengthy periods of time (Smith, 20). However, by the 1930s, a large number of library school graduates were unable to find stable jobs. Many were forced to either take mandatory, unpaid and long vacations or to seek employment in other fields to make ends meet. Newcomers to the field were understandably critical of the lack of professional opportunities, though it was recalled that most kept their critiques to private discussions (20). The time came, however, for when librarians could no longer remain quiet about the crisis.

During the 1935 annual conference, held in Portland, Oregon, a group of young librarians who recently graduated of the University of Washington School of Librarianship, spoke out to the crowd of attendees. The librarians brought forth a series of resolutions that reflected the sentiments of many who were struggling to survive on low wages. In addition to the resolutions, two stirring papers were presented. One focused on the impending rise of fascism and what the implications of war would mean for library services (20). The other painted a bleak picture of the profession's future: librarians must either accept meager earnings and a poor quality of life, or they must take direct action to ensure the vitality of the profession for its future generations of colleagues. Overall, the resolutions were viewed by long standing members as a means to express frustration. One key piece of a resolution was passed, however, which resulted in the creation of a committee to produce the quarterly PNLA bulletin still published today. Concerned for those who would one day follow in their professional footsteps, the librarians who spoke out exercised courage when they lent their dissenting voices to the discussion, confirming Washington PNLA members have been instrumental in enacting change for many decades.

To illustrate the dire need for wage increases, in 1938 PNLA members William P. Tucker and Eleanor Harmon conducted a survey of earnings and living costs among 30 Washingtonian librarians, the majority of whom worked in public libraries and were between the ages of 18 and 39 (Tucker, 118). They found that a high proportion of the average librarian's income was spent on dependents, and a low proportion spent on their own education and professional development. Though the authors of the survey cautioned that the sample size was small, they saw value in the results as a means to understand the full context of how Northwest librarians coped with their small earnings, and in hopes that the severity of the situation could spark change.

One thing was certain: professional development was seen by Washington PNLA members as a crucial strategy to ensure the survival of libraries in the Northwest. In an attempt to create support systems for up and coming professionals in the field, the University of Washington Library (UW Library) implemented new programs to address a lack of available staff associations and professional development opportunities. In 1936, the UW Library created a staff association that was divided into two sections, a professional and a nonprofessional division that were comprised mainly of part-time employed students (*PNLA Quarterly* 1, no. 2). Creating an association allowed librarians to sponsor association members to improve library services as well as mentor early career library workers. Common issues within libraries were discussed at division meetings, and recommendations were developed and presented to the library administration to improve working conditions, sick leave availability, and classification concerns. In addition, beginning in 1935, UW Library staff members had the option of joining a union, which was seen as a way to allow for more professional movement and growth. The positive impacts of the UW Library advocating for and creating career pathways for non-librarian staff are still felt today.

Rural Services in Washington

The issue of Washington's lack of rural services had been an ongoing discussion for several decades in the early twentieth century. In 1920, Washington was the only PNLA state who had not moved towards establishing county library systems, despite Washington being known for its progressive library innovations (PNLA Proceedings 1916-20, 17). Traveling libraries were one strategy to address the shortage of rural library services, however, they ultimately fell short of the changing needs of rural communities (72). One traveling library was piloted for eighteen months between 1919 and 1920, but its distribution of materials was considerably lower than anticipated (72). Washington librarians recognized that they needed to adapt their service strategies and to advocate for the passing of county library legislation.

In the first decades of PNLA's formation, discussions of services to Washington's rural communities were prevalent. Dorothy Alvord, of the Bellingham Public Library, presented a paper that discussed poverty and rural libraries at the 1937 Harrison Hot Springs, British Columbia annual conference. She reminded attendees that poverty was an ongoing issue in the communities that Washington libraries served (PNLA Proceedings 1937, 43), but she was hopeful that the establishment of county libraries would help alleviate the burdens felt by non-urban residents. She cited a shortage of personnel as an ongoing challenge for rural Washington libraries, as well as a lack of training for already existing staff (though she acknowledged it was through no fault of their own). Still, despite the challenges Alvord outlined, she ended her presentation on a driven note, reminding the audience that challenges would always emerge, and that libraries would continue to rise to the occasion to meet the needs of all library users.

Moving toward the 1940s, the Northwest still relied on agriculture, lumber, mining, and fishing to fuel its economy (Tucker, 54-58). Since 1910, population growth had slowed in all Northwest states, despite the fact that the overall population growth in the United States remained steady. Rural farm areas constituted the majority of new population growth in the greater Northwest, though Washington lagged in this trend. Twenty-seven Washington counties increased in population between 1920 and 1930, however, twelve counties showed a significant decrease and by 1940, Washington family size

and marriage rates were decreasing faster than the national average. Washington's slowed population growth, along with an aging overall population, created economic opportunity for an influx of subsistence farmers into Washington's rural areas.

Longstanding PNLA member William P. Tucker viewed cities as hubs of innovation and rural communities as mainstays of stability. Tucker did not discount the importance of urban library services and he identified the need to increase service specifically in the Puget Sound area to address what he saw as a forthcoming urban population boom. But to Tucker, expansion of library services, and adult services in particular, for rural areas were not to be overlooked. Rural Washington was experiencing an influx of young adults, which in turn placed a strain on the already sparse library offerings in very small communities. In his estimation, the needs of all groups were increasing. Most communities were facing an aging population with specialized library needs, and those of younger ages were also feeling the dearth of library services.

While Washington PNLA librarians faced changing demographics, they also began to look inward at the state of PNLA as an organization and its capacity to implore impact. PNLA President John S. Richards's address during the 1938 annual conference, held at the beautiful Glacier National Park in Montana, illustrated that a turning point in the organization had come. He acknowledged that the growth of PNLA and its influence had slowed, and proposed that in its humble beginnings PNLA held more vigor (PNLA, 4). Richards compared librarianship to other professions and raised the question of whether librarians were subjected to lower standards with regard to personal well-being. Outrage over wages was understandable, and he declared, considering the education necessary to pursue the profession, that librarians were one of the poorest paid professions in the nation.

Despite the bleak picture he painted, Richards offered strategies to counter the stagnancy of the field and of PNLA. He saw a need for more clerical positions to clearly differentiate between clerical work and professional work. In his view, stronger classifications would allow librarians to pursue specialized professional interests that would have a greater impact on library users. He cited the need for librarians as instructors, using as an example the need for basic library use education for both undergraduate and graduate library users at the University of Washington. One solution to the UW's problem was to create a readers' advisory service, which allowed librarians to hone their service skills to become better instructors throughout the wider campus (5). To conclude his speech, Richards announced that the year's conference would be dedicated to rethinking the scope of PNLA, with the understanding that PNLA had outgrown its ability to progress. It was time to move in a new direction.

Washington During WWII

The early 1940's was a time for growth for Washington State libraries. Many library buildings were constructed or renovated, with the libraries of Wapato, Chelan, Vancouver, and Toppenish cited as some examples of the outstanding construction accomplishments of the day (Collins, 27). In spite of the overall increase in library construction, in 1940, research showed that despite ranking third in the index of education in the United States, 40% of the Washington population still had no access to library services (Richards, 97). More library services were needed.

History has proven that World War II gripped the nation's conscience, and libraries in Washington

were no exception. It was during this era that PNLA writings began to center on libraries as institutions and their roles within the contemporary, global socio-political context. Melvin Rader, from the University of Washington's Philosophy Department, wrote a piece for the July 1942 PNLA Quarterly, titled "Thoughts About Post-War Reconstruction." Rader was adamant that defeat was not an option (159-163) and that, in his estimation, the only way to save the United States was to unite its citizens under the conviction of social justice. To him, peace was impossible without social justice. This piece stands as one of the first instances in which social justice models emerged in PNLA discourse.

In the same PNLA Quarterly issue, Siri Andrews of the University of Washington's School of Librarianship offered some tangible ways local librarians could offer their skills and expertise during the war. She cautioned that recommending and selecting children's materials, for example, required sensitivity and tact on the part of the librarian, which could only come from self-examination and self-education (Andrews, 162-163). Intrinsic to the process of looking inward, was the upholding of the librarian's sense of responsibility to the public, particularly during times of crisis. She suggested that selecting humorous or imaginative materials for children would help relieve the tension felt by families, and that early literacy would help develop and foster ideas encouraging peace. Exercising empathy and tailoring to different social environments were practices that were beginning to emerge within the dialogues of Pacific Northwest librarianship.

In the October 1943 issue of the Quarterly, a piece titled "The Library Profession" prompted readers to examine who libraries were and were not serving. Extending services to everyone, regardless of age, sex, race, economic status, political affiliation, or religious affiliation was discussed (Anderson, 18). As the historical record demonstrates, libraries had (and categorically still have) a replete amount of work to do in terms of equality, equity, inclusion, and social justice for library users. However, it is during this time that these conversations begin to become committed to paper, published, and disseminated in Pacific Northwest library circles.

PNLA continued to work diligently during times of scarcity. Though resource rationing during the war resulted in no annual conference for the year 1943, President Katherine E. Anderson continued the publication of the Quarterly (Gershevsky, 22-23). A smaller scale conference was held in June 1944 in Spokane and saw two hundred librarians in attendance, as well as many non-librarians. The sense of duty and responsibility felt by PNLA members to each other and to their patrons kept the organization afloat during the war.

Things began to look up when in 1946, Washington public libraries received state aid for the first time, allowing for the expansion of many library services (48). In 1946, it was noted that fourteen county libraries were newly established in Washington State, with fourteen bookmobiles on order and expected to offer services in 1947 (48).

Gaining Momentum

From the very first annual conference, PNLA members were excited about the prospect of establishing a bibliographic center. From its precursory planning stages to its implementation and growth, its development was heavily featured in PNLA publications and discussions. The establishment of a working bibliography that spanned across state lines was seen as vital to coordination between institu-

tions, and as a way to reduce unnecessary duplicate purchases of rare and pricey materials. In 1917, PNLA President Cornelia Marvin appointed a committee to begin planning for the bibliographic center (Bauer, 30-42), with Charles W. Smith serving as chairman of the committee through 1947, save for one year when he acted as president of PNLA.

The project was years in the making, and in 1940, PNLA received a \$35,000 grant to support the project's implementation (Smith, 85). The University of Washington Library was designated to become the home of the center, and was named the Pacific Northwest Bibliographic Center (PNBC) (85). The PNBC increased in volume in 1948 and resulted in a 17% increase in regional interlibrary loans ("News," 77). By 1949, Charles W. Smith happily reported that the PNBC included 3,200,000 catalog cards and that more than 9,000 volumes of materials were borrowed via interlibrary loan through the Center. The PNBC was a unique asset to the Northwest, and many years of planning, advocacy, and dedication had paid off.

By 1950, Washington was home to the majority of PNLA members, with 357 individual and 26 institutional members, and libraries throughout the state were adopting new means of promoting and sharing services ("Standing Committee," 50-52). The Spokane Public Library had started a public service of cataloging all 16mm films available in the city and county, and the Snohomish County Library had just won a national award in recognition of its efforts to try new publicity techniques to reach their rural communities. Further south, Tacoma radio stations broadcasted five recurring library programs per week that included book reviews by librarians, playing records from library collections, and a program called 'Who Owns the Tacoma Public Library?' wherein officers of local organizations and clubs were interviewed about what the library system meant to their communities.

Carma Zimmerman, President of PNLA in 1951, wrote in the Quarterly in honor and celebration of the hard work members carried out year-round for the organization. She explained that the annual conferences served as but hallmarks of the ongoing story of libraries in the Northwest (Zimmerman, 110-111). She acknowledged that the work of PNLA members was an ongoing, daily process and that carrying out work across several states was a challenge in and of itself. This collaboration and culmination of daily perseverance, however, is precisely what made PNLA such a formidable force in the Northwest.

In May of 1953, an incident occurred that sparked concern throughout the region and tested the organization's tenacity. The head of the Tacoma Public Library and PNLA first vice-president was dismissed from his position by four members of the system's Board of Trustees (Gershevsky, 31-32). PNLA investigated the incident and found no evidence of misconduct, and during that year's annual conference the organization passed two resolutions to condemn the termination by the board members and to initiate an ALA-led investigation, as well as to appoint a new board. PNLA intentionally held its following annual conference in Tacoma, once again highlighting the spirit of PNLA and Washington's camaraderie.

Revitalization and New Approaches

As participation in PNLA activities partially waned in the beginning of the 1960s, members saw a need for improved committee communication. In 1966, reorganization plans were in motion and the

relationship between PNLA and the PNBC was codified (Waldron, 6-9). It was time for PNLA to dedicate more time to professional development, cooperation, and automation. To reinvigorate membership, former PNLA President Rodney Waldron encouraged members to engage with PNLA in new ways, such as recruiting new faces to the organization, develop friendships within the membership, and to reconnect with each member's inspiration that initially drew them to the organization.

Waldron continued to ask hard questions in an effort to revitalize PNLA and its influence in the Northwest. During the 1967 annual conference that was held in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, a controversial presentation was delivered by several members that struck the core of the adaptability and evolution of PNLA (PNLA Records). Waldron opened the presentation, titled "What's Wrong with PNLA?" by asking listeners to consider if, or how, PNLA was impacting the profession. Waldron expressed concerns that there was considerable room for the organization to improve, such as increasing attempts to recruit early career librarians to PNLA. Yet Waldron was not alone--in the spirit of PNLA's solidarity, several colleagues, including two from Washington, came to the podium to support Waldron's concerns and strategies.

Wreath Goodrich of John Rogers High School in Spokane, Washington, stated that PNLA had long overlooked the needs of high school librarians. She felt strongly that school librarians lay at the center of public education, and that PNLA had not offered enough backing in the area. John Veblen, a Washington State Library Trustee, cited a need to improve the education of trustees, and though not a Washington member, Twin Falls Public Library librarian Robert Bruce agreed with Waldron that PNLA could do more to cultivate interest in the organization amongst new library professionals. Waldron's presentation was not a typical progress report and he was brave to speak so candidly during the conference, as were his colleagues. Acknowledging missteps can be uncomfortable, however, PNLA has demonstrated that it is willing to engage in difficult conversations to continually transform itself and enact lasting, positive change.

Transformation of PNLA and its aims emerged as an indisputable trend in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. Long-standing member Eli M. Oboler believed that the dwindling of federal funds to libraries ought to push each individual library system in the Northwest to advocate for every possible source of funding at the local level (PNLA Records). Perhaps more importantly, Oboler felt that each library had a responsibility to put its own house in order, so to speak, and only then could libraries in the region be strong enough to come together with sincere purpose and ability to enact change.

With self-reflection and new areas of focus in mind, libraries in Washington began to expand beyond their traditional practices. Peter Gellatly of the University of Washington Library wrote a 1968 Quarterly piece that highlighted underground Seattle newspapers such as *Helix* and *Synapse*. He offered his own characterization of young Americans who were disenfranchised and disillusioned with the current state of politics and war in the United States, which illustrated the juncture felt across Seattle's sociopolitical climate (Gellatly, 24-25). Gellatly's review highlighted how Washington librarians began to think outside of PNLA's traditional reporting on collections. The underground papers were characterized as something special, and Gellatly's inclusion of them in his review gave voice to perspectives that that were often silenced in mainstream outlets.

In 1965, an institutional library collaboration was struck between the Washington State Library and the Washington State Department of Institutions to provide library services to those in Washington State institutional facilities (Conte, 15-17). A pilot project with King County saw services developed at Echo Glen Children's Center and Woodinville Group Home, with the intent to integrate librarians into treatment plans for residents by creating a link between the institution and the community that resident children would return to. In 1968, a new project was developed between the University of Washington School of Social Work, Eastern State Hospital, and the Spokane Public Library to integrate and develop library collections for the hospital. Washington librarians were seen as influential sources of knowledge and of personal development, and were integrated into holistic treatment plans. The roles, responsibilities, and possibilities of the profession were changing.

In 1969, University of Oregon School of Librarianship student Namky Kim was sponsored by the Asian Foundation to attend the PNLA annual conference held in Seattle (Kim, 62). Kim was excited to attend, but also apprehensive; Kim shared memories of feeling unwelcomed by librarians in her youth. Kim began to feel at ease as her first conference day wrapped up, and described the kindness and interest in her studies that PNLA members showed her. Kim reported that the most noteworthy presentation at the conference centered on providing outreach services to underserved communities. The presentation was titled, "Scenes from Outreach Library Programs in Institutions, Black Urban Areas, Indian Reservations and Migrant Camps." The mission to reach out and develop connections with patrons who had historically been marginalized and excluded from libraries struck a chord, and it was reflective of a new approach to Washington library services.

Emerging Technology and Inclusive Dialogues

Beginning in the early 1960s, Pacific Northwest libraries had begun to examine and experiment with automated library technology. In 1962, the Central Washington State College installed two automated circulation machines, and in 1967 the University of Washington Library hired a Library Automation Coordinator, who designed and managed an automated information system (Dickney, 7). Toward the end of the decade, libraries in the region increasingly began incorporating automated processes into their libraries.

By the late 1970s, the concept of online services was no longer new to librarians in Washington. Dan Trefethen of the UW Health Sciences Library conducted a survey in 1978 to find out what library professionals needed from online services and discovered online searching was becoming an integral part of academic, special, and public librarianship in Washington (Trefethen). Who ought to be familiar with online searching and how it would be implemented were looming questions, though it was clear that online services were here to stay.

Professional development continued to emerge as a theme in Washington's libraries. In 1974, the University of Washington School of Librarianship introduced an experimental program called Professional Development Studies (Nelson). The goal of the program was to support new librarians and to provide education relevant to the field, without requiring an additional degree. It consisted of courses tailored to the personal educational objectives of enrolled librarians that were taught by experienced faculty. In addition, the shifting needs of career librarians prompted the UW's School of Librarianship to change its degree program to a two-year Master of Librarianship program in 1979 (Hiatt, 14-15) and

the program began to emphasize library users rather than the library as an institution. Continuing education was seen as a tenet of the field, and it became obvious that professionals must be given the opportunity to advance their skills to keep up with changing technology and the changing needs of library stakeholders.

Part of placing focus on library users meant genuinely connecting with communities and developing an understanding of their changing information needs. In Washington, it also entailed working to dismantle barriers that have alienated indigenous communities. In 1974, Margarita Dolejsi of Highline Community College Library wrote a piece that described how Washington State librarians were working to provide long overdue services to Native residents. Dolejsi cited informative bibliographies curated by Tacoma librarians to include Native perspectives in materials, but stressed that more references and materials were needed (Dolejsi, 4). The King County Library System provided bookmobile services to the Muckleshoot Indian Reservation and opened a branch at the tribe's Indian Center in 1975 (Symon), and Highline College was at the time in the process of training library technicians to specialize in providing culturally responsive services to local Native communities. Whatcom County Library created services with the Lummi and Nooksack nations that placed special emphasis on youth services, and the Yakima Valley Regional Library served the Yakama Nation, hosting oral history workshops with indigenous knowledge, cultural preservation, and tribal sovereignty at the forefront of its curriculum (Dolejsi, 5).

Dolejsi was forthright in stating that more direct action was needed to provide services to Native communities in Washington. For example, Dolejsi wrote that most available materials were written by non-Native authors for non-Native readers. Tribal leaders were clear in their desire to create their own materials, though funding and technical assistance were cited as barriers. This was one identifiable way that librarians could offer their assistance. Dolejsi reported that some Washington libraries were understandably met with hesitation from tribal leaders, particularly from the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe. However, in 1975, Irene C. Heninger of the Kitsap Regional Library reported the tribe was indeed enthusiastically partnering with the Kitsap system and that the reporting had been a misrepresentation of a budding relationship (Heninger, 28).

Understanding why indigenous groups may hesitate to partner with institutions is crucial to building relationships based on respect and good faith, and it is imperative that libraries who reach out to tribes to collaborate do so with humility and grace. The indigenous people of the Pacific Northwest have never ceased in their resistance to colonialism and occupation, and cultural preservation and tribal sovereignty issues continue to be confronted in Washington. Washington is home to large indigenous communities, and PNLA members have an excellent opportunity to build upon the groundwork laid by their predecessors, and work to improve library services to tribal nations and communities in Washington.

Markers of social justice and change continued throughout the 1970s. In 1979 the UW received a grant, in partnership with the Washington State Library and UW School of Librarianship, to establish the Career Development for Women Librarians Assessment Center (Grant, 20). The center was developed to help women within the profession eliminate barriers that had historically prevented them from obtaining managerial positions. At the time of the center's establishment, women accounted for 82%

of librarian positions, but only 32% of manager positions (20). The partnership between institutions and the creation of the center signified a recognition and effort to address inequities within the profession, however it remains a pressing issue today.

Looking Forward: Washington and PNLA

From the first PNLA gathering in 1909, those involved in the organization have placed immense value on the regional connections that were built across borders. In an interview, former PNLA President Samantha Hines shared that she believes one of the longstanding cornerstones of the organization remains in the tradition of coming together for annual conferences (Hines). After more than a hundred years, the conferences remain a unique gathering that brings professionals together from all branches of librarianship in a genial and collaborative atmosphere. Conference sessions are active, hands-on, and provide valuable takeaways for everyone who attends.

PNLA leaders recognize the emerging challenges of present day. Library professionals have less time and funding for traveling and conferences has dwindled. Because of this, Hines explained that PNLA maintains as low a membership rate cost as possible, and strives to maintain its ability to facilitate important networking for new professionals. Connecting regional library workers remains a guiding force of the organization.

As it continues to grow, PNLA continues to contemplate its focus areas and ways to adapt to changing environments. PNLA recognizes that it has work to do, and new priorities include focusing on smaller scale, local connections in areas that have historically lacked emphasis. Though Hines has acknowledged that representation of these communities within PNLA membership is an issue that deserves immediate attention, and building partnerships, particularly with tribal libraries and rural systems are high-priority goals for Washington PNLA members.

Conclusion

PNLA was created to build strong connections that traverse borders. Thus, it is difficult to separate Washington's PNLA history from the rest of the Pacific Northwest's library history, as innovations and goals were often attained through collaboration across the region. Washington PNLA libraries and their staff have proven themselves to be leaders in the region's field, often speaking out side by side with and on behalf of others when most needed. Social justice, representation, and equity are now in focus for PNLA, and if history is telling, Washington will lead by example.

The history of PNLA in Washington State is vast. Captured here are a few notable moments in time, but they in no way encompass the breadth of work that has been done throughout the state. There exists ample opportunity to further collect the organization's history of the past thirty years, particularly the oral histories of Washington PNLA members. As PNLA Washington members have shown over the past century, much can be accomplished through the spirit of camaraderie. The needs of libraries and their users will continue to change and present challenges, but it is the people who are remembered as the conscience of organizations. Washington PNLA members will continue to work tirelessly together to continue PNLA's legacy of support and fellowship in our unique and remarkable region.

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