
The policies developed by the libraries of the Consolidated University of North Carolina (The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; The North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering of the University of North Carolina, Raleigh; and The Woman’s College of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro) over the period from 1951 to 1958 demonstrate the difficulties African-Americans faced when pursuing scholarly research, as well as the broader challenges of integrating higher education institutions.

Although all three schools shared an overarching administration, each one handled African-American library patrons differently. This inconsistency became a source of contention during the early 1950s, as the University system attempted to maintain “separate but equal” facilities for African-Americans, in an effort to put off integration. This preliminary report outlines and analyzes these policies, places them in the context of African-American scholarship and higher education during the time period, and suggests avenues for further research.

Headings:

Academic libraries -- North Carolina -- History.

African Americans and libraries -- Southern States -- History.


Woman's College of the University of North Carolina. Library -- History.
AFRICAN-AMERICAN ACCESS POLICIES AT THE CONSOLIDATED UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES, 1951-1958

by
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**Introduction**

In 1931, the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (now called the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and hereafter referred to as UNC), The North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering of the University of North Carolina, Raleigh (now called the North Carolina State University, and hereafter referred to as the State College), and The Woman’s College of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro (now called the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and hereafter referred to as the Woman’s College) merged to form the Consolidated University of North Carolina.

Prior to 1951, when three African-American students successfully sued to gain entry to the law school of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, each of the member institutions of the Consolidated University of North Carolina had developed distinct attitudes and unwritten policies concerning African-American use of its libraries and other educational facilities. After the first African-American students arrived at UNC in 1951, many campus facilities remained segregated as the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and the rest of the Consolidated University of North Carolina rushed to develop standardized policies for the use and allocation of resources, including the admission of African-American researchers to their libraries, in order to avoid further integration measures. Although access requests had been handled on a case-by-case basis prior to the initiation of integration proceedings, with the beginning of integration, the
Consolidated University administration urged each institution to develop a standardized, formal policy concerning African-American library access.

Each member of the Consolidated University responded by developing its own vaguely-worded policy that would allow the school to interpret it as best suited its own interests, and access to each university’s libraries and other research facilities initially became even more difficult for African-American scholars. These policies, which were frequently re-visited and re-worded over the period from 1951 to 1958, when the last member of the Consolidated University of North Carolina integrated its undergraduate program, demonstrate the difficulties African-Americans faced when pursuing scholarly research, the challenges of integrating institutions of higher education, the unequal resources of public white institutions and HBCUS, and the complex relationships between the three schools in the Consolidated University of North Carolina.

The struggles over the use of the Consolidated University libraries also reflected another recent change in African-American education. After the Supreme Court’s 1938 decision mandating that the University of Missouri admit African-American student Lloyd Gaines to a graduate program that was not available to him at the state university for African-Americans, many southern states encouraged the development of graduate and professional programs in African-American colleges and universities in order to maintain “separate but equal” conditions, and thus to prevent the necessity of admitting African-American students to graduate programs at white public universities. The development of these programs, together with other societal changes, resulted in higher numbers of African-American graduate students. However, most African-American colleges and universities did not receive the funding necessary to update their libraries so
that they would be able to effectively support these new graduate programs, and as a result, many students and faculty members needed to use materials that were only available at white colleges and universities, or at public research libraries and archival repositories. Access to these materials was very uneven.

Although there has recently been an increase in scholarship on the subject of African-American access to public libraries, there has been little secondary research on the topic of access to academic and research libraries. This exploratory report examines one aspect of the issue, in a limited geographic region, and also suggests potential avenues for future research on the subject.

Notes

I. African-American Scholarship in the South, 1900-1955

“The Plight of the Negro Scholar in the South”

In the early twentieth century, the development of an African-American middle class that was better-equipped to meet the financial and educational demands of graduate study led to the expansion of graduate programs in African-American schools, and an attendant surge in African-American graduate students between 1920 and 1945. These societal changes, together with the improved resources many African-American institutions received as a result of pursuing academic accreditation, and the impact of the United States Supreme Court’s 1938 decision in the case *Gaines v. Canada*, which mandated that each state provide equal educational opportunities at the graduate level for African-Americans and whites, increased the number of advanced students in African-American higher education institutions: “[a]lthough none of these added pressures resulted in equality of educational resources for either students or faculty, they did, on the whole, force some slight improvement in the position of Negro scholars. As a consequence, for a few institutions in particular, the period 1930-1945 was extraordinarily productive.”

Despite this period of flourishing, many African-American scholars found it very difficult to complete their professional research, as many of them studied and taught at southern schools, which were located in areas that were not supportive of African-Americans using the resources of white institutions. Michael Winston writes that
“[m]ore than 80 percent of all Negro Ph.D.’s were employed by Atlanta, Fisk, and Howard, and the latter had by far the largest concentration of Negro Ph.D.’s anywhere in the United States (and the world).”\textsuperscript{ii} As a result, many researchers faced significant obstacles and roadblocks in their efforts to perform research in the South.\textsuperscript{iii}

The professor and intellectual John Hope Franklin spoke and wrote about his experiences doing historical research in the South quite frequently. He wrote about his challenges in his autobiography \textit{Mirror to America}, as well as in a chapter in the book \textit{Soon, One Morning}, entitled “The Dilemma of the American Negro Scholar.” In this chapter, he observes that the origins of these struggles lay in the belief many Americans held that African-Americans were incapable of being competent scholars, and says, “[f]ew Americans, even those who advocated a measure of political equality, subscribed to the idea that Negroes—any Negroes—had the ability to think either abstractly or concretely or to assimilate ideas that had been formulated by others.”\textsuperscript{iv} In his writings, Franklin discusses the challenges that African-American scholars of the early twentieth century faced in fighting these beliefs and their determination “to demonstrate that Negroes were capable of assimilating ideas and of contributing to mankind’s store of knowledge.”\textsuperscript{v}

Many African-American scholars also faced difficulties in using libraries that claimed that they were not set up to serve them because they were not suited for African-American studies. Franklin observed that African-American scholars in the early twentieth century often felt that they needed to isolate themselves into their own society and in their own studies—Negro Studies—because “[h]ere they were insulated from the assaults of the white scholars…here, too, they would work relatively unmolested in a
field where they could meet, head on, the assaults of those who would malign them and their race.”

However, many libraries that were associated with white institutions did not feel that they needed to obtain materials that would be useful for these studies, as “…many of the whites conceded that Negroes had peculiar talents that fitted them to study themselves and their problems. To the extent that this concession was made, it defeated a basic principle of scholarship—namely, that given the materials and techniques of scholarship and given the mental capacity, any person could engage in the study of any particular field.”

These attitudes led some to assume that African-Americans should not need to use materials from white academic libraries, as they would only be studying African-American studies, which would not be supported by the libraries of white academic institutions. Franklin continues, “Imagine the plight of a Negro historian trying to do research in archives in the South operated by people who cannot conceive that a Negro has the capacity to use the materials there.”

In his autobiography, Franklin recounts the story of his arrival to the State Department of Archives and History in 1939, which was directed by Dr. Christopher C. Crittenden of Yale University. Franklin recalls that his arrival created quite a stir, as Crittenden told Franklin that he was the first African-American scholar who had ever requested to use the collections, and as the architect who had planned the building had not taken that possibility into account, Franklin would need to delay beginning his work until the library could scramble to find a solution, while workers emptied and converted an exhibition room into a temporary private study room for him. Franklin recounts in his autobiography that three days later,
I was escorted to a small room across from the large whites-only research room. It had been outfitted with a table, chair, and wastebasket and was to be my private office for an indefinite period of time. Crittenden also presented me with keys to the stacks of the manuscript collection, this to avoid my requiring the white assistants to deliver manuscripts to me. So situated, I began my work. The stacks were a veritable gold mine. I would emerge from them with my cart overloaded with boxes, rolling it through the whites-only research room en route to my private room across the hall. The arrangement lasted only two weeks, after which the white researchers, protesting discrimination, demanded keys to the manuscript collection for themselves. Rather than comply with their demands, which would have created chaos in the stacks, the director relieved me of my keys and ordered the assistants to serve me.²

Franklin also discusses his experiences researching at several other libraries and archives in North Carolina:

Over time I would come to realize that nothing illustrated the absurdities of racial segregation better than Southern archives and libraries. In Raleigh, the state library had two tables in the stacks set aside for African American readers. The state supreme court library had no segregation at all, while the state archives solved the problem on an ad hoc basis. I had already seen that the state archives in Tennessee did not segregate users, and Alabama had a similar policy. In Louisiana, in 1945, I was permitted by the director of the archives to use the collection, from which African Americans were usually barred, simply because they were otherwise closed in celebration of the United States’ victory over Germany and Japan.³

In this account, Franklin observes the irony of celebrating democracy’s victory while denying the rights protected and cherished by a democratic society to other Americans.⁴ E. Horace Fitchett faced similar difficulties while researching for his dissertation on “The Free Negro in Charleston, South Carolina” in 1936. In the introduction to his dissertation, Fitchett discusses the challenges he encountered while researching, and the varying reactions each library had to his requests to use its materials. For example, although Fitchett was granted access to the building and materials of the Charleston Free Library, and provided with a special reading room, he was forced to enter and leave from the back of the building, and an African-American janitor took and
filled his requests for materials. Meanwhile, Richard Harris notes that at the Library of the College of Charleston, Fitchett was allowed to use the library in the evening and during the night, after the library had officially closed, and the white students had vacated the building. xiii Fitchett observes,

The Negro student who endeavours to conduct a study of this kind in the average southern community may and often does find it difficult to get access to valuable source material. xiv

Finally, he describes his interactions with the Charleston Library Society: “There is in the city of Charleston a private library, one of the oldest in America. It is, of course, supported by private subscriptions. This institution unequivocally bars Negroes from the use of its facilities.” xv Fitchett recounts with great dismay the many efforts he made to use this library’s materials, which were concluded by his receipt of a letter from Theodore D. Jervey, the head of the Charleston Library Society, which said: “Dear Sir: I made inquiries concerning our collections of source material and, by index, we have nothing on the subject you are engaged upon.” xvi This method of discouraging African-American researchers from using the library would later be echoed in UNC’s responses to African-American scholars wishing to use its library collections.

At a 1940 conference of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) held at Howard University, Lawrence D. Reddick, who was the curator of the Schomburg Collection at the New York Public Library, pushed for the increased development of guides to research in the area of Negro studies and the purchase of materials, including microfilming black newspapers. xvii He also decried what he called “the plight of the Negro scholar in the South”:

If he is a teacher, and he usually is, his classes are heavy; appropriations for his research are virtually nil, and the facilities in his own college library quite
inadequate. Some state and municipal libraries will admit him; others will not. A few of the privately endowed institutions will permit individual Negroes to read ‘somewhere in the building’; many of them will not even do this. Inter-library loans may bring in certain of the books, but letters, manuscripts, and other rare items which have what he really needs, obviously, cannot be handled in this way. With the Negro and white scholars of the South separated from each other, and with the Negro scholar further handicapped by the social barriers to his documents, is there any wonder that so little is produced and so little of that is of first quality? 

Reddick suggested:

A great deal may be done through legal action. A thorough test of the arrangements which bar Negroes from tax-supported libraries and archives should clear the air. For privately endowed institutions, other methods suggest themselves. All scholars, in the South particularly, should be called upon to require that some arrangement be established and maintained whereby the Negro scholars shall have the benefit of the increasing deposits of data in the semi-public and private institutions of the region. If the Southern white scholars, who are so frequently bemoaning their own difficulties, are not scholars enough to support actively such an effort, then they should be condemned.

This was a rare outlook, and very few white academics took up the African-American researchers’ cause. Given the lack of support from white institutions, one might assume that African-American scholars would be able to simply rely more heavily on the collections at their own home institutions, but this was impossible given the African-American schools’ almost universal dearth of resources.
Notes

ii Ibid., 695.
v Ibid., 66.
vi Ibid., 67.
vii Ibid., 69.
viii Ibid., 72.
ix Ibid., 73.
xii Ibid., 84.
xv Ibid., 16.
xvi Ibid., 18.
xvii Ibid., 320.
xix Ibid., 365-366.
Historically Black College and University (HBCU) Libraries

Although white and African-American colleges and universities were legally required to have separate but equal facilities, the African-American schools frequently were relegated to much poorer facilities, and had many fewer financial and educational resources. The first African-American academic library was founded at Virginia Union University in 1865, in the same year of the university’s founding. This was unusual, because most African-American colleges and universities were unable to establish libraries until long after they had been established.\(^1\) About 20 libraries had been opened at African-American colleges and universities by 1900, using funding from donors including Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, and Julius Rosenwald.\(^2\) Andrew Carnegie continued to fund academic libraries in African-American colleges and universities throughout “the first quarter of the twentieth century.”\(^3\)

By 1926, a survey of African-American colleges and universities by the United States Bureau of Education counted 79 academic libraries.\(^4\) However, when Louis Shores, head librarian at Fisk University, analyzed the results of this survey in his 1932 article “Library Service and the Negro,” he concluded that the conditions were still quite poor, and he noted that the libraries were ill-equipped with “gifts from deceased missionaries and from the attics of well-meaning Northern friends” and run by poorly trained employees in “dark and dingy” buildings.\(^5\) Similarly, in his 1943 article “The Negro College Library,” James A. Hulbert observed that “[t]he backwardness and stagnation characterizing Negro college libraries continued in many institutions well into the decade of the twenties.”\(^6\) He continued,

In 1928 the United States Office of Education’s survey of private Negro institutions disclosed outstanding deficiencies in their libraries. Most of these
colleges had existed for years; many of them had libraries either as depositories for odd, unorganized groups of books, or else for the mere fact that educational institutions traditionally included some room or department to be known as a ‘library.’ Out of seventy-nine colleges, it was revealed, only fifteen had libraries with 10,000 or more volumes, and seven colleges either had no library at all or had collections too wretched to be known as libraries.\textsuperscript{vii}

He quoted the conclusions of a 1930 U.S. Office of Education study on African-American colleges: “It is obvious…that one of the important duties devolving upon the administrative authorities of the Negro land-grant colleges is the strengthening and upbuilding of their libraries and library service.”\textsuperscript{viii} The situation improved somewhat beginning in 1928 with the founding of the General Education Board, which frequently funded library projects at African-American colleges and universities, as well as after 1930, when many African-American colleges and universities began the process to become accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, which placed a high emphasis on library quality. However, progress typically slowed after the accreditation process was completed.\textsuperscript{ix}

The opening of the Hampton Library School in 1925 also helped encourage more African-American students to pursue higher education in library science, and this improved African-American academic libraries as well, not only by improving the staff, but as Shores put it, by “building up a ‘library-minded-ness’ among Negro educators, few of whom were fully aware of the significance of library training and service.”\textsuperscript{x} Still, even though enrollments were increasing, many schools struggled to provide their students with adequate library facilities and research guidance. Even as late as 1946, six African-American colleges and universities in Atlanta (Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Spelman College, Morris Brown College, Clark College, and Gammon Theological College) shared one library.\textsuperscript{xi}
In the 1944 publication *Libraries, Librarians, and the Negro*, which was produced by the library school at Atlanta University and was intended to encourage African-American students to pursue a career in librarianship, the authors noted when describing collections development advances in Negro college libraries:

Here again, much remains to be done. It is not necessary to compare the collections of Negro college and university libraries with those of Harvard University, say, with its 4 million volumes, or even with Dartmouth College and its half million volumes in order to see this. Negro land-grant colleges in the South hold an average of 15,388 volumes as compared with an average of 80,917 volumes in 7 white land-grant colleges (not including any of which are also State universities) in the South. The facts speak for themselves.

In her 1954 article “Library Resources for Graduate Study in Southern Universities for Negroes,” Dorothy M. McAllister summarized a study of libraries at eleven African-American colleges and universities that had begun offering graduate programs since the year 1937, which closely coincided with Supreme Court’s decision in the Gaines case. Using data collected from 1951-1952, McAllister compared the facilities and resources of academic libraries at African-American colleges and universities to those of a number of white colleges and universities with similar academic programs and student body sizes. She quoted a report about 58 white colleges including “Adelphi College, Amherst, Dartmouth, Bryn Mawr, Mt. Holyoke, Roosevelt, Wake Forrest, Williams [sic] and Mary, Ohio University, Howard, Fisk, and Xavier.” Howard and Fisk were the only African-American institutions included in this group. She observed that “[a] comparison of the salaries, book budgets, book collections, and accessions for 1951-1952, of the ten Negro institutions surveyed with the fifty-eight other [white] institutions offering similar programs, revealed that the Negro institutions were weakest in the book collections.”
McAllister also compared the ten African-American schools with a group of eleven white schools (Amherst, Appalachian State Teacher’s College, Butler University, Clemson, Colorado A&M, East Carolina College, North Texas State, Ohio University, South Illinois, Wake Forest, and William and Mary) that had been selected to match the African-American institutions in her study in terms of overall size, graduate student population, and academic programs. She summarized this comparison by stating that “in every category salary budget, book budget and accessions the white universities as a group surpass the Negro universities.”

In interpreting this data, McAllister observed that before the recent expansion of graduate programs in African-American colleges and universities, the libraries at white institutions had already been larger and held more books. She continued, “therefore, the annual expenditures for books in the Negro schools should be larger to purchase books which could not be purchased before the universities offered graduate work.” In other words, the white schools had long been offering graduate courses, so they already had such books before the time of the study, while the African-American schools had expanded or opened graduate programs, so they would require higher funding levels than the white schools, in order to “catch up.” McAllister concluded that “it will be necessary, therefore, for these institutions to continue to increase the library budget and to work out a means of co-operating with other nearby scholarly libraries in certain areas of specialization.”

As of 1950, there were five public HBCUs in North Carolina: Elizabeth City State Teachers College (now Elizabeth City State University), The North Carolina College at Durham (which until 1947 had been called the North Carolina College for Negroses, and
is now called North Carolina Central University; hereafter called the North Carolina College, The Agricultural and Technical College of North Carolina (now the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, hereafter abbreviated as A&T), Winston-Salem Teachers College (now Winston-Salem State University), and Fayetteville State Teachers College (now Fayetteville State University). The five schools consisted of two teacher training institutions, a technical school, and a land-grant college. The two schools closest to the schools in the Consolidated University of North Carolina were the North Carolina College, which was near the State College and UNC, and A&T, which was in the same city as the Woman’s College. Although each school in the Consolidated University had long had varying unofficial agreements allowing for use of its library materials by nearby colleges, including HBCUs, the schools quickly developed formal, standardized policies when the first graduate students integrated UNC in 1951.

In North Carolina, the allocation of resources to the public white higher-education institutions and public HBCUs had long been unequal. By the end of the 1946-1947 school year, the 12 total HBCUs (both public and private) held a total of 253,631 volumes, which was just over half of the 494,467 volumes held at UNC alone. In a report summarizing the library resources of North Carolina public, special, and academic libraries, Marjorie Beal, of the North Carolina Library Commission, noted that “the six state supported colleges for white youth which reported have an average of 47 books per student, compared with a 24.9 average for the five state supported colleges for Negro youth.” These differences in funding and resources were still apparent five years later, in statistics documenting the 1953-1954 school year. Both sets of data are outlined more fully in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.
Notes

iIbid., 45.
iIbid., 45.
iIbid., 45.
iIbid., 379.
iIbid., 624.
iQtd. in Ibid., 626.
i Wheeler, Johnson-Houston, and Walker, 45 and Hulbert, 626-627.
iIbid., 57.
i Ibid., 57.
i Ibid., 58.
i Ibid., 58.
i Ibid., 58.
i Ibid., 59.
II. Access Policies at the Consolidated University of North Carolina, 1951-1958

Overview

In 1931, the three strongest public universities in North Carolina joined to combat financial pressures during the Great Depression. The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, The North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering of the University of North Carolina, Raleigh, and The Woman’s College of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro merged to form the Consolidated University of North Carolina. Although each school retained its own identity and campus administration, the leader of each school reported to a joint President of the Consolidated University of North Carolina. The President of the Consolidated University oversaw a head administrator on each of the three campuses, initially called the Dean of Administration, and later the Chancellor. All three schools shared a board of trustees.

Several schools, particularly the Woman’s College, strongly opposed the coordination measures, and the different academic strengths and personalities of each school continued to make it difficult to come to agreements on standardized policies and procedures. The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, was unquestionably the flagship campus in the Consolidated University system, and received the lion’s share of funding, support, and power. Still, it met with strong reactions from the other two schools whenever it attempted to unilaterally force changes on its sister schools, particularly when social issues were involved.
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

The University of North Carolina’s internal correspondence and policies reflect these conflicting, and sometimes contradictory, attitudes well. For example, in 1925, Louis Round Wilson, Librarian of The University of North Carolina, was selected to visit several African-American colleges and universities in order to recommend one to the Board of Education for Librarianship to be the home of a new graduate program in library science. Wilson considered Howard University, Fisk University, Hampton, and Tuskegee, and wrote that he preferred Hampton because “as the principal and heads of the various schools are white, it has had at all times the advantage of white managerial intelligence.” He further urged the Board of Education for Librarianship to make their decision based on one “fundamental question,” namely, “shall you place your school in an institution which is apt to follow the lead of DuBois [who argued for what Wilson called ‘a negro institution manned by negroes’], or one in which the closest sort of cooperation with the white people will be maintained by the negroes?”

Two decades earlier, in 1912, the University of North Carolina had established an extension service program, which served the general population of the state of North Carolina. The service grew out of the larger Progressive Era “library movement” in North Carolina that sought to educate citizens, and in turn create “better communities and a better nation.” Yet the program, while well-intended, also serves as an early example of the sometimes contradictory impulses and policies about outside use of the library. For example, in the Librarian’s Report for 1910-11, just before the formal organization of the extension service program, University of North Carolina librarian Louis Round Wilson wrote that although the library did not “attempt to furnish material to individuals
and institutions out in the State, it has freely invited them to make use of it here.” But later in the report, Wilson described recent loans of a number of small, topical package libraries to reading groups and social clubs. These efforts formed the basis of the Extension Service, which sent out loans through its General Information Division, and had become so popular within five years of the program’s founding that it served 5,426 non-University patrons during the years 1914-1916. Although the program gradually amassed a collection of its own, the Extension Service primarily relied on books from the main University Library.\textsuperscript{iv} The burden grew as demand increased, reaching a “post-Depression peak” in 1947-1948, when “27,432 books and pamphlets, in almost 7,000 packages, were sent out.”\textsuperscript{v} In 1954, the library’s leaders began to fear that the extension service would soon” cripple our on-campus service,” and the program ceased its “direct service to students of schools, high schools, and small colleges.”\textsuperscript{vi}

The library’s attempt to curb extension loans to students accompanied an overall 1954 goal to “redefine its policy on service to off-campus readers,” in order “to prevent duplication of work that should be done by the local libraries.”\textsuperscript{vii} At that time, the librarian developed a new policy for outside users, which stated that outside borrowers would only be able to loan books directly from the university if they did not have access to a public library or bookmobile. Otherwise, borrowers would need to go through the North Carolina Library Commission, and the interlibrary loan system. The Extension Service was abolished outright in 1958.\textsuperscript{viii} The recipients of the Extension Service’s loans undoubtedly included African-American patrons, but the library found it more difficult to determine how to handle these patrons when they wished to use the library’s resources in person.
The issue of African-American on-site patrons is first reflected in the archival records of The University of North Carolina in the 1930s, when UNC professor Howard W. Odum, who was the head of the sociology department and has been described as “one of the most influential southern liberals in academic life,” wrote several times to request that African-American scholars be admitted to perform research in the library, first requesting permission for a Mr. Samuel Moss Carter of Shaw University in Raleigh to study in the main library in June 1938. In response to this request, the librarian wrote that “[o]ur regular arrangement for colored students in the University Library is to give them stack permits and assign them carrels in the stacks… I would be glad for you to tell him to come by my office or see Mr. [Olan V.] Cook at the circulation desk and we will provide accommodations for him.” However, despite his support in these instances, Odum wrote elsewhere that he doubted any African-American’s capability to perform serious research. In his book *Social and Mental Traits of the American Negro*, Odum wrote that he believed that African-Americans had certain genetic tendencies that made them ill-suited for higher education:

> The young educated negroes are not a force for good in the community but for evil. The Negro quickly outgrows the influence and control of his instructors; especially has this been noted in cases where the [northern] whites have taught them … They imitate the whites and believe themselves thereby similar to them.

These conflicting attitudes seem to have been shared by several library leaders at The University of North Carolina, including Louis Round Wilson and Olan V. Cook. Yet some members of the University of North Carolina community staunchly supported African-American scholarship. In a 1936 speech to the Institute on Regional Development, UNC Professor Guy B. Johnson urged for a “New Deal” for African-Americans in the South, and said:
One thing which we need very much to do is to make the better white university libraries more accessible to Negro scholars in nearby institutions. Does it not seem a bit stupid to make a Negro professor forego on his particular problem except when he can get away to Chicago or Columbia or some other northern school while all the time he has been living within the shadow of a good library? … I know any number of first-rate Negro scholars teaching in the South who would give almost anything to be able to use a university library. In some cases they could have the use of the library for the asking, but so many of these Negroes have learned from bitter experience that their reception may be anything but cordial that they simply forego this privilege rather than risk the danger of being insulted or Jim Crowed.\

In her article for *Library Quarterly* about university library cooperation, Sidney Butler Smith notes that in 1939, “the privileges of both university libraries [the University of North Carolina and Duke University] were extended to the North Carolina College for Negroes…” Although it is unclear what these privileges entailed, this statement proves that there was at least some sort of arrangement between these libraries as of 1939.

In a 1943 article, University of North Carolina librarian Louis Round Wilson wrote an article for *Social Sources*, in which he discusses the variation in spending on academic libraries for white and African-American institutions, and notes that even the largest African-American college libraries only had at most 70,000 volumes, which Wilson felt was an insufficient number to support graduate and professional study. Wilson continues, “As a result of the decision of the Supreme Court in the Gaines case, Negro state supported institutions have recently received greater appropriations for these purposes, but the appropriations have not been sufficient to remove the heavy limitation upon effective work in graduate and professional study.”

He later notes that the lack of sufficient materials to support graduate and professional students at each college in the South is largely due to the unnecessary
duplication of resources and effort necessitated by having institutions segregated by race and gender, in which “several institutions have to be provided to do the work which only one institution does elsewhere.” Wilson explains, “[t]he University of Illinois offers instruction to men and women of all races in the humanities, agriculture, and engineering. In North Carolina five institutions are required for this purpose.” Wilson goes on to argue that the journals and books the University of Illinois might purchase to begin a special chemistry collection would have to be divided between

… each of the three units of the University of North Carolina and the North Carolina College for Negroes and the Negro Agricultural and Technical College. These five journals would be available in one library in Illinois to whites and Negroes, men and women, and students in the humanities, the social sciences, the sciences, engineering, agriculture, and home economics, whereas the library of no one of the five North Carolina institutions could build up a collection that would be so extensive and specialized as that of the University of Illinois, except at great additional expense.

Wilson presents several suggestions for improvement, including his opinion that “[t]he apparent assumption which many communities in the South have acted upon that library service to Negroes is not essential will have to be abandoned.” Wilson says that he learned after conversing with African-American graduate students that

… the opportunities for Negro faculty members of southern colleges and universities to keep up with the developments in education and in the subjects which they taught were far less than for members of faculties of institutions for whites on account of lack of library resources. Educational foundations have done something to relieve this situation, but the fact remains that … students in Negro colleges and universities in the South have comparatively few library resources at hand. As a minority group they lack the opportunity to make use of library facilities essential to their full development as American citizens or participators in the upbuilding of the region.

In a November 1947 letter, the University of North Carolina head librarian Charles E. Rush responded to what appears to have been a request by A.F. Kuhlman, the
director of the Joint University Libraries in Nashville, Tennessee, to outline UNC’s procedures for admitting African-American patrons to the library. Rush wrote:

Our practice and procedure are a bit difficult to state specifically and logically. Will the following rough outline be helpful?

Owing to crowded conditions, undergraduate students from other institutions, both white and Negro, are served only through interlibrary loan and the library extension department. This, of course, includes local grade and high school students of all colors.

We have no stated policy on service to visiting Negro faculty and research students. Each case is handled according to its own needs and merits. On warranted and infrequent occasions we now grant:

Temporary stack permits
Use of catalogues and indexes
Temporary use of carrels and seminars

Negroes do not occupy table space in our reading rooms. Lack of sufficient lavatory facilities cause us some difficulty at times. By staff agreement, one of the small, closed lavatories is used on occasions by Negro women.xix

With the advent of integration measures in 1951, it quickly became imperative to find a way to outline these procedures much more “specifically and logically.” However, the University of North Carolina administrators faced a challenge from the Woman’s College librarian, who held a much more permissive outlook on the issue of African-American users, and on integration in general.
Notes


ii Qtd. in Ibid., 304.


iv Ibid., 25.

v Ibid., 34.

vi Ibid., 46-47.

vii Ibid., 45.

viii Ibid., 42.


x “Negro Use of the Library,” Office of the University Librarian Records #40047, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

xi Qtd. in Winston, 687.

xii “Closing Arguments For ‘New Deal’ In South,” *Wyandotte Echo*, September 11, 1936.


xv Ibid., 465.

xvi Ibid., 465.

xvii Ibid., 466.

xviii Ibid., 466.

xix “Negro Use of the Library,” Office of the University Librarian Records #40047, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
The Woman’s College of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro

The Woman’s College of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, was founded in 1892 as the State Normal and Industrial School. Although its leaders had initially hoped for it to become “the women’s university of North Carolina, as nearly parallel as possible to the male university at Chapel Hill,” the merger that formed the Consolidated University of North Carolina left most of the system’s graduate programs focused in Chapel Hill, limiting the Woman’s College’s ability to add more advanced academic programs. As college historian Allen W. Trelease put it, “[a]s one of the original three, UNCG nourished early hopes of achieving parity with Chapel Hill and Raleigh. But these hopes quickly faded as UNCG continued to occupy an uneasy third place in the hierarchy…”

Throughout its history, the Woman’s College has been constantly underfunded, a victim of Louis Round Wilson’s observation in the 1930s that the state’s presumed need to support so many institutions that had been segregated by race or gender left fewer resources for each individual institution.

The Woman’s College’s location, within close proximity to several different HBCUs, led to frequent interactions with its neighbors. The degree to which these interactions were mutually beneficial or strained varied according to the attitudes of its administrative leaders. For example, in 1929, W.C. Jackson, who was then a professor of History at the Woman’s College, wrote to the Dean of Administration (a title which would later change to Chancellor) Isaac J. Foust, protesting the library’s policy of turning away students of the nearby HBCU A&T. Although Foust ultimately relented and agreed to allow A&T students to borrow books from and use the Woman’s College library, he wrote in his response to W.C. Jackson that he would first need to consult with the
Woman’s College doctor, in order to ascertain “what danger from disease NCCW 
students might incur as a result of such use.”iii However, W.C. Jackson later served as 
Chancellor of the Woman’s College, and encouraged cooperation between the Woman’s 
College and other local white and African-American colleges, including Bennett College, 
A&T, Greensboro College, and Guilford College, among others. The third school in the 
Consolidated University of North Carolina, The North Carolina State College of 
Agriculture and Engineering of the University of North Carolina, Raleigh, faced the same 
financial challenges as the Woman’s College, but was not nearly as supportive of 
cooperative arrangements, or outside borrowers.

Notes

i Allen W. Trelease, Making North Carolina Literate: The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 
from Normal School to Metropolitan University (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2004), xiii.

ii Ibid., xiii.

iii Ibid., 127.
The North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering of the University of North Carolina, Raleigh

The North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering of the University of North Carolina, Raleigh opened as the North Carolina Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1889, with one room set aside as a library.¹ By 1911, the library had 7,500 volumes.² The library was always a weak spot in the university’s resources, and as former library director Isaac Littleton notes, “As the history of the library unfolds, statistics on library appropriations and growth of the collection substantiate that college administrators, state budget authorities, and many faculty members did not visualize the necessity for strengthening the library adequately to meet the growing educational and research needs of the college, even into the 1960s.”³³

Low funding levels, poor facilities, and insufficient resources continued to plague the school. In 1923-1924 statistics from the American Library Association, State College ranked 33rd in enrollment, 16th in income, 50th in volumes in the library, and 47th in volumes per student.⁴ The school struggled to support its own students, and had few resources to support outside users, even after a new library building opened in 1925. It opened an extension program in 1924, following the lead of its peer institutions, but it was never a frequent lender. After the formation of the Consolidated University of North Carolina in 1931, funding eventually increased overall for all three institutions, but initially, it was even lower, as the consolidation was spurred by the financial challenges of the Great Depression. State College also proved to be a thorn in the side of its fellow members in the Consolidated University, as the state government typically used State College’s astoundingly low budget requests as benchmarks to use when funding the other two schools.
State College’s first difficulties with outside users came in the late 1930s, when the director wrote in the library’s 5-year report that the presumed inadequacy of Raleigh public libraries had led many people to use the State College libraries. This use had become so frequent that it eventually began to limit service to the school’s students and faculty, and in 1940, the Library Committee “voted to place restrictions on lending materials to people not connected with State College: students and teachers of elementary and secondary schools and of other colleges, and private citizens. These groups could get materials through interlibrary loan, from their local public libraries, the North Carolina Library Commission, or from the Extension Service at UNC. The only individuals not connected with State College who were allowed to check out books were local clergymen, doctors, lawyers, and government officials.”

The same postwar growth of graduate programs that HBCUs faced also affected white colleges. Enrollment increased, and both the Woman’s College and State College wanted to begin offering doctoral degrees, which then were only offered at the University of North. Still, when State College did begin to offer these programs, beginning in 1948 at State College, it placed an additional strain on the library’s resources, and left it further unable to serve patrons who were outside the university community.

In 1947-1948, Harlan Brown wrote in his annual report that “never before have the staff or the facilities of the D.H. Hill Library been as taxed… Inadequate seating accommodations, inadequate book resources, inadequate work space, and inadequate professionally trained personnel have all contributed to a difficult, strenuous year.” During the same year, Brown wrote a letter to Chancellor Harrelson stating that the school was only spending 1.1% of its total college budget on the library, which was “the
lowest among all southeastern colleges and universities,” and compared with 5.75% at UNC and 3% at UNC-G. In 1948, State College had 96,000 volumes and a budget of $75,000, compared to UNC’s 514,797 volumes and $278,504 in 1948. This lack of resources made the State College librarian eager to enact the University of North Carolina’s proposed policies limiting outside users.

Notes

2 Ibid., 9.
3 Ibid., 9.
4 Ibid., 12.
5 Ibid., 24.
6 Ibid., 27
7 Ibid., 28.
8 Ibid., 30.
The issue of African-American patrons came to a head in April 1951, when Gordon Gray, President of the Consolidated University of North Carolina, made an inquiry into the development of formal policies regarding the use of the library by African-Americans. He requested formal reports from the Chancellors of three schools in the UNC system: Chancellor Edward K. Graham (Woman’s College), Chancellor J. W. Harrelson (State College), and Chancellor R. B. House (UNC). The Chancellors of each school were aided by, and frequently refer in their correspondence to, the director of each school’s library: Charles E. Rush (UNC), Charles M. Adams (Woman’s College) and Harlan M. Brown (State College).

In a letter dated 10 April 1951 from Edward K. Graham, who at the time was Chancellor of the Woman’s College, to Charles M. Adams, who was the head librarian at the Woman’s College, Graham strongly rebuked Adams for making the decision to not segregate the newly-opened library, and to allow African-Americans to use it freely. Graham reminded Adams that the librarian had no authority to make or question policy, as it is determined by the President and the Board of Trustees, and said,

The Library has not, up to this time, received any instruction to change present practice in respect to the use of the Library by Negroes. You have been told (and I think the logic here is inescapable) that if present practice does not conform to the policy of the Trustees, as interpreted by the President, the Library is going to have to change it. In reply to your comment that change would be embarrassing to effect, possible devices were suggested as worth considering if change became necessary.

The immediate issue is not to determine the relative merits of separate or joint use of our facilities by Negroes and whites. The immediate issue is to get a determination as to whether or not what we are doing is acceptable under Trustee policy as interpreted by the President of the University, and, if it must be changed, in what respect it must be changed. …
We now find ourselves in an unhappy position where the College could bring embarrassment to President Gray at a time when he is engaged in the thankless assignment of trying to bring some measure of order and equity into racial relations in higher education in this State.”

In a letter dated 12 April 1951 and addressed to President Gray, Chancellor Graham of fretted about the current situation and opined that

We have a chance of getting out of this thing with a whole skin, but it is not much more than a chance. A policy question that could have been settled without recrimination when we moved into the Library several months ago could very easily become a burning issue now, no matter which direction we take. Because a practice has already been established, if we change it we shall be in the position of reversing ourselves for reasons which some quarters will be at pains to ascribe to racial prejudice. If we do not change it, we shall conceivably be in the position of running counter to University policy and the desires of the Trustees and the people of the State. While it is not yet firmly established that we are running counter to such policy and desires, it is hard for me to differentiate between joint use of classrooms and joint use of study tables in the Library. I believe that we have to withhold judgment on this point until the Library has submitted a memorandum, which it has been instructed to prepare forthwith.

This letter likely also reflects a conflict of opinion between Chancellor Graham and the Woman’s College librarian Charles Adams, as Adams supported integration on all levels, while Graham gave a speech to a local PTA group in early 1952 in support of voluntary segregation in schools. Adams, on the other hand, was instrumental in leading the movement to merge the North Carolina Library Association (NCLA) and its African-American counterpart, the North Carolina Negro Library Association (NCNLA). When the Woman’s College hosted the 1951 annual meeting of the NCLA, he obtained special permission to invite the NCNLA to participate in all of the non-dining portions of the meeting, and put the issue of his proposed merger to a vote, which did not pass.

Despite these differences of opinion, Adams and Graham appear to have come to a compromise, as it established a policy forbidding use of the library by “outside borrowers” except during limited hours. In the University of North Carolina library
records, document entitled “Use of the Library by Negroes,” dated 13 April 1951, outlines the following policies, which are less clear:

The University of North Carolina Library is visited on an average of once a week by graduate students of the North Carolina College, Greensboro A&T, or other neighboring colored institutions. There is some use also by the teachers of these institutions and by Negro teachers of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro community.

Infrequently, Negro students have been presented at the Library by members of the University’s faculty (Lefler, Ashby, Blaine) who were serving as visiting teachers or lecturers at negro institutions, particularly. These presentations have on several occasions been made with a request for the temporary assignment of study space, such as a carrel. Where possible these requests have been granted and in all instances courteous service has been rendered.

Policy, based on excessive demands for service by the University’s Faculty and swollen student enrollments of recent years, has been to advise Negro patrons that facilities of the building are open to them at the time of their visit but no materials may be withdrawn from the Library building except through the Extension Department or through Interlibrary Loan Service. In all instances a statement is made to the effect that the University, though a State Institution, is duty bound to restrict its services to its own campus primarily.

In response to a request by Olan V. Cook, who was assistant librarian at the UNC University Library, James W. Patton, the head of the Southern Historical Collection at the UNC University Library, wrote a Memorandum dated 13 April 1951 entitled “Use of the Southern Historical Collection by Negroes.” In it, Patton noted that such use had not been heavy, with no more than five African-American patrons in the past year, and that “in every instance since I have been connected with the Southern Historical Collection, the Negro users have been mature persons, mainly advanced graduate students at the State College in Durham, or teachers in the various Negro colleges in North Carolina. Except for skin coloring they have not differed in any respect from comparably situated white scholars. Our present policy is to make no distinction between the services rendered by the Southern Historical Collection to white scholars and to Negro scholars.”
Although Olan V. Cook was involved in the development of policy changes improving African-American access to the collections, the UNC library’s records also contain a letter dated 11 August 1955 which is addressed to Cook from Governor of North Carolina Luther H. Hodges. Hodges wrote: “Thank you for your letter of August 9 with reference to my recent speech on the public school segregation problem in North Carolina. I appreciate your expression of confidence, and I will be grateful for anything that can be done to help make successful this program of voluntary separate school attendance.” From this letter, it appears that despite his involvement with developing policy changes at the UNC library, like Chancellor Graham of the Woman’s College, Cook personally supported voluntarily segregated schools. In a memorandum dated 19 April 1951 from Olan V. Cook to Chancellor House, Cook writes,

There is no stated policy on record governing the use of the University Library by Negroes. Each application for Library privileges has been handled on the basis of legitimacy of need, materials required for use, and the availability of space other than the general reading room …

During the past several years, our Negro visitors would not average more than one per week. All of them have been serious students, appreciative of permission to use our resources not available elsewhere in the State and cooperative in following instructions.

… With the addition of more natural and normal facilities for individual study and research in both the Main Library and the Law Library, continued use of the collections by qualified Negro patrons will not be as seemingly segregated as before, but should be perfectly satisfactory for all concerned.

The library’s records also contain a series of letters from D. Eric Moore, librarian of the North Carolina College at Durham, to Olan V. Cook, assistant librarian at UNC. In the letters, Moore asks for advice in preparing the library for the African-American college to support a proposed graduate program in education. In one letter, dated 14 June 1951, D. Eric Moore writes:
You have probably seen in the newspapers that a proposal is being made that our College offer programs leading to the doctor’s degree in some fields equivalent to such programs which are offered at your University. There are some officials on our campus who believe that we should gather data as to what your Library has in the field of Education that our Library does not have and that we should form an estimate of the cost of making our collection in Education substantially equal to yours. So, I have been directed to ask your Library for statistics on its holdings in Education so that I can find some cost figure which may be presented to the joint committee representing our trustee boards, if it is formed.

With this explanation I should like to ask you for whatever data you can give me which may be used for purposes of comparison of our Libraries’ abilities to support instruction in Education at the doctoral level.\footnote{ix}

Both Cook and the head librarian Charles E. Rush refused Moore’s request, claiming that it would take too long and require an unreasonable effort to gather the requested data or to make a list of suggested books.

During the tumultuous period from 1951-1952, while UNC struggled to develop strategies for admitting and teaching individual African-American graduate students while maintaining partially segregated facilities and avoiding further integration measures, every request for an African-American researcher to use the library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill had to be cleared through Chancellor Robert House and then through Gordon Gray, who was President of the consolidated University of North Carolina.\footnote{x} One such request, dated 15 May 1951, from Dr. Helen G. Edmonds, a faculty member at the North Carolina College, included this quote:

I am writing this letter about something which vitally concerns me. I am a Negro and am employed in the Graduate School of North Carolina College at Durham in the field of History. … My problem is this: I do not wish to create or present a racial problem at the University of North Carolina in view of the present tension; however, some of the materials which I wish to use are in your library… It would be impossible for me to do a representative piece of historical research without seeing the manuscripts.

I have no desire or intention of matriculating at the University of North Carolina. I hold the following degrees already in the field of History: the Bachelor of Arts,
the Master of Arts and the Doctor of Philosophy. I am interested solely in seeing some of the materials in your library. Could you find it possible to clear through administrative channels a permission for me to see the materials (primary sources) which are located at the University of North Carolina?

The University of North Carolina library’s records also contain the memoranda sent from the librarian to the chancellor to the president approving the order. In addition, the reference librarian Georgia H. Faison noted in her response dated 22 May 1951 approving Dr. Edmonds’ request: “You will be interested to hear that the University has expanded its facilities since you last worked in the Library. Provisions for rest rooms have been made in the Morehead Planetarium.” After writing a self-effacing letter outlining her research goals and excellent credentials, in which she felt required to assure the librarians that she had no intention of doing anything that might contribute to the controversy and racial tensions brought about by the recent admission of UNC’s first African-American graduate student, Dr. Edmonds had finally been approved to research in UNC’s library—but she still had to use a separate restroom, in a building located on the opposite side of campus.
Notes

i “Segregation,” Office of the President of the University of North Carolina (System): Gordon Gray Records, #40008, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
i
ii Ibid.

iii Edward Kidder Graham, Jr. Records, UA 2.4, Martha Blakeney Hodges Special Collections and Archives, Walter Clinton Jackson Library, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

iv University Libraries Records, UA 11.1, Martha Blakeney Hodges Special Collections and Archives, Walter Clinton Jackson Library, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

v “Negro Use of the Library,” Office of the University Librarian Records #40047, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

vi Ibid.

vii “Segregation,” in Office of the University Librarian Records #40047, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

viii “Negro Use of the Library,” in Office of the University Librarian Records #40047, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

ix Ibid.
x Ibid.
x Ibid.
Conclusion

This study ends in 1958, the year in which the final member of the Consolidated University of North Carolina integrated its undergraduate program. However, as an anecdote from one of the first African-American undergraduate students at the University of Texas shows, access problems continued long after formal policy allowed library use. Peggy Drake Holland attended the University of Texas from 1958 to 1962, after the first group of undergraduate students had arrived in the fall of 1956. A student in the College of Business, Holland was studying in the business library one evening, when “an older white man sat down across from her at a table and stared at her for a couple of minutes before writing something on a piece of paper and sliding it over to her. Holland did not read the note and quickly an off, never again to study in the business library.”

What should we learn from this period of our library’s history, and from these examples of discrimination against African-American scholars? Lorna Peterson puts it well in her review of John Hope Franklin’s autobiography for Library Quarterly:

The importance of this historian’s life should not be lost on those in the library and information science professions. Franklin’s interactions with our institutions contextualize the pace of libraries and archives in a historian’s life and also the collusion of our institutions and their workers in the racist environment of the United States. Franklin transformed American historiography while directly experiencing racism in information access. His memoir challenges us in LIS to uncover the racism our institutions perpetuate. LIS professionals should not read his memoir as a triumphalist tale but rather as a shameful part of American history and life in which our profession participated.

It is important for us as library professionals to remember that we have frequently denied access to knowledge as well as fostered it. Although it can be difficult to reflect
on such an uncomfortable and shameful part of our institutional history, examining the segregation policies of the Consolidated University of North Carolina libraries teaches us about the challenges African-American researchers have faced, and reminds us that we must be willing to question and challenge such policies and ensure that we provide free and open access to information for all who wish it.

In addition, the relative paucity of research relating to this subject suggests a number of avenues for further inquiry, such as an expansion of the study to consider private schools, religiously-affiliated schools, or other geographic regions. A full study of the history of training programs for African-American academic librarians has yet to be written, as does a history of the Negro Library Associations of each state. Finally, how did African-American scholars overcome access challenges well enough to successfully complete their research? Although John Hope Franklin and E.H. Fitchett described their experiences researching in Southern libraries in great and fascinating detail, this researcher was unable to identify any other accounts by or about specific African-American researchers attempting to use white academic or research libraries. Further research on any of these topics would add greatly to our understanding of our profession’s sometimes painful past, and remind us to remain vigilant in ensuring free and open access to information for all who seek it.

Notes


### Appendix 1: Library Funding and Resources, 1946-1947

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<th>Total Volumes</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
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<th>Volumes Per Student</th>
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Figure 1: The Consolidated University of North Carolina Libraries, 1946-1947

<table>
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<th>Library Expenditures Per Student</th>
<th>Volumes Per Student</th>
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Figure 2: Public North Carolina Historically Black College and University Libraries, 1946-1947

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\[ii\] Ibid.
## Appendix 2: Library Funding and Resources, 1953-1954

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<th>Institution</th>
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<th>Total Volumes</th>
<th>Total Library Expenditures</th>
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<th>Volumes Per Student</th>
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Figure 3: The Consolidated University of North Carolina Libraries, 1953-1954

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Figure 4: Public North Carolina Historically Black College and University Libraries, 1953-1954

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2. Ibid.
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University Libraries Records, UA 11.1, Martha Blakeney Hodges Special Collections and Archives, Walter Clinton Jackson Library, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.


