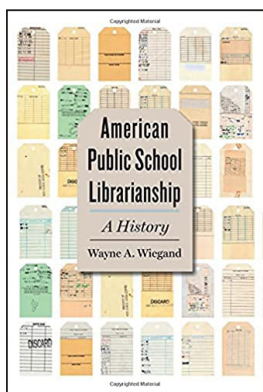


Wayne A. Wiegand. *American Public School Librarianship: A History*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021. 360p. Hardcover, \$49.95 (ISBN: 978-1-4214-4150-1).



As I write this, New England and the Mid-Atlantic are digging out from a Nor'easter that dumped 20 to 30 inches of snow on coastal towns. Thinking about Wayne Wiegand's stature in the library history discipline as I experience these wintry conditions, the metaphor that comes to mind is of a rugged pathbreaker who is the first to trudge across a cold, unwelcoming field, making a way for followers who will gratefully fit their feet into his steps. Wiegand's *The Politics of an Emerging Profession* (Greenwood, 1986) and *Irrepressible Reformer* (1996) remain valuable starting points for researching the early history of the American Library Association and for understanding Melvil Dewey, one of the profession's controversial but foundational individuals. More recently, Wiegand's *Part of Our Lives* (Oxford, 2015) has called into question how libraries understand themselves, valuing their role in information-seeking/vetting at the expense of recreational reading materials, community social spaces, and other offerings that library users cherish. His insights on those fronts have influenced my own work and will likely shape a generation or more of scholars.

In *American Public School Librarianship*, Wiegand similarly provides a volume that will be a point of departure for the present and next generation. Here, he asks, "why did school librarianship turn out the way it did, and what can its history tell us about its limitations and opportunities in the twenty-first century's coming decades?" (2). As Wiegand argues in his Introduction, the constraints of educational and library structures that already existed when the public school library profession came into being are central to the answer. For example, school librarians faced adverse power dynamics due to the fiscal control that administrators have wielded and due to the roles textbook publishers and state standards have played in shaping educational environments. From both the education and public library worlds, school libraries also inherited a focus on "useful knowledge," narrowing their focus to serving curricular needs and teaching information literacy. For these reasons, Wiegand contends, school libraries did not encourage reading for pleasure, or school libraries as social spaces, as much as they might have done. Also, they did not respond as progressively as they could have to calls for racial desegregation and other issues.

In this book, we benefit from a treasure-trove of material about school libraries that Wiegand has accumulated through five decades of research on other topics. One strength is his documentation of the early influence of municipal libraries on school libraries, establishing branches within schools or providing children's materials to classrooms. Because of this genealogy, many school libraries ended up employing the Dewey Decimal Classification, using the *ALA Catalog* and Wilson bibliographies as selection tools, and adopting the public library profession's service ethic. In large part, school librarians also heeded the advice of a children's literature "clerisy," which promoted certain types of books for juvenile readers. This part of Wiegand's work is based upon public library annual reports that shed light on the collaborative efforts those institutions attempted with nearby school districts.

American Public School Librarianship is also valuable for uncovering fascinating stories and people that may not be widely known. Personally, I was interested in the "libraries" (book collections for schools) developed by nineteenth-century publishers, and I would like to track down more analyses of the titles, authors, and social values they contained. Wiegand also pro-

vides a view of the embattled founding of the American Association of School Librarians and ongoing turf wars among children's, school, and audiovisual media professionals. For those who are interested in the influence of federal policy on libraries, a section on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act demonstrates how increased funding led to a "golden age" in school library development followed by declines because of Nixon-era budget cuts and a shift toward "teaching to the test." Many names, including C.C. Certain, Lucille Fargo, Laura K. Martin, Mary Peacock Douglas, Margaret Walraven, and Lillian Gerhardt, surface here and may deserve articles or even book-length treatments of their own.

Wiegand includes a bibliography of primary sources that demonstrates his use of *America's Historical Newspapers*, *Readers Guide Retrospective*, *JSTOR*, and other databases commonly used by historians. However, it must be said that his research from the Education perspective doesn't seem as deep. Much of the Education side of the story appears to come from published books, articles, and dissertations. While Wiegand used *ERIC*, *ProQuest Education Database*, the AASL Archives, and the NEA Archives, it is not clear that he consulted *Education Abstracts* (print), which lists earlier professional literature, or *State Education Journal Index*, which uncovers periodicals that are not included in the largest indexes. It seems that few if any archival collections of state-level education associations, state-level departments of education, or public schools were used. Herein lie significant limitations, because, as Wiegand points out, school librarians tend to affiliate more closely with the Education profession and only a small fraction of them have ever been members of AASL. Also, states and/or localities have significant influence over school librarian training and certification, curriculum content, and other aspects of schools that directly affect their libraries. It is hoped that future studies will provide a better sense of how national standards, ideals, and trends were perceived and implemented—and whether there were important differences—at the regional and local level.

Overall, Wiegand's effort affords us an admirable bird's-eye view of the existing scholarship on school libraries and helps us understand their history through the lens of the library profession more broadly. This approach isn't quite the same as researching the history of school libraries on their own terms or understanding them within the contexts of all the institutions, especially the educational ones, of which they are a part. However, it is a crucial beginning. —Bernadette A. Lear, *Penn State University*

Reimagining Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Survival Beyond 2021. Gary Crosby, Khalid A. White, Marcus A. Chanay, and Adriel Hilton, eds. Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing, 2021. 217p. Hardcover, \$95.00 (ISBN: 978-1800436657).

I have a sentimental connection to historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and remain deeply invested in their survival. I attended Winston-Salem State University and have chosen to work at HBCUs professionally because of their storied history and commitment to Black excellence. While the first HBCU was founded in Pennsylvania in 1837, most Black colleges were founded after the Civil War in the South to educate the formerly enslaved and their descendants. Today, two-year and four-year colleges, public and private institutions, medical and law schools make up more than 100 HBCUs—102 to be exact. *Reimagining Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Survival Beyond 2021* offers a kaleidoscopic view of these diverse institutions, combining historical analysis, theoretical interventions, and

