



FIGURE 1: Hannah Packard James, ca. 1885. From Myra Poland, "Miss Hannah Packard James," in *Proceedings and Collections of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society for the Years 1902–1903* (Wilkes-Barre, PA: The Society, 1904), 300–304.

YANKEE LIBRARIAN IN THE DIAMOND
CITY: HANNAH PACKARD JAMES,
THE OSTERHOUT FREE LIBRARY OF
WILKES-BARRE, AND THE PUBLIC LIBRARY
MOVEMENT IN PENNSYLVANIA

Bernadette A. Lear
Penn State Harrisburg Library

Nearly twenty-five years ago, Laurel Grotzinger wrote about the “paucity, perils, and pleasures” of researching women in librarianship. Citing the lack of “herstory” in library history scholarship, as well as the absence of librarianship in works on women’s history, Grotzinger found few studies that used primary source material to interpret female librarians within the context of their times.¹ Since then, there have been numerous articles and book chapters documenting female librarians. Recently, researchers have described the careers of government documents pioneers Edith Guerrier (1870–1958) and Adelaide Hasse (1868–1953), theological librarian/cataloger Julia Pettee (1872–1967), Oregon State Librarian Cornelia Marvin Pierce (1873–1957), library educator Mary Wright Plummer (1856–1916), and children’s librarian Effie Louise Power (1873–1969).² Yet few if any have studied women in Pennsylvania. In fact, there has been no article

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY: A JOURNAL OF MID-ATLANTIC STUDIES, VOL. 78, NO. 2, 2011.
Copyright © 2011 The Pennsylvania Historical Association

in either *Pennsylvania History* or the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* on women librarians in the past forty years.³

Perhaps more important, published studies of female librarians who were active *before* the American Civil War are relatively scant. There is a dire need for such research because, as Dee Garrison has found, there were two distinct generations practicing librarianship in the late Gilded Age and Progressive era. There was a “gentry” that had been in the field prior to the 1870s, and a new “professional class,” led by Melvil Dewey (of Dewey Decimal fame), which came to the fore in the mid-1890s. The studies cited above already tell us a great deal about new professional library women of the early twentieth century and, particularly in the case of Hasse and Pierce, how they interacted with the Progressive movement. However, none describe an older woman transitioning from a small-town society and worldview to an industrial, progressive outlook. Existing research may lead us to believe that most female librarians of the early 1900s were staunch Progressives, but some women were quite ambivalent about professional and social change.

Robert Wiebe’s and Steven Diner’s scholarship can help us contextualize and predict older librarians’ responses to the Progressive movement. Wiebe describes the period from the 1870s through the 1920s as a “search for order.” Prior to the Civil War, he argues, most communities were quite autonomous and handled community needs in informal ways. In fact, people who came of age in antebellum America had grown up on “islands,” “judging the world as they would their neighborhood. Their truths derived from what they knew; the economics of a family budget, the returns that came to the industrious and the lazy, the obnoxious behavior of the drunken braggart, the advantages of a wife who stayed home and kept a good house.” This generation “had little reason to believe that these daily precepts were not universally valid, and few doubted that the nation’s ills were caused by men who had dared to deny them.” This “society without a core” lacked “national centers of authority and information” that could have helped people cope with the economic and social effects of rapid industrialization.⁴

Over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it appears that nearly every American sought answers in higher education, morality crusades, social science, government and social programs, or other such activities. Yet Steven Diner’s research reveals that many “Progressive” individuals’ commitments were selective and their ideals were contradictory.⁵ Some social activists retained earlier beliefs in limited government, protection of property rights, and Social Darwinism, even as their contemporaries were

arguing for the expansion of state authority, were moving into communal settlement houses, and were questioning the entire socioeconomic order.

Unsurprisingly, such ambivalence emerged within librarianship, a profession that often marks its beginning with the founding of the American Library Association in 1876. As Dee Garrison points out, there was substantial conflict between the first and second generation of career librarians. Early leaders such as Justin Winsor of Harvard (1831–97), William Frederick Poole of the Newberry Library (1821–94), Charles Ammi Cutter of the Boston Athenaeum (1837–1903), and Josephus N. Larned of Buffalo (1836–1913) were part of a “gentry” whose attitudes “were anchored in a more provincial past, when family, education, and righteous behavior were the marks of a gentleman or lady within the local community.” Their “ideas were formed in a time when a more clearly defined group exercised unspecialized authority within a more deferential and cohesive society.” As Garrison further describes,

They placed great emphasis upon moral norms, as a way of governing themselves and of shaping the moral values of a society in which they felt disoriented and bypassed. . . . Active in education, charitable, municipal, and civil service reform, the recognizable group . . . was of native, usually New England, stock. . . . Responding to a mixture of clear fear, self-interest, and humanitarianism, alternating between excited optimism and gloomy foreboding, they attempted to alleviate the problems of political corruption, urban poverty, and labor unrest that challenged their familiar way of life. They never doubted the validity of imposing upon others their middle-class values: thrift, self-reliance, industriousness, and sensual control. Never comfortable in industrial America, they viewed themselves as saviors of society.⁶

Despite this helpful insight, there is little discussion of *female*, “gentry” librarians in Garrison’s book.⁷ Fortunately, a close examination of the later career of Hannah Packard James (1835–1903), who was the first librarian of the Osterhout Free Library in Wilkes-Barre, one of the founders of the Pennsylvania Library Association, and an early leader in the American Library Association, can fill in some of the gaps.⁸ Born in Scituate, Massachusetts, James grew up just on the periphery of Brahmin Boston. She was strongly influenced by her father, William James, who was the largest landowner in the area and a state senator who espoused decidedly pro-Northern convictions.

As a girl, she was also a member of a Unitarian church pastored by Samuel May, an abolitionist and peace advocate with a fiery sense of civic duty.⁹ She had experienced the limited opportunities for women's education that sparked Massachusetts's great reforms a few years later.¹⁰ She had also witnessed the demise of wooden shipbuilding, an industry that had enabled her family's prominence, and according to census records, she had borne the geographic dispersion of her siblings after their father's death.¹¹ One local historian has even stated that the James family went from being "prominent" in all aspects of community life to people whom Scituate residents forgot had "ever existed."¹²

James left the seaside life she cherished to live with an older sister in Newton, on the outskirts of Boston. James had lost a brother in Andersonville, the notorious Civil War prison, and while in Newton she coordinated a sewing circle to benefit Union soldiers.¹³ After the war, she started working at the new Free Library in Newton and she rose from a clerical assistant to head librarian. Even then, she kept involved with community and social causes. For example, she organized a collection of toys and supplies to donate to victims of the 1871 Chicago fire.¹⁴ By the time she moved to Wilkes-Barre in the late 1880s, James had been a librarian for seventeen years and had built a national reputation on her work with teachers and schoolchildren. She had become friends with Melvil Dewey, had been elected councilor of the American Library Association, and had lectured at the School of Library Service at Columbia, the first professional academic program for librarians. Given her upbringing, the great success of the public library movement in Massachusetts, and her own roles at the national level, James probably boarded the train to Pennsylvania with high confidence in the righteousness of her ideas.

Wilkes-Barre in the 1880s and 1890s

Like many communities during the Gilded Age, Wilkes-Barre was becoming a very different place than the bucolic, ethnically homogenous, and suburban enclave Hannah Packard James was leaving behind. Describing northeastern Pennsylvania during the late nineteenth century, one historian has called it "the best and worst of times." On one hand, there were "signs of growth and improvement," yet Dickensian "social and economic problems plagued" the area.¹⁵

Coal was the main reason for the region's growth. Northeastern Pennsylvania's anthracite was highly valued because it burned longer

and cleaner than other fuels. Mining became so crucial to Wilkes-Barre's well-being and identity that in 1906, when the city celebrated its centennial, it added a black diamond to its official seal. Today Wilkes-Barre is still known as the "diamond city."¹⁶ As Edward J. Davies explains, the nature of extractive industries meant that Wilkes-Barre was becoming increasingly connected with national economic developments. Coal operations had to be built wherever deposits were found; housing, banks, stores, and other services had to develop for local mine employees; and transportation routes had to be built to bring the coal to market.¹⁷ Because Philadelphia's needs were already filled by other collieries, the Wyoming Valley marketed its coal (and thus became well connected) to New York, New England, and the Great Lakes.¹⁸

As Davies has noted, Wilkes-Barre's leadership remained more cohesive—more Anglo-American, more Protestant, with more family ties to the Wyoming Valley—than Pottsville and other Pennsylvania communities.¹⁹ Other researchers have agreed that the area's coal barons ensured hegemony over the industry by serving on the boards of each other's companies, contributing to the same charities, attending the same churches, and marrying into each other's families. Although generous, they were "essentially conservative men, reluctant to admit outsiders to their closed circle of money and power." In the 1880s and 1890s this small group of people shaped the community's growth in particular ways. The city had just begun to pave its streets in asphalt, organized a cemetery, and devised gas and water systems—all signs of progress. Wilkes-Barre also boasted electric street lamps, long-distance telephone service, a public hospital, sewers, and other improvements. Wealthy residents were building handsome, river-view mansions along the Susquehanna River.²⁰

Despite some residents' civic generosity, Wilkes-Barre, like many urbanizing cities throughout the nation, experienced grating economic and social inequities. It was one of the fastest-growing cities in the nation, counting fewer than 25,000 residents in 1880 but more than 50,000 by 1900.²¹ Predictably, Wilkes-Barre's infrastructure and services experienced growing pains. Much of the area's wealth was dug from the earth by children and immigrants, living in shacks that were "abominations even by the low standards of the day."²² Despite some notable exceptions, it appears that many looked upon these poor (especially so-called foreigners) with attitudes ranging from insensitivity to terror. When compiling a promotional "souvenir" booklet, town boosters included full-page photographs of young boys working in coal breakers. The book's compilers were unapologetic about

the contrast between filthy, hunch-backed children and the crisp, stout-chested business leaders shown on other pages of the book.²³

Hannah Packard James may have been startled if she had tried to get to know her new hometown by reading local newspapers. The *Record of the Times* (the weekly version of Wilkes-Barre's Republican newspaper) was filled with the type of sensationalism she abhorred. Typical headlines described convicts who "swung into eternity," fire victims "burned to a crisp," and the "putrid remains" of murder victims who had been "hacked to pieces" with steak knives.

Another aspect of the changing city was the ethnicity of its residents. Although the number of foreign-born in Wilkes-Barre held at 22–25 percent from 1880 through 1910, the Germans, English, and Welsh predominant in earlier decades were beginning to give way to immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. By 1910 the largest numbers of foreign-born were from Russia, followed by those from Austria-Hungary. Nearly a thousand Italians had relocated to Wilkes-Barre as well.²⁴ Although the *Record of the Times* announced upcoming activities of a "Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle," and other activities she may have been familiar with, James may have felt that she was entering a different world.

James likely knew of the violent struggle between capitalists and labor, for the railroads and collieries in Pennsylvania were at the center of it. Unlike the craftsmen of earlier decades who took their skills and tools with them, an increasing number of Pennsylvanians became "dependent on employment by corporations that practiced an especially ruthless form of competitive capitalism." It was common for businesses to cut wages even in times of profit. In the 1860s the state's corporations won the right to establish their own police forces, enabling them to investigate and to punish employees. Unsurprisingly, Pennsylvania saw some of the nation's fiercest confrontations, including railroad strikes in 1877, the hanging of ten Irish laborers ("Molly Maguires") in Mauch Chunk (now Jim Thorpe) and Pottsville the same year, the Homestead strike of 1892, and the 1902 coal strike.²⁵

Thus Wilkes-Barre and other industrialized cities presented a quandary to social activists like James. As the daughter of a shipbuilder-turned-politician, James herself appreciated that many of Pennsylvania's elite were self-made men, and she knew they donated large sums to churches, hospitals, and other institutions. Yet the squalid conditions of others were difficult to ignore. Without education or the ability to cultivate relationships with those in power, a young person had very limited opportunities to raise his or her standing.

As we shall see, throughout her tenure in Wilkes-Barre James retained many of her beliefs regarding individual responsibility for social problems, the importance of protecting property rights, the transformative power of education, and the supremacy of Anglo-American culture. Long before she came to Wilkes-Barre, she had decided that much of the promise and much of the blame for the human condition were to be found in the choices made by individual people. To her, libraries could expose the public to new ideas, opportunities, and ways of life, and thus be a strong defense against economic and social ills. As she had in Newton, James strove to and succeeded in developing both a book collection that was intellectually broad and deep, and a physical environment that inspired noble thoughts. Yet her continuing focus on the individual would often cause her to ignore very real problems with the socioeconomic structure in which she was now living. James and the charitable associations she supported would often dismiss the “undeserving” poor, and would never (at least in print) call into question the larger socioeconomic problems that exacerbated such ills. These attitudes inevitably carried over into her work with libraries and other organizations, and in some cases may have caused some of their programs to fail. Though Hannah Packard James should not be faulted for lacking the same perspective as we have today, and although her views are not dissimilar from many other self-styled “Progressives” of the time, it is still important to examine her work with a critical eye.

A Free Library for Wilkes-Barre

Hannah Packard James’s move to Wilkes-Barre was a great opportunity for her, for the city, and for the library profession. Like many older communities in Pennsylvania, Wilkes-Barre had a long history of literary associations and social libraries. By 1886 the YMCA provided about 2,000 volumes. The library of the Wyoming (Valley, Pennsylvania) Historical and Geological Society, the Wilkes-Barre Law Library Association, and the Wyoming Athenaeum were also available. Yet the city lacked a general library that was open to men, women, and children.²⁶

A free library for Wilkes-Barre was long in coming, organized only through the careful foresight of a local businessman. Isaac Osterhout laid the foundation for his fortune in the 1830s when he began acquiring property around the city square. Though a keen businessman, he remained public-spirited, serving as

an officer of Hollenback Cemetery and giving a great deal of money to the local hospital. Osterhout had been a member of the Wyoming Athenaeum and likely understood its benefits and limitations. So, before his death, he willed his estate to establish the Osterhout Free Library.²⁷

Osterhout made careful provisions for the library's future. He named a powerful board, which included a district judge, a bank president, and other talented men.²⁸ His bequest stipulated that the board would hold the estate for five years to allow it to build income. After that point, accumulated interest could be used to start and maintain the library. An assessment in 1890 showed that the library owned more than \$377,000 in "resources" (bonds, cash, property, and other investments) including the "Osterhout Block," a massive office and retail building. These assets produced more than \$5,000 in annual income for the library.²⁹ Thus, well into the twentieth century, the Osterhout Free Library did not require city appropriations. This structure of a "free" (rather than a "public") library was likely comfortable to James, who had come of age in an era of privately funded, informally organized, locally led social programs. Financial autonomy gave the library's board and staff reins to develop collections and activities as they saw fit.

As the mandatory five-year waiting period came to an end, the board sought guidance from one of the best-known librarians of the day. In November 1886 Melvil Dewey attended a board meeting and informed them of "library management in many of its details." The board specifically asked him to survey a nearby church building to see if it could be retrofitted as the library's first home. The next day Dewey reported that the church was "well-constructed" and "with some alterations it would answer all uses for a library quite as well as any building we might erect." The board was impressed with Dewey's "hard sense" and followed his advice.³⁰

According to local legend, the board then visited libraries in Massachusetts and hired Hannah Packard James upon seeing her work. However, the truth is a bit more complex. In January 1887 board member Andrew McClintock wrote Dewey to "inquire whether . . . we could get a good librarian who would be willing to come here for say a year or perhaps two." Interestingly, McClintock felt "it might be better to get a *man* to start us" (emphasis added). Dewey assisted him by taking in applications and providing recommendations. Meanwhile, members of the board *did* visit several libraries in New England, but more to inform themselves of current practices than to scout suitable employees. By mid-February 1887, McClintock informed

Dewey that he hoped to convince the board to hire James. He thanked Dewey for “opening the way for us to approach her” and promised he would write to her precisely as Dewey had suggested. Thus it was through Dewey and McClintock acting as go-betweens that James was hired.³¹

James was very enthusiastic about her new position. Writing from Newton in March 1887, she told Dewey that the board had generously agreed to her salary request and allowed her to hire a friend (Myra Poland) as a library assistant. She showed excitement and determination about the challenges ahead: “I have a fair field before me and if I do not succeed the fault will be my own. I could not desire or imagine more cordial treatment than I have received and I mean to deserve it.” Although she had never visited Wilkes-Barre, she vowed “that library *is going to be a success*” (her emphasis).³²

Garrison’s description of librarians as “apostles of culture” is especially apt for James in these circumstances. Moving to Pennsylvania in the late 1880s to start a free library was indeed pioneering work, a mission that she had been called to by her friend Dewey. Although the American Library Association had been established for thirteen years, by 1889 only nine people from Pennsylvania had joined. All were men, and nearly all hailed from Philadelphia or its suburbs.³³ Yet the state had potential to become a leader in public library development. Many communities (including Wilkes-Barre) had longstanding social libraries, and since Pennsylvania was among the wealthiest states, there were great possibilities for new library donors. If James succeeded at building the Osterhout Free Library, her work could become a model for small and mid-sized communities throughout the country.

Organizing the Osterhout

During her first years with the Osterhout, Hannah Packard James was consumed with her own version of Wiebe’s “search for order”—organizing the book collection. Her experience in Newton and her connections with Melvil Dewey served her well in this effort. Though the Presbyterians had not vacated their church, she set up a temporary workspace in the Sunday school room. In addition to Myra Poland, James hired several assistants. Some were from the area, and others (such as May Seymour) were students or recent graduates of Dewey’s new library school.³⁴

For a year and a half, the women worked diligently at preparing the collection. Although the Osterhout was initially intended for “consultation and reference,” the board came around to the idea that borrowable books could “be introduced by way of experiment.”³⁵ One doubts that James envisioned anything less than a free, circulating library—from the beginning, she and her staff prepared books for heavy use. To James, thorough cataloguing was key. Speaking to a group of library students in the 1880s, she explained “accessioning, classifying, cataloging, shelf-listing, all are to be considered as means, eventually, for the most prompt and efficient service to the public. The more carefully and lucidly you classify a book, the more sure it is to reach the person who needs it.”³⁶ Thus the women typed descriptions for each book on author and (multiple) subject cards. They even worked during the demolition of the church’s steeple.³⁷

They soon produced a publicly accessible card catalog (including author, subject, and title cards) and a 434-page *Class Catalogue and Author Index* of the entire collection. These were hefty achievements for less than two years’ work. Amazed by the thoroughness of the *Catalogue*, a reporter found “a bewildering list of subjects, tables, numbers, etc.,” but eventually understood the utility of the various indexes.³⁸ By 1895 the women had produced a 308-page supplement that listed everything the library had acquired between 1889 and 1895.³⁹ Thus patrons of the library could have its booklist available in their homes, schools, or offices.

Given all this work, the opening of the Osterhout Free Library was a much-anticipated event. Local newspapers covered the public “inspection” of the building, providing a glimpse of what the Osterhout’s first customers encountered. The library’s location on South Franklin Street placed it in a stylish area of the city. Wilkes-Barre’s public square, which was less than two blocks away, then contained the Luzerne County Courthouse and was ringed by prominent businesses. Walking along Franklin Street, one encountered the leading cultural and social organizations in the city, including the prestigious Wilkes-Barre Female Institute, St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, and Westmoreland Club. The Osterhout’s location meant it could easily serve lawyers, businessmen, pastors, and the other prominent citizens.⁴⁰

The library’s interior reflected both James’s and the board’s understanding of the library environment as an important social force. They had decided to install electricity throughout the building so the space “fairly glowed with light.” Entering through the front door, patrons came into a main room about twenty feet wide. Here, customers could sit on settees to consult



FIGURE 2: Detail of *Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania*, a map by A. E. Downs (Boston: Fowler, Downs, and Moyer, 1889). Franklin Street, including several blocks of churches, clubs, and other cultural institutions, runs from the upper left to the lower right of this view. Wilkes-Barre's diamond-shaped public square is near center. It was a good location for a library. Image courtesy of the Library of Congress, American Memory Project, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>.

the card catalog. On the left, beyond a bronze wire screen, was a magazine room. This area provided more than seventy serials for quiet reading. It was illuminated by a large, stained-glass window (which likely reminded visitors of the building's former purpose), as well as incandescent lights at each table. Staff thoughtfully placed coat and umbrella stands near the reading tables. James's own office was in a different location, in the reference room at the back of the library. Thus she distanced herself a bit from casual visitors and placed herself closest to the most serious researchers.

Rather than resembling the municipal reference "departments" that progressive librarians would set up to serve city officials a few years later, the Osterhout's reference area was designed to resemble a cozy private library. In addition to a working fireplace, it included a Brussels carpet with a pattern of Japanese chrysanthemums and an alcove housing the library's most valuable materials. Around the room were fifteen oak tables, each with its own light. Oak pillars supported the room's ceiling and inspirational quotations were carved into the woodwork. Thus if a reader looked up from his studies, he was reminded that "While I was musing, the fire burned." In summarizing, a reporter felt that the Osterhout Free Library would "inaugurate an era" in Wilkes-Barre's history.⁴¹

The *Library News-Letter*

Once the Osterhout Free Library was firmly established, Hannah Packard James developed the *Library News-Letter*, a monthly publication that is crucial for understanding her thoughts and work.⁴² Thinking about James as a transitioning or ambivalent Progressive, the *News-Letter* is a fascinating document, fraught as it is by the tension between modern methods of communication and a social message that was increasingly irrelevant.

At the time, some libraries were issuing “bulletins” that listed new books. James’s publication did this, too, but went much further. Notably, its masthead did not list board members’ names. Instead, “Hannah P. James—Librarian” appeared in bold print. The *News-Letter* instructed users how to choose, read, and care for books—from describing the correct way to cut the leaves, to a recipe for “good mucilage” (glue) that involved gum Arabic, water, and oil of cloves.⁴³ Here James displayed the expert, modern, technical knowledge that identified her as a professional librarian.

Yet the articles James included, her choice of words, the organizations she promoted, and other details reveal much about the causes that were near to her heart. Among them were the inculcation of civic and moral values, genealogy and heritage organizations, poverty relief, the ethical treatment of animals, and education for people of all ages and both genders. Reading the *News-Letter* one sees that Protestant, conservative, pro-New England, pro-British values remained entwined with James’s goals. For example, her stance against popular fiction was adamant. Starting on page 1 of the first *News-Letter*, James boldly urged the public to abandon fiction reading, and to use the Osterhout as the people’s university for which she intended it:

The Library means to have only the very best of fiction on its shelves; but reading a great deal of the best of fiction weakens the powers of application, and spoils the appetite for that which is of lasting worth. The gossip of the world, and the gossip of daily life take up too much of the time that should be spent in strengthening the mind and storing it with useful and delightful knowledge. . . . The Library believes that many read fiction because it requires little thought to select it; or it is recommended by a friend; or, because the reader does not know just how to get at anything better, and is not aware that he cares to. . . . [I]f you will take time to seriously consider the matter you can hardly fail to find some *one* thing about which you would

like to know more. Take that one thing as a starting point, even if it seems trivial, and come to the Library to see what it has to offer on that topic. If it is difficult to find what you want, ask the Librarian to help you; she has her desk in the Reference Room for the purpose of helping all who need help, so do not be afraid to ask her. . . . Try it, and you will soon find out how delightful it is to know a little more of something that is *worth knowing*, every day [emphasis in original].⁴⁴

Many previously unspoken assumptions are revealed here. For one, James seemed to think that fiction had absolutely no value. It also appears that James believed learning was an activity done best in isolation—a single person choosing his or her own course of study with the librarian's help. There was no acknowledgment that readers could help each other by discussing their ideas. In another early issue, James reprinted a quotation of Philip Brooks (a recently deceased bishop in Massachusetts's Episcopal Church). He wrote, and James seemed to agree, that "there is nothing so bad for man or woman as to live with their inferiors" and that people were better off reading classic texts than talking with neighbors.⁴⁵ Although other librarians still ascribed to these ideas, they were being strenuously challenged by a new, Progressive generation who embraced popular fiction, viewed learning as a social activity, developed story-times and other group activities, and were reaching out to readers in the poorest neighborhoods.⁴⁶

The newsletters also show James's ongoing preference for New England and British cultural values, since the *News-Letter* frequently informed Pennsylvanians about those places' education, history, and social life. For example, the May 1895 issue included a lengthy piece about the evolution of Massachusetts's public school system, presented as a counterpoint to Pennsylvania's new education law. Also, for months on end, the *News-Letter* reprinted excerpts about the Boston Massacre from Justin Winsor's *Memorial History of Boston*, as well as passages on Bunker Hill from John Fiske's *The American Revolution*. In January 1901 James even republished the *Transcript's* account of how Boston celebrated New Year's Eve (a choir of 200 voices, public readings of the Psalms and Lord's Prayer, and other dignified festivities). When James took an extended tour of England and Scotland in 1897, she wrote a series of travelogues and bibliographies relating to her trip. For more than a year after she returned, James ran them on page 1 of every issue of the *News-Letter*.⁴⁷

Thus the *News-Letter* promoted New England and Anglo-Saxon worldviews. At the same time, few issues appear to acknowledge the contributions other ethnic groups made to Wilkes-Barre, to Pennsylvania, or to the United States. Perhaps James refrained from writing articles on local history so as not to outshine the nearby Wyoming Historical and Geological Society.⁴⁸ Or maybe it is too much to expect a person of the 1890s to have recognized the contributions other immigrants were making to American culture.⁴⁹ Yet, the *News-Letter* could have celebrated the national culture and history of Ireland, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Russia, and Wales (reaching out to the largest immigrant groups in Wilkes-Barre) as much as it did of England and Scotland. If James included such items, she did so very rarely. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the *News-Letter's* circulation plummeted after James's trip to Europe. In 1902 a simple *Bulletin* of new titles replaced it. Despite the innovative "newsletter" format, it seems clear that James's message was becoming disconnected to an ethnically diverse, urban community.

The Reading Room Association

With the Osterhout Free Library's collection and publications in place, Hannah Packard James undertook a new venture. In 1893 she met with local residents to explore ideas for establishing library services throughout the city. The group decided that unlike most municipalities, which set up branches as extensions of an existing central library, they would start a "Reading Room Association" (RRA). They quickly gathered more than \$700 for the idea and elected James president.⁵⁰ This choice to begin a distinct organization is an interesting one. Often-cited hallmarks of the Progressive era are increases in the size, complexity, responsibility, and professionalism of organizations (especially of governmental agencies). Yet James chose a decentralized method and drew upon her neighbors for the RRA's leadership.⁵¹ According to city directories, Shepherd Ayars, the RRA's treasurer, was a cashier who lived a few doors down from James on Northampton Street. Similarly, board member Alexander Ricketts was a lawyer who rented nearby. For a pledge of one dollar, others could become "active" members and vote at RRA meetings. To administer each reading room, the RRA's executive board planned to appoint a "local board," which would be responsible for "superintending" its branch, collecting gifts, and managing membership. James expected that "any one in the neighborhood of the Branch who is able to help, will

according to his or her ability take hold of the work and do all in their power to carry it on.”⁵²

To James the RRA dovetailed nicely into her ongoing efforts with schoolchildren. By providing adolescents and adults a place to continue their education, the reading rooms would ensure that learning was a lifelong experience. But the RRA had a political and social agenda as well. It existed at least in part to stem the tide of labor violence and pauperism rising among the young men of Wilkes-Barre. Believing that “education and character are the sure producers of thrift and prosperity” and “ignorance” was a “non-producer of prosperity,” James felt that “good schools, good libraries, good books are essential factors in a true political economy.” The RRA did not envision “a millennium when all will be equally rich,” but hoped for a future where “truth, honesty, and a respect for honest labor” prevailed. Reading rooms were needed to counteract the “education” residents were receiving “in our streets, with the profanity and vulgarity which they hear from their earliest years” which was “carried on . . . by companions reared amidst surroundings of ignorance and crime.” If not addressed, this maladjustment “continued in later years by anarchists, communists, tramps, men who never do an honest day’s work if they can help it.”⁵³ In other words, James and the RRA did not perceive their task as challenging the economic and social structures that may have worsened poverty. Instead, reading quality books in an orderly environment reformed individuals whose situations were due to their own educational and moral shortcomings.

A key objective was to create “clean, cheery rooms, conveniently located, so that after a hard day’s work a man need not walk a mile or two to reach them.” Thus the RRA chose to locate its first reading room on Bowman Street, not far from several coal breakers. By November 1893 the group had signed a lease and begun repairs. To attract passers-by, they added seven windows, installed “Rochester” kerosene lamps (multiple flames for better lighting), and put in several warm stoves. They also took advantage of “fire sales” at local stores, enabling them to repaper all the rooms, install a new linoleum floor, and purchase more than eighty chairs. Luckily, they secured free coal, oil, and water, as well as numerous donations of books and magazines.

The Bowman Street Reading Room opened on January 24, 1894, and despite bad weather more than 200 people attended. Reverend Horace E. Hayden opened with a prayer and then John Boyle, a member of the local RRA board, gave a speech. All expressed the hope that the new reading room would prompt “better living and thinking” in the neighborhood. By March



FIGURE 3: Detail of *Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania*, a map by A. E. Downs (Boston: Fowler, Downs, and Moyer, 1889). A far cry from Franklin Street and (literally) on the other side of the train tracks, the RRA's reading room on Bowman Street was intended to serve working-class men and women. See the coal breakers at the upper left, lower left, and far right of this view. Image courtesy of the Library of Congress, American Memory Project, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>.

the Osterhout began to deliver books to Bowman Street every Monday and Thursday evening.

The Bowman Street Reading Room attempted to attract young, working-class patrons (especially men). Upstairs, the facilities included smoking and game rooms. A side room fifteen feet square contained newspapers and serials. In addition to *Century*, *Harper's*, and *Scribner's*, Bowman Street also subscribed to *Science* and *Scientific American*. James hoped that gift subscriptions of *Electrical Review*, *Field and Stream*, and other periodicals would be forthcoming. She also envisioned a lunch counter “with simple food, coffee, hot milk, sandwiches, eggs, etc.” to be sold “at very reasonable rates.”⁵⁴

Over the coming months, James and the RRA followed up on requests for additional reading rooms. In March 1897 the RRA opened a “distributing station” at Calvary House, a settlement house on North Main Street. Calvary was an ambitious organization, run by a local minister, which planned to offer “men’s, boys’, and girls’ clubs, a gymnasium, shower baths, reading room, and kitchen” as well as a “kindergarten, employment bureau, cooking school, and kitchen garden.” Notably, the intent of the place was “not to be a lounging place for the idle or worthless, but a busy hive of industrial, intellectual, and physical life. It is for workers, for those who wish to make the most of

themselves and their opportunities." Calvary House, and by extension James' reading rooms, would "help to make life worth living for hundreds."⁵⁵

The RRA found early success by encouraging women's reading circles. For example, over the winter of 1894, about fifty women "traveled" to California via books, maps, and pictures, reading about American Indians, native plants and animals, Mormonism, the Rocky Mountains, and other things outside their daily experience. Yet as months went by, James found that the local residents didn't always use the facilities for their intended purposes. She noted that "disorder and rowdiness soon reigned supreme" in the game and smoking rooms so they were converted into reading classrooms.⁵⁶

Unfortunately, the support that James and the RRA anticipated from nearby residents did not materialize. By March 1898 the Bowman Street Reading Room had moved to a space within the Sullivan Club. James noted, "We expected to bear the heavy end of the burden, but not the whole of it. If we are not mistaken, not a dollar has been contributed during the last two years by those in the vicinity of the Rooms . . . and in five years of the Reading Room's existence not one hundred dollars in all have been given by them." The next year, she announced that the RRA was being dissolved. James bitterly wrote, "There was never any general interest manifested on the part of the people in the Rooms, and that being the case it was impossible for the committee to create it. A movement of this kind to be successful must have its source in a real heartfelt want of the community, where such is not the case little can be done."⁵⁷

In retrospect, the RRA is a fascinating study of library branch development. One reason it is unusual is because James specifically tried to attract young, working-class men. She experimented, if only briefly, with recreational activities she thought they might like (games, smoking rooms, and low-cost meals). More important, the RRA's story illustrates the limitations of older methods of charitable/educational work in helping industrialized communities. James's demand that residents help themselves, rather than receive the charity of others or rely on the city's agencies, was very much a throwback to an earlier, agrarian era where neighbors could more easily contribute in-kind products and had greater say in how they used their daytime hours. In other words, the limited financial means and spare time of Bowman Street residents in the modern wage economy was a great challenge to James's ideal.

The RRA faced additional difficulties, some self-imposed. One was disputes over suitable reading material. Michael Denning and others have found that "cheap stories" (dime novels and serialized fiction) were very popular among

working-class readers in the late nineteenth century. They featured heroes, villains, and settings that were familiar to northeastern Pennsylvanians—including factory strikes, mining accidents, Molly Maguires, and railroad detectives. Also, this type of fiction was usually short and written in simpler language, making it accessible to the newly literate.⁵⁸ Yet the RRA weeded out such “sensational” items, especially by inspecting all donated books and periodicals, and visiting branches every two weeks.⁵⁹ Although I have found no local studies of working-class reading habits during the period, one could surmise that the RRA’s high-brow literature and nonfiction were a tough sell to residents who already had satisfying materials. Also, one could surmise that local residents perceived themselves unwelcomed by the RRA, since their favorite literature probably was banned from its shelves. Here, too, James had fallen out of step with social currents.

Another thing that may have handicapped the RRA was the imperious moral overtones James used to describe it. For example, in a January 1894 *News-Letter* article, she intoned that “the Branches are not to be opened for mere amusement. There needs to be seed sown of manly and womanly character, aims inspired for better thinking and truer living, ideas implanted of higher and holier things. . . . Then we may in time see the fruit of good thoughts in better lives.” Potential members may have perceived an underlying, unflattering charge that they—the working class of Wilkes-Barre—lacked a moral compass or the ability to think on their own.

Another possible drawback was that the RRA seemed to function like a social library—an institution rather common through the 1870s, but perhaps inadequate for engaging diverse urban residents. A person could not become a voting member unless he or she had been “approved” by the RRA directors, then “elected” by a vote of current members. Upon election, new members had to read aloud and affirm a “promise” to support the RRA’s constitution and work toward its goals. Furthermore, any member who missed RRA meetings was fined twenty-five cents. Such rules may have made it difficult for newcomers, laborers, non-English speakers, and others to participate. Finally, the enforced silence and gender segregation of the rooms (women were only allowed in the afternoons, men only during the evenings) may not have been attractive. Many factory and mine workers spent long hours away from family and friends, in workplaces where the noise was too deafening to talk, hunched over machines for hours at a time.⁶⁰ After hours, they may have wished more opportunities to socialize.

By investing so much in a new organization and reading rooms, James may have missed opportunities to work with existing literary efforts. For instance, the Wilkes-Barre Bicycle Club was immensely popular and held annual “book receptions” for its library. Also, the local Young Men’s Christian Association was a vibrant organization, offering a library and lecture courses. Had she partnered with these groups, James may have gained insights on working with young men (albeit of a different social class). There were additional opportunities to reach out to immigrants, too. Many Welsh residents participated in *Eisteddfod*, an arts and literary festival that included poetry recitation, singing, and speeches.⁶¹ The local news provided detailed coverage of Eistedfoddau throughout the coal regions, including events in Avoca, Edwardsville, Freeland, Nanticoke, Plymouth, Scranton, and Wilkes-Barre. Yet judging from extant news articles and library publications, James was never involved with this phenomenon.⁶²

Another cause for the RRA’s failure may have been that James could not devote as much time to it as she had initially planned. In 1896 she was elected vice president of the American Library Association and her term was quite busy. That year ALA petitioned the National Education Association to establish a “Library Department,” and James was a member of the committee that got the effort rolling.⁶³ Following the ALA’s 1897 conference in Philadelphia, James sailed to London to present a paper on “Special Training for Library Work” at the second International Library Conference. She remained in the United Kingdom for two months to tour libraries and historic sites. In addition, she and other Pennsylvania librarians were organizing a state-level professional association (the Pennsylvania Library Club).

At any rate, many public libraries in the 1890s and early 1900s developed fully functioning branches in impoverished communities. Others partnered with churches, schools, settlement houses, stores, and other organizations to provide materials and services when a building and full-time staff were not viable. It is difficult to believe that the Reading Room Association, with the leadership and funding structure that James envisioned, was Wilkes-Barre’s only option. The story of the RRA has not been told in the professional literature, probably because there is no such thing as a *Journal of Library Failure*. Yet it reveals much about James’s personal, professional, and social philosophy—particularly her difficulty in shifting to more Progressive methods of library work.

The Charity Organization Society

In addition to the Osterhout and the RRA, Hannah Packard James assumed leading roles in other cultural, educational, and social organizations in Wilkes-Barre during the 1890s. One could fill an entire book with details about the Osterhout Free Library, the local chapter of the Colonial Dames of America, the Kindergarten Association, the Reading Room Association, the Town Improvement Society (which focused on façade improvement and street cleaning), the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, and more. At this point, I do not know precisely why she became involved in so many and varied organizations. Here, I will focus on Wilkes-Barre's Charity Organization Society (COS), which is important for several reasons. For one, James remained vice president of it until her death—therefore her work with the COS may have been most important to her. Second, Dee Garrison and others have identified many commonalities between librarianship, social work, and other professions.⁶⁴ Also, the COS survived into the twentieth century (as the United Charities) and still exists today (as the Family Service Association of Wyoming Valley). The FSAWV offices in Wilkes-Barre possess annual reports, scrapbooks, and other items pertaining to its earliest years, thus providing rich documentation of the COS's goals and activities. Finally, James's involvement with the COS illustrates her views toward citizenship and community development in ways that her other efforts may not.

Local COS organizations were part of a larger movement that began in England and spread to the United States in the late nineteenth century. Their case-management approach, which evaluated each person's need for assistance and connected him or her with appropriate support, was very innovative at the time. Wilkes-Barre's COS may have had its origin in the frequent, spontaneous collections that were taken up after mining accidents. During the 1880s and 1890s it seems that few days passed without a cave-in, explosion, or fire that left a family without a breadwinner. As of January 1888, women in Wilkes-Barre's Christian Benevolent Association (CBA) had divided the city into districts to investigate applicants' needs and devised a new method of fundraising. Believing that canvassing the town would "annoy" businessmen, the women simply published a call for donations in the newspaper and mailed circular letters to each home. Those who gave at least five dollars were given tickets to the CBA storeroom which they could hand to the needy. Working with Wilkes-Barre's Board of Trade, the CBA collected more than

\$1,400 and distributed groceries, shoes, and other necessities to hundreds of people. It appears that the CBA began as a Protestant organization, for Wilkes-Barre's Catholics devised their own programs. Prominent was the St. Vincent de Paul Society, organized in March 1890 at St. Mary's Church. Resources donated through St. Vincent's were subsequently distributed by the Sisters of Mercy.⁶⁵

It is unclear how the CBA and St. Vincent's ultimately joined forces and reorganized as the COS. It is also unknown exactly how and why Hannah Packard James became involved. Yet by 1895 she was acting as secretary pro-tem of the COS and called its first meeting. On June 21 a number of men and women gathered in the Sunday school room of St. Stephen's Church "to ascertain the real condition of the worthy poor, prevent the over-lapping of charity, and also protect the generous from imposition."⁶⁶ Since James was secretary, (later) vice president, and a strong advocate of the COS, her iteration of the organization's goals are worth studying. In one of the library's *News-Letter* articles, James described the group's fear that "too much relief will be given at one time, and that the recipients will find it easier to live on the bounty of others than to earn their living themselves." The 1897 report of the organization stated it even more bluntly:

To be consistently demanding more aid than is his equitable share, from a free and liberal contributor . . . is an imposition upon that person's generosity, and is one which we have endeavored to abolish. . . . To those who say, "Get rid of the beggar," we answer, "if we only could." . . . What we as a society can do . . . is to furnish in a just and systematic manner, temporary relief to the worthy destitute . . . then by the withdrawal of that aid, force them to help themselves. We can also drive the drones to work, or from our midst, as well as diminish the army of unworthy paupers in our valley, by a wise and discriminate ministration of charity. . . . Unless such promiscuous charity is checked, all our means, fidelity and care will not eradicate condemnable pauperism from amongst us. With such assistance we can eliminate the undeserving beggar from our annoyance, but not otherwise. (11-12)

As uncomfortable as such words might make us feel today, they provided powerful motivation to like-minded residents. Within a year, several other organizations agreed to work with the COS. Speaking as one voice, they

urged the public to send the poor to their way, and "we guarantee you they shall be cared for if worthy."⁶⁷

The COS extended and professionalized the CBA's method of caseworking. Instead of using volunteers, it hired Anna Burkhart Bertels, a German immigrant and wife of a Civil War veteran. While "saintlike" to some, she "struck terror" particularly among "erring and worthless" husbands who "got a beating up, literally or figuratively" when necessary. Her "wallops" and "strong right arm" were legendary among wayward boys. An important part of Bertels's work was teaching recipients "habits of providence and self-dependence." Each case file noted the person's name, nationality, religion, pastor's name, occupation, number and ages of people in the household, and aid given. Any "tramp" who sought help was required to do chores (such as chopping wood) for at least fifteen minutes. Bertels remained the organization's "matron" for nearly thirty years.⁶⁸

Despite (or perhaps because of) Bertels's stern management, the Charity Organization Society received strong support from government officials. Wilkes-Barre's mayor and chief of police were ex-officio members of the board. In 1897 the COS (by then called the United Charities) had obtained a lease on a four-story building just a few doors away from James's home and renovated it to accommodate the most desperate residents. By 1903 the United Charities had handled more than 12,000 cases, given out more than 20,000 pieces of clothing and 40,000 meals, found homes for more than 1,300 adults and children, and arranged jobs for more than 1,000 employees.⁶⁹

We can see that James's hard-nosed opinions about poverty, as evidenced in the literature of the Reading Room Association and COS/United Charities, had not changed throughout the 1890s. To her, being poor was clearly a vice and could often be chalked up to a person's moral failings. The middle and upper classes in Wilkes-Barre had to be protected from financial imposition, disease, and other dangers the urban poor brought to their doorsteps. In this way, James was not unlike some other Progressive social reformers, who, to use Nell Painter's phrase, felt they were "standing at Armageddon" and were embracing reform out of "plain, stark fear."⁷⁰ Yet when one compares the RRA to the COS/United Charities, one sees a significant shift in tactics. While the RRA relied on customer-volunteers to fund its services, the COS/United Charities was led and staffed by professionals. Another important point is that by the early 1900s it appears that some of the dire rhetoric toward lower-class residents had diminished. As I have shown above, the United Charities, like many social welfare organizations of the day, began

to measure success statistically in the number of needy served, rather than in narrative descriptions of persons' moral states. Although I have found no documentation of it, this suggests that either the influence of James's views, or the opinions themselves, may have begun to change. When one examines James's efforts to organize her profession on the state level (as I will describe below), one may delineate a similar trend. An organization that started as an informal and exclusive "club" of library elite eventually became a more dispersed "association" of library workers and advocates.

The Pennsylvania Library Club

In trying to locate Hannah Packard James within the Progressive movement, it seems she became most in step with professionalization, particularly in her efforts to define librarianship as an expertise that required its own ethical standards, communication networks, and training. When James came to Pennsylvania in 1887, the free public library movement was just beginning. Although the state had a long tradition of social libraries, few had been "thrown open to the public" (to use a phrase common at the time). But within a few years cities and towns throughout Pennsylvania were starting new public libraries from the ground up, and others were reorganizing for broader access.⁷¹ Thus the time was ripe to start a state-level professional organization.

Because Pennsylvania had no library training program or free library commission, a kernel of American Library Association members was instrumental in early efforts to restructure and increase the state's libraries. By participating in ALA and attending its conferences, James came into contact with a handful of Pennsylvanians who were committed to improving the competency of practitioners, attracting better funding for buildings and collections, and expanding libraries' roles in society. While attending a conference in September 1890, they noted how Massachusetts and New York had formed state library clubs. This inspired James, along with Philadelphia's John Edmands (Mercantile Library) and Thomas L. Montgomery (Wagner Free Institute of Science), to send circular letters to hundreds of other libraries. Among their goals were to have a state-wide meeting at least once per year, "stimulate library interests" in Pennsylvania through publicity measures, and collaborate on interlibrary loan. Within a few years, their invitation soon attracted the talents of James G. Barnwell (of the University of Pennsylvania),

Henry Carr (of Scranton's Albright Memorial Library), and Alice Bertha Kroeger (of Drexel Institute's new library school). The group met again in February 1892, at which time they organized the Pennsylvania Library Club (PLC), adopted a constitution, and established a nominating committee.⁷²

James was an obvious choice to play a leadership role. In addition to her professional reputation, various elements of her background would have been important for any group trying to claim statewide authority. Coming from Wilkes-Barre, she was one of the few prominent librarians who were working outside of the southeastern corner of the state. At the same time, Luzerne County (because of its coal industry) was important to the economic well-being of Pennsylvania. Furthermore, James was a female while most of the state's ALA members were male. If library leaders wanted to motivate women who were working in small cities and rural areas, James simply *had* to be part of the effort. Thus the Osterhout Free Library hosted the PLC's 1894 annual meeting, James served as vice president for many of its early years, and her name appears on many of its extant documents.

It seems that PLC's aims were debated from the time it was first announced in 1891 to when its constitution was written a year later. Although an early article by James had mentioned interlibrary loan and other tangible activities, by 1893 the group intended more vaguely "to promote acquaintance and fraternal relations among librarians and those interested in library work; and by consultation and co-operation to increase the usefulness, and advance the interests, of the libraries of Pennsylvania." The PLC seemed to function like a scholarly society. Its meetings typically featured an address or paper presented by a single speaker. For instance, in November 1899 members gathered at Bryn Mawr to see Mary Salome Fairchild, who discussed "The Function of the Library" as the "Development and Enrichment of Human Life." Similarly, in January 1900, Morris Jastrow (of the University of Pennsylvania) read Lindsay Smith's paper on "Paternalism in Libraries." The addresses and essays were published as "Occasional Papers."⁷³

James's and Henry Carr's involvement notwithstanding, the PLC came to be perceived as a "Philadelphia" organization. In addition to the academic bent of its meetings, logistics made it difficult for librarians in other parts of the state to participate. Most railroads that crossed Pennsylvania at the time cleaved to winding rivers and mountain passes, making the trip arduous. Inevitably, many PLC meetings were held in the Philadelphia area (usually on a weekday night) and its officers nearly always hailed from the eastern part of the state. This was unfortunate because southwestern Pennsylvania (centered around the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh) was becoming a hotspot of library

development. In 1896 librarians there banded together to form the Western Pennsylvania Library Association.⁷⁴ Neither the PLC nor the WPLA could claim to represent statewide interests, but they were crucial beginnings for library professionalism in Pennsylvania.

The Keystone State Library Association

By 1901 James and other leaders in the Pennsylvania Library Club apparently recognized the shortcomings of their efforts and decided it was time to unite the state. They proposed a new organization, the Keystone State Library Association, and James devoted extensive coverage to it in her *News-Letter*. Particularly, she urged readers to attend KSLA's first meeting on November 13–14 in Harrisburg.

The KSLA departed from the PLC in many ways. This started with the goals of KSLA, which were “to enlist the aid of all librarians, assistants, and directors and . . . to district the State and establish institutes in the different districts, so that each section may be reached more effectively.”⁷⁵ Rather than inviting well-known librarians to deliver “formal” papers, speakers were asked “to open each subject with an address not exceeding ten minutes, after which the matter will be open for general debate.” The sessions would “bring all existing libraries into neighborly sympathy with each other, and thus profit from each other's methods and ideas.”⁷⁶ This represented an important shift—the recognition that practitioners could learn as much from each other as they could from a nationally known speaker. Also, the KSLA sought cooperation with the state government—not only were State Librarian George Edward Reed and his assistant Robert P. Bliss prominent members, but the meeting was to be held in Harrisburg. The location was closer to the center of the state, and a program that spread over an evening and the following day justified the trip for those who had to travel. The meeting organizers also made arrangements with a nearby hotel, securing a rate of two dollars per night.⁷⁷

James apparently attended the first meeting of KSLA, for the November 1901 *News-Letter* describes the event in detail. It began with a reception on Wednesday evening in the hall of the State Library, sponsored by the new Free Library Commission. The next morning John Thomson opened the meeting with a speech about the need and goals for KSLA. There were also discussions on the Library of Congress's new catalog-card distribution program, fiction in public libraries, and statistical recordkeeping. The practical focus of the sessions attracted more than eighty attendees.

Affirming the need to represent and to assist librarians across Pennsylvania, attendees at KSLA's first conference elected a slate of officers that was more diverse than the leadership of PLC had been. Edwin Anderson of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh was elected president, with Isabel Ely Lord of Bryn Mawr as vice president. When Henry Carr declined the post, Hannah Packard James was appointed secretary-treasurer. They were assisted by an "Executive Committee," which included an assistant at the state library as well as a library trustee from Bethlehem. Another new feature of the KSLA was its efforts to accommodate rural librarians who could not travel for meetings. Shortly after James's death, KSLA organized the state into several "districts" (chapters), which met on a regular basis.⁷⁸

Although KSLA would change its name to the Pennsylvania Library Association (PaLA) and grow enormously in members and concerns, many vestiges of KSLA remain today. Documentation in the PaLA archives reveals its ongoing, concerted efforts to professionalize librarians and library workers (especially through a certification program in the 1930s). It has also surveyed the needs of librarians and their diverse communities (particularly through the Public Library Inquiry and other studies in the 1950s and 1960s) and lobbied government officials for favorable policies (especially through its "Legislative Days"). The regional chapters and their meetings remain an important part of PaLA as well. At this point, I am not able to say whether James's experiences with the Osterhout Library, the Reading Room Association, and the Charitable Organization Society influenced how the PLC and KSLA developed. Nonetheless, it is clear that James and others who started the PLC are the founders of modern librarianship in Pennsylvania. Tantalizingly, organizational differences between the PLC and the KSLA, and James's leadership in both, may also point toward her cautious support for some Progressivism within her profession.

James and Dorranceton in the 1890s and 1900s

As Hannah Packard James aged, the masthead of the *Library News-Letter* began to include a revealing quotation from Oliver Wendell Holmes (senior), a prominent poet from the Boston area:

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!

Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
 Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
 Till thou at length art free,
 Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

Such a verse is an interesting snapshot of James's mindset by the mid-1890s. She took it from Holmes's poem about the "chambered nautilus," a sea creature that grows its spiraled shell over time. Today's scholars recognize the poem as a model of patient self-culture, a theme that aligns well with James's educational and moral interests.⁷⁹ Yet Holmes's words fit her story on other levels. For one thing, a shell incorporates both new and old. Once a nautilus has built a larger chamber to live in, it moves into its new home and seals off the older section it had once occupied. Yet its former chamber is still attached, and the nautilus casts a new shell in a similar form with the usual material. Likewise, James shaped a life and career in Pennsylvania, working with the convictions and skills she had learned in New England. Also, like a seashell, James had been buffeted and perhaps hardened by a long life in uncertain waters. Thinking about her involvement with the COS, PLC, and KSLA, and their connections to the Progressive era, it is unclear whether James's basic professional and social philosophies had changed, or if she had just begun to use different strategies for achieving them. Thus it is interesting to note her personal efforts to regroup, particularly by returning to the simpler, rural life she had once known, and by shifting her professional and social commitments. While many women were moving into cities to seek educational, occupational, and social fulfillment, it seems James fled from urban life.

During her first decade in Pennsylvania, James shared her home with Myra Poland, a close friend and colleague whom she had met in Massachusetts. Located in downtown Wilkes-Barre, on Northampton Street, it was most likely an apartment (the building no longer stands). Poland's mother also lived with them.⁸⁰ When Almira Poland died in April 1897, she left Myra the bulk of the family estate.⁸¹ This may have given James and Poland a new opportunity to purchase property, since they moved out of the city just a few months later. The community they chose was then called Dorranceton, a new suburb only minutes from the city. Although nineteenth-century descriptions of rural communities contain much purple prose, portrayals of Dorranceton in the 1890s were especially laudatory:

Of the many beautiful suburban residence boroughs that so surround
 Wilkes-Barre . . . there are none more beautiful and inviting than

this. Its broad and elegant avenues and ornamental shade trees, the spacious lawns and the modern built mansions, and the healthy, clear, unvexed air that sighs through the great old trees, as well as the quiet and orderly movements of the people, to one transported in a few moments from the thronging city, with its slums and odorous alleys, is a magical and refreshing change.⁸²

James and Poland jointly purchased a large lot and house at 58 Butler Street and shared it until James's death. At the time, there were few buildings nearby—only apple, cherry, and peach trees. For James, who enjoyed gardening, it was perfect. She wrote Melvil Dewey, "We can see the horizon all around—and hear the birds sing, and breathe pure air—it is like paradise. We have begun to *live*" (her emphasis).⁸³ Pictures taken in the early 1900s show much evidence of Victorian women who remained connected to their colonial heritage. Entering through the front door, one saw a wide hall with a large mirror, oriental runners on the wooden floors, a pair of Windsor chairs at the right, and a stairway and grandfather clock at the back. There were colonial antiques, bric-a-brac, and other mementoes.⁸⁴

James withdrew from other aspects of urban life as well. Though she continued working with library organizations and the COS, she seems to have stopped working directly with Wilkes-Barre's underprivileged residents. For example, her efforts with the Kindergarten Association and the Town Improvement Society appear to have ceased. Like many New Englanders whose families had once been prominent, James joined the Colonial Dames of America and her county historical society. She also invested in Dewey's Lake Placid Club, a summer resort. All these organizations celebrated America's Anglo-Saxon past, and the Lake Placid Club specifically barred nonwhites and Jews from membership.⁸⁵

Perhaps continuous work and travel began to catch up with her, exacerbating the frequent bronchial infections she had suffered throughout her life in Pennsylvania. In November 1902 she contracted a serious illness and became bedridden. Though she continued to thumb through publishers' catalogs, selecting new materials for the Osterhout, she never recovered. James died of pneumonia on April 20, 1903, at sixty-seven years of age.⁸⁶

In Wilkes-Barre, newspapers of all political stripes noted her passing. One cited her as "one of the most cultured women in this State." An obituary in the *Record* mentioned that through her work the Osterhout had become "known

over a large part of the English-speaking world as a model library of the smaller class." Yet another article remembered James as "an excellent conversationalist, one well informed on the current topics of the day." It also noted her "pleasant smile, her cherry [*sic*] conversation, her warm welcome and courteous manner to all."⁸⁷ James's funeral services are some evidence of the esteem with which she was held. The Osterhout's board paid for all expenses, including a choir and the cost of a person to escort her body to Massachusetts. The funeral was conducted by Reverend Henry L. Jones (president of the board) and Reverend Horace Edwin Hayden (a key figure in the historical society and local charities). In summing up Hannah Packard James's contributions to Pennsylvania's libraries, perhaps the Osterhout's trustees said it best:

[O]nly those who were endeavoring to carry out, in the best manner possible, the trust imposed upon them by the founder of our institution may recall how little was known outside of some of the larger cities, regarding library work and management. . . . [O]ur own was more deficient in this department of learning than many of the other states of the Union. The modern library movement has had its growth almost entirely since we began our work. Among the foremost in this movement for the education and enlightenment of the people of our country stood Miss James. . . . Her years of preparation at Newton gave to us the benefit of her mature and cultured mind, and of her wide knowledge of, and experience in, the subject before us, and our library . . . bears the impress of her personality and stands as a monument to her skill and labor.⁸⁸

With this context in mind, we can begin to assess James's legacy.

Conclusion

Hannah Packard James is still considered one of Wilkes-Barre's most "notable women."⁸⁹ The Osterhout was one of the first widely known, free libraries in Pennsylvania, preceding the free library systems in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. James created a model collection, which offered thousands of books and other resources at no charge to men, women, and children. In fact, James's and Poland's acquisitions helped form the basis for the Osterhout's

designation as a “district library center” (state-funded, regional resource) in the 1960s. James was also instrumental in the early years of the Pennsylvania Library Club and the Keystone State Library Association, predecessors of today’s Pennsylvania Library Association. Thus she may be considered one of the founding mothers of professional librarianship in the state. In particular, her activities with the KSLA seem to indicate that she supported some Progressive efforts to define and improve librarianship. Working with libraries and other organizations, James also strived, at least at first, to improve the economic, educational, moral, and social climate of a city in which some residents desperately needed assistance.

Yet we see plenty of evidence that James was ambivalent about the new focus and methods of Progressive social reform. She often continued to see the world through her own perspective as a self-supporting, middle-class woman and thus resented anyone who demanded a greater share of America’s bounty without putting in extra effort. She never seemed to question an economic system that increasingly prioritized corporate and property rights over the common person. Although she helped start several activist organizations prior to 1897, the diffusion of effort probably caused most (the Reading Room Association, the Free Kindergarten Association, and the Town Improvement Society) to falter. Also, her strident belief in New England and British cultural mores may have foreclosed some opportunities. These attributes serve as a reminder that not all women active during the Progressive era were as egalitarian or as effective as Jane Addams. After three years of researching James, I can say that I admire her achievements with the Osterhout and KSLA, but knowing her views toward her work with the RRA and COS, I often have difficulty liking her as a person. Empathy for one’s clientele is considered a key tenet of librarianship today, and it is difficult for me to identify with a professional who often viewed her patrons with disgust, fear, and paternalism. This conclusion is much more complex than what one would glean from other sources, which tend to emphasize and praise James’s work with schoolchildren (based on articles authored by James in *Library Journal*, which mostly describe her work in Massachusetts).

Before suggesting which direction future research should take, it may be helpful to consider the reasons why James and other “small-town” professional women may be poorly understood. Sybille Jagusch’s discussion of the relative fame of Caroline Maria Hewins and Annie Carroll Moore, two other important librarians in James’s era, goes a long way toward explaining the problem. Pioneers like Hewins and James juggled adult reference desk

shifts, children's services, book selection, cataloguing, staff training, and all the other duties incumbent upon the head of a new library. In contrast, Moore (a children's librarian) and those who came later worked in larger organizations where they could focus and excel in a single area. Specialists like Moore quickly surpassed the efforts of Hewins and James. Additionally, the women themselves made choices that worked toward or against national recognition.⁹⁰ For example, James's commitment to local charities and state-level library associations during the 1890s may have diverted her from national efforts that tend to receive more press and scholarly attention. The fact that James's career began early and spanned two different states makes her story all the more challenging to uncover. These biases in the research are unfortunate, because one can learn a great deal by examining smaller organizations and the women who ran them.

A related point is that we can learn much by stepping outside of the occupational "box." In the case of James and many other working women, their personal and social lives seem to shape their experiences with paid work. The reverse is also true. In other words, examining nonoccupational information sources is crucial if we seek to understand the developmental course of a person's life and career. The need to do so is especially obvious when one reads James's extant correspondence in the Melvil Dewey papers, the William Howard Brett papers (at Cleveland Public Library), the Thomas Lynch Montgomery papers (at the Wagner Free Institute in Philadelphia), the Pennsylvania Library Association archives, and other records of librarians and library-related organizations. When speaking, writing, or making decisions before a national audience, it is clear that James consulted heavily with her colleagues (especially Dewey). Perhaps because of Dewey's interest in the technical aspects of librarianship, the papers she submitted for national publications were far more practical than reflective. In contrast, the pieces James wrote for local newspapers, organizational reports, and the *Library News-Letter* are rich with information about her priorities and worldview. Only by using such local sources do we truly understand that she viewed librarianship as part of a broader educational and social effort. To James, it was no stretch for a librarian to advocate pre-primary and higher education, animal welfare, efficient distribution of clothing, food, and other charitable resources, and other causes—something she could not really do within the pages of *Library Journal*.

Thus there are numerous avenues that should be explored in a comprehensive biography. Readers will note that this article was written without the benefit

of James's personal papers (if such exist). Part of my motivation in publishing this "first look" is the hope that those with access to unadvertised, relevant records will see this piece and come forward. One area of great interest to me is James's life before she became a librarian (e.g., 1835–70), and why she chose it as a career. I would love to know how James (and other librarians) decided to engage in paid work, and why she chose to move to Wilkes-Barre. I do not doubt that some of her experiences in Massachusetts influenced her path.

Another worthy topic is James's and other early librarians' complicated stance on the role of women in the professions and in society. Many scholars describe women's activism as an extension of mothering activities,⁹¹ and yet James seems to have had little to say about her circumstances as a female, daughter, sister, or aunt. This, plus the fact that fewer than 10 percent of library employees during this time were married begs the question of whether motherhood and family issues were at the forefront of their thoughts.⁹² Interestingly, James missed two of the most important events in library history—the first meeting of the American Library Association in 1876, as well as the 1893 World's Fair (including opportunities to present a paper and staff the Women's Library)—in order to care for ill family members. When speaking about the status of women in librarianship, James appeared to have conflicting views. On one hand, she wrote in a scholarly paper that "apart from occasional local prejudice or reason in favour of either man or woman, library positions are bestowed according to ability, and not according to sex."⁹³ Yet when the 1897 death of Justin Winsor presented the possibility that a woman (James herself) might become president of the American Library Association, she told Dewey that she "didn't approve" of women in the vice-presidential role. Further, she "intended making the occurrence the text for a homily against putting women librarians in such a position." Though James clearly made sacrifices for her family, and she was ambivalent about women assuming leadership in the profession, her role as an officer in many organizations belies any charge that she was subservient to others. The household she built with Myra Poland, an arrangement often known as a "Boston marriage," may also call into question scholarly assumptions about the role of motherhood in women professionals' lives. Trisha Franzen's and other scholars' research on "Independent Women" may be more helpful in understanding librarians like James, for they are uncovering those "who constructed lives that seemed to be in opposition to rather persistent norms of womanhood."⁹⁴

Perhaps the most important story that needs telling is James's and others' efforts to professionalize and extend the public library movement

in Pennsylvania. The 1890s and first decades of the twentieth century were watersheds for library development here, as the founding of the Pennsylvania Library Club and the Western Pennsylvania Library Association indicate. In addition, training programs sprouted at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Clarion, Drexel, and elsewhere. Also, the State Library of Pennsylvania began to assume greater responsibility for developing libraries and museums across the state. Currently, there are Haynes McMullen's statistical data on libraries before 1876, some student theses, and scholarly articles about libraries in the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh areas.⁹⁵ There are also numerous (but mostly nonrefereed and uncritical) county and local historical society papers, self-published pamphlets, and Web sites on individual libraries.⁹⁶ Yet to my knowledge, the history of public libraries in Pennsylvania has never been written about in a comprehensive way. This seems odd given that the library movement connects with women's history, industrial/professional history, social history, pop culture, and so many other topics that have attracted scholarly interest in recent decades.

The insightful strands of James's life lend more credence to the notion that library historians must think "outside the book," and the historians of women at work must think outside the bounds of gender and occupation. Articles published in national outlets such as *Library Journal* give us very little insight on James's career development, much less her motivations and priorities. It is only when we consult the records of other types of organizations that her outlook on library work and society emerge. Her story makes clear that all kinds of women were active during the Progressive era, and it was an age when many had to re-examine their roles at work and in broader society. Hannah Packard James's family understood the broad impact she tried to have in the communities she lived. In memorializing her, they described her not as a librarian, but as "zealous in good works."⁹⁷

NOTES

The author would like to thank Ruth Runion-Slear, Interlibrary Loan assistant at Penn State–Harrisburg Library; Diane Suffren, director, and the staff of the Osterhout Free Library; Dennis Gourley, executive director, and the staff of the Family Service Association of Wyoming Valley; and Ellen Wharton, administrative assistant of the Pennsylvania Library Association. All provided extraordinary help in procuring rare and archival materials for this project.

1. Laurel A. Grotzinger, "Biographical Research on Women Librarians: Its Paucity, Perils, and Pleasures," in *The Status of Women in Librarianship: Historical, Sociological, and Economic Issues*, ed. Kathleen M. Heim (New York: Neal-Schuman, 1983), 139–90.

2. See Kellie D. Clark and John V. Richardson Jr., "Edith Guerrier, 'A Little [Warrior] Woman of New England' on Behalf of U.S. Public Documents," *Journal of Government Information* 28 (2001): 267–83; Clare Beck, *The New Woman as Librarian: The Career of Adelaide Hasse* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006); Cheryl Gunselman, "'Wheedling, Wangling, and Walloping' for Progress: The Public Service Career of Cornelia Marvin Pierce, 1905–1943," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 110 (Fall 2009): 362–89; Mary Niles Maack, "No Philosophy Carries as Much Weight as the Personal Life: Mary Wright Plummer as an Independent Woman," *Library Quarterly* 70 (January 2000): 1–46; Christopher Walker and Ann Copeland, "The Eye Prophetic: Julia Pettee," *Libraries and the Cultural Record* 44 (2009): 162–82; Melanie A. Kimball, Christine A. Jenkins, and Betsy Hearne, "Effie Louise Power: Librarian, Educator, Author," *Library Trends* 52 (Spring 2004): 924–51.
3. Among the library-related articles published recently in *Pennsylvania History* and *PMHB* are Louis Waddell's piece on the history of the State Archives (see *Pennsylvania History* 73, no. 2 [Spring 2006]: 198–235); Martin Goldberg's and Curtis Miner's articles on the Carnegie Library of Homestead (see *Pennsylvania History* 70, no. 2 [Spring 2003]: 149–73, and 57, no. 2 [April 1990]: 107–35), George Thomas's article about the Frank Furness library at the University of Pennsylvania (*PMHB* 126, no. 2 [April 2002]: 249–72), Arthur Jarvis's note about the beginning of the Free Library of Philadelphia's Edwin Fleisher (Music) Collection (*Pennsylvania History* 63, no. 3 [Summer 1996]: 412–19), George Boudreau's research on the Library Company of Philadelphia (*Pennsylvania History* 63, no. 3 [Summer 1996]: 302–25), and Thomas Winpenney's work on the Mechanic's Institute in Lancaster (*Pennsylvania History* 55, no. 1 [January 1988]: 31–41).
4. Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877–1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 4, 12.
5. Steven J. Diner, *A Very Different Age: Americans of the Progressive Era* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 3, 8–9.
6. Dee Garrison, *Apostles of Culture: The Public Librarian and American Society, 1876–1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 9–10.
7. Garrison's chapters on the "missionary" or "genteel" phase of the profession focus on librarians leading institutions with 50,000 volumes or more. Fewer than 25 percent of these were led by women. As a result, Garrison extensively describes and quotes Justin Winsor, Frederick Poole, Charles Cutter, and Josephus Larned, but only mentions women like Hannah James as "spinsters" in passing. Subsequent chapters on "tender technicians" who feminized the profession mostly pertain to women who began their careers in the 1890s and early 1900s.
8. Surprisingly, no scholar has ever published a book or article about James, who is arguably a founder of public libraries in Pennsylvania. Up until now, many of the known facts about James have been drawn from three sources. One is Myra Poland (1855–1930), who was James's assistant librarian at Osterhout Free Library from its opening until James's death. As she aged, Poland wrote reminiscences of their work. While providing essential clues about James's life, Poland is uncritical of her and James's activities. There are two theses as well. In 1961 Joan P. Diana wrote a history of the Osterhout using the library's publications, published histories of Wilkes-Barre and Luzerne County, and other local resources. Unfortunately, only a small portion of her paper describes the library under James's leadership. A few years later, Frances C. Davis combed through national-level professional journals to learn about James. Exploring whether James was "representative" of broad trends in librarianship during the late nineteenth century, Davis did not write about James within

- the context of the community she served. See "Miss Hannah Packard James," in *Proceedings and Collections of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society for the Years 1902-1903*, ed. Horace Edwin Hayden (Wilkes-Barre, PA: The Society, 1903), 300-304; "In Memoriam—Hannah Packard James," *Library Journal* 28 (May 1903): 240-41; Poland, "Hannah Packard James, 1835-1903," *Bulletin of Bibliography and Dramatic Index* 8 (October 1914): 91-92; "As It Was in the Beginning," *Public Libraries* 29 (1924): 176-78; Joan Diana, "History of the Osterhout Free Library," master's thesis, Marywood College, 1961; and Frances Davis, "Hannah Packard James, 1835-1903: A Representative Public Librarian of the Last Quarter of the Nineteenth Century," master's thesis, University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill, 1969.
9. Poland, "In Memoriam," 240-41; Alix Quan, e-mail message to author, August 25, 2006. Quan, a staff member of the State Library of Massachusetts, used the library's "Biographical Files" on the state's legislators to confirm William James's dates of service. For information about Samuel May, see Donald Yacovone, "Samuel Joseph May," in *American National Biography*, vol. 14, ed. John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 762-63; May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society, "Samuel J. May," <http://www.mmuus.org/who-we-are/history/sjmay.html>; Thomas James Mumford, George B. Emerson, and Samuel Joseph May, *Memoir of Samuel Joseph May* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1873).
 10. Jarvis Freymann, *Scituate's Educational Heritage, 1630-1990* (Hanover, MA: Scituate Historical Society, 1990).
 11. L. Vernon Briggs, *History of Shipbuilding on the North River, Plymouth County, Massachusetts, with Genealogies of the Shipbuilders, and Accounts of the Industries upon Its Tributaries, 1640 to 1872* (Boston: Coburn Brothers, 1889); George Michael O'Har, "Shipbuilding, Markets, and Technological Change in East Boston," Ph.D. diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1995; John Bradford Hunter, "Boston and Its Maritime World, 1790-1850: Trade Circuits, Proto-Industrialization, and the Historical Geography of Shipbuilding in New England," Ph.D. diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1999.
 12. Joseph Foster Merritt, *Old Time Anecdotes of the North River and the South Shore* (Rockland, MA: Rockland Standard Publishing, 1928), 61.
 13. Frederic Augustus James, *Prison Diary of Frederic Augustus James: Sumter to Andersonville*, ed. with an introduction by Jefferson J. Hammer (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1973). Myra Poland and others have claimed that James worked for the U.S. Sanitary Commission during the Civil War. More likely, James volunteered for the New England Women's Auxiliary Association, a regional "tributary" to the USSC. NEWAA's records are housed at the New York Public Library. According to Susan Waide, a manuscripts specialist at NYPL, an NEWAA "catalog" of volunteers links James to the Channing Sewing Circle, and the sewing circle to the NEWAA.
 14. *Newton Journal* (Newton, MA), December 2, 1871, and January 6, 1872.
 15. Sheldon Spear, *Chapters in Northeastern Pennsylvania History: Luzerne, Lackawanna, and Wyoming Counties* (Shavertown, PA: Jemags and Co., 1999), 1.
 16. Donald L. Miller and Richard E. Sharpless, *The Kingdom of Coal: Work, Enterprise, and Ethnic Communities in the Mine Fields* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 4, 12; Wilkes-Barre Preservation Society, "Seals and Symbolism," Wilkes-Barre Presentation Society, <http://www.diamondcity200.org/symbols.htm> (accessed October 12, 2009).

17. Edward J. Davies, *The Anthracite Aristocracy: Leadership and Social Change in the Hard Coal Regions of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 1800–1930* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1985), 6–7.
18. J. E. Williams, ed., *Williams' Wilkes-Barre City Directory* (Wilkes-Barre, PA, 1895), 73–75.
19. Davies, *Anthracite Aristocracy*, 3–101.
20. Spear, *Chapters in Northeastern Pennsylvania History*, 1–17; Miller and Sharpless, *Kingdom of Coal*, 75–78; Oscar Jewell Harvey and Ernest Gray Smith, *A History of Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, from Its First Beginning to the Present Time; Including Chapters of Newly-Discovered Early Wyoming Valley History Together with Many Biographical Sketches and Much Genealogical Material*, vol. 4 (Wilkes-Barre, PA: Raeder Press, 1909–30), 2154–55; W. W. Munsell, *History of Luzerne, Lackawanna, and Wyoming Counties, Pennsylvania* (New York: W. W. Munsell, 1880), 213; *Wilkes-Barre Record-Almanac 1888* (Wilkes-Barre, PA: Wilkes-Barre Publishing, 1889), 17–27.
21. See table 80, “Population: 1900, 1890, and 1880,” in U.S. Census Office, *Abstract of the Twelfth Census of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1902), 102.
22. Spear, *Chapters in Northeastern Pennsylvania History*, 5.
23. *Souvenir of Wilkes-Barre* (Wilkes-Barre, PA: F. M. Kirby, 1907).
24. See table 2, “Foreign Born Population, Distributed to Country of Birth, of Cities Having 25,000 Inhabitants or More,” in U.S. Census Office, *Compendium of the Eleventh Census: 1890* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1894), pt. 2, 608–9; table 81, “Population Classified by Sex, by Race, and by Nativity,” and table 82, “Foreign Born Population Classified by Principle Countries of Birth,” in U.S. Census Office, *Abstract of the Twelfth Census of the United States: 1900* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1902), 105, 108; table 38, “Foreign-Born Population by Country of Birth, in Cities Having from 25,000 to 100,000 Inhabitants,” in U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States*, vol. 1, *Population, General Report and Analysis* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1913), 864–65.
25. Howard Harris and Perry K. Blatz, eds., *Keystone of Democracy: A History of Pennsylvania Workers* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1999), 85–87.
26. J. E. Williams, ed., *Wilkes-Barre Directory 1886–7* (Binghamton, NY: J. E. Williams, [1886]), 27; J. E. Williams, ed., *Williams Wilkes-Barre Directory 1888* (Binghamton, NY: J. E. Williams, [1888]), 37.
27. Ellis W. Roberts, *A Brief Biography of Isaac Smith Osterhout and the Founding of the Osterhout Free Library* (booklet [n.p.: n.d., probably Osterhout Free Library, 1989]). Available in Osterhout Free Library business office.
28. I checked early board members' names in Samuel Robert Smith, *The Wyoming Valley in 1892* ([Scranton, PA:] Scranton Republican Print, 1892).
29. Board of Trustee meeting minutes, Osterhout Free Library (hereafter Osterhout Library Board minutes), April 12, 1890.
30. *Ibid.*, November 9 and 10, 1886.
31. Melvil Dewey Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University, New York (hereafter Dewey Papers). See Box 32 (Correspondence, Kappa–Nye), letters from McClintock to Dewey, January 17 and February 22, 1887.
32. James, letter to Dewey, March 18, 1887, Box 32 (Correspondence, Hasse–Jordan), Dewey Papers.
33. They included Maurice Abbott and James Barnwell of the Library Company of Philadelphia; Eckley B. Coxe, president of Coxe Brothers and Company coal mines in Luzerne County; John

- Edmands of Philadelphia's Mercantile Library; S. P. Ferec of the Leonard Publishing Company in Philadelphia; Gregory Keen of the University of Pennsylvania; W. Kite of the Friends Free Library of Germantown; E. J. Nolan of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences; and Dr. C. Schaffer of Philadelphia. See American Library Association, *American Library Association Constitution, Charter, and Regulations; With List of Members, List of Meetings, Etc.* ([n.p.:] 1889).
34. Poland, "In Memoriam," 240–41; Osterhout Library Board minutes, April 6, 1887.
 35. *Wilkes-Barre Record* (Wilkes-Barre, PA), January 29, 1889.
 36. Poland, "In Memoriam," 240–41.
 37. *Record of the Times* (Wilkes-Barre, PA), August 27 and November 4, 1887.
 38. *Ibid.*, June 6, 1890.
 39. See Osterhout Free Library, *Class Catalogue and Author Index of the Osterhout Free Library, Wilkes-Barre, PA* (Wilkes-Barre, PA: [Press of R. Baur and Son], 1889); Osterhout Free Library, *Class Catalogue and Author Index of the Osterhout Free Library, Wilkes-Barre, PA, First Supplement* (Wilkes-Barre, PA: R. Baur and Son, 1895).
 40. W. H. Sturdevant, *Atlas of the City of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania; Compiled from Actual Surveys, Official Maps and Records* (Philadelphia: J. L. Smith, 1894).
 41. *Wilkes-Barre Record*, January 28–29, 1889.
 42. Osterhout's *News-Letter* is an important document within national library history as well. Although intended for Wilkes-Barre readers, copies were sent to "any address" for just fifty cents per year. At its peak, the *News-Letter* was distributed to 3500 people and organizations. Even today, it can be interlibrary-loaned from many institutions outside of Pennsylvania.
 43. Osterhout Free Library (Hannah Packard James, ed.), *Library News-Letter* (Wilkes-Barre, PA), October 1891 (hereafter Osterhout Library *News-Letter*).
 44. *Ibid.*, April 1891.
 45. *Ibid.*, October 1893.
 46. Garrison, *Apostles of Culture*, 206–41.
 47. See issues for September 1897–November 1898.
 48. James was an active member of the Society, which met in a building at the back of the Osterhout Free Library. In the 1890s the Society regularly published *Proceedings* (scholarly papers) and other items.
 49. According to Diana Selig, this consciousness did not begin to arise until the 1920s and 1930s. See Selig, *Americans All: The Cultural Gifts Movement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).
 50. Osterhout Library *News-Letter*, April 1893; Reading Room Association of Wilkes-Barre, *Annual Report* (n.p., 1894), 5–8.
 51. Perhaps James's prior experiences delivering books to Newton's scattered villages (and the financial problems this caused the Newton Free Library) made her cautious about relying on the Osterhout's funding and staff.
 52. Reading Room Association of Wilkes-Barre, *Annual Report* (n.p., 1894), 5–8.
 53. *Ibid.*, 1–3, 16.
 54. Osterhout Library *News-Letter*, April 1893 and January 1894; Reading Room Association of Wilkes-Barre, 1894 *Annual Report*, 5–8.
 55. Osterhout Library *News-Letter*, March 1897.
 56. Reading Room Association of Wilkes-Barre, 1894 *Annual Report*, 11–12.

57. Osterhout Library *News-Letter*, March 1898 and March 1899.
58. Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class Culture in America* (New York: Verso, 1987).
59. Reading Room Association of Wilkes-Barre, 1894 *Annual Report*.
60. Ibid.
61. *Eisteddfod* remains an important tradition in many Welsh communities. For example, see the Web site of the National Eisteddfod of Wales, <http://www.eisteddfod.org.uk/english/>.
62. For examples of Eisteddfod coverage in Wilkes-Barre newspapers, see *Record of the Times*, November 7 and 25, 1887; March 21 and April 4, 1890; January 2, January 9, February 6, March 20, March 27, and August 21, 1891.
63. Budd L. Gambee, "'An Alien Body': Relationships between the Public Library and the Public Schools, 1876-1920," in *Ball State University Library Science Lectures, First Series* (Muncie, IN: Department of Library Science, Ball State University, 1973), 11.
64. Garrison, *Apostles of Culture*, 198-205.
65. Extensive coverage of CBA and St. Vincent de Paul's early activities appear in the *Record of the Times*, Wilkes-Barre's newspaper. See January 13, 1888; March 21, March 28, April 4, April 11, May 9, May 16, May 23, and June 27, 1890.
66. Charity Organization Society of Wilkes-Barre, *Annual Report* (Wilkes-Barre, PA: E. B. Yordy Printing and Blank Books, 1897), 5.
67. Osterhout Library *News-Letter*, May 1895; Charity Organization Society of Wilkes-Barre, 1897 *Annual Report*, 5.
68. The FSAWV scrapbooks, located at the organization's administrative offices in Wilkes-Barre, contain many undated and unattributed news clippings concerning the early years of the COS. Quotations are taken from articles headlined "Parting Shots," "Mrs. Bertels Retires," and "Birthday Greetings," probably dating 1923-26.
69. United Charities. *Annual Report* (n.p., 1904), 14-16.
70. Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877-1919* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), xii.
71. Examples include Philadelphia (which opened its first public library branch in 1892), Scranton (opened to the public in 1893), Pittsburgh (opened 1895), Erie (opened 1899), Easton (reorganized ca. 1901), and Bethlehem (reorganized 1901).
72. Osterhout Library *News-Letter*, May 1891 and March 1892.
73. Pennsylvania Library Club meeting programs, available in the Pennsylvania Library Association Archives, PaLA headquarters, Mechanicsburg, PA. See series "Related Organizations" files, Box 4, folder labeled "Pennsylvania Library Club."
74. "Western Pennsylvania Library Association," *Library Journal* 21 (1896): 466, 506.
75. Osterhout Free Library, *Annual Report* (n.p., 1901), 6.
76. Osterhout Library *News-Letter*, October 1901.
77. See flyers in Pennsylvania Library Association Archives, series "Conference Files," Box 1, folders labeled "1901 Conference."
78. Osterhout Library *News-Letter*, November 1901; manuscript notes in Pennsylvania Library Association Archives, series "Conference Files," Box 1, folders labeled "1901 Conference"; William

- F. Stevens, *The Keystone State Library Association, 1901-1915* ([Homestead, PA?]: Printed by Order of the Executive Committee, 1916).
79. "The Chambered Nautilus," in *Poetry for Students*, vol. 24, ed. Anne Marie Hacht and Ira Mark Milne (Detroit: Gale, 2006), 51-65.
80. See J. E. Williams, ed., *Williams Wilkes-Barre Directory 1889* (Binghamton, NY: J. E. Williams, [1889]); T. P. Robinson, *Wilkes-Barre Directory 1893* ([Wilkes-Barre, PA]: T. P. Robinson, [1893]); T. P. Robinson, *Wilkes-Barre Directory 1897* ([Wilkes-Barre, PA]: T. P. Robinson, [1897]).
81. Luzerne County Register of Wills, will book Q, pp. 408-9, will number 211 of 1897. Will books are available at the Register of Wills office, Luzerne County Courthouse, Wilkes-Barre, PA.
82. H. C. Bradsby, *History of Luzerne County, Pennsylvania with Biographical Selections* (Chicago: S. B. Nelson and Co., 1893), 548.
83. Luzerne County Recorder of Deeds, deed books. See 368:50-52 and 479:341; Also see James, letter to Dewey, April 26, 1898, Box 5 ("ALA Conference 1898"), Dewey Papers.
84. [Florence Watts?], photographs of Myra Poland at home, not dated, ca. 1905. Available in the business office of the Osterhout Free Library, Wilkes-Barre, PA. These unique photographs were sent to the library in the 1980s to be used in its centennial exhibit. According to an accompanying note sent by Ruth M. Broschat, Broschat had "spent many happy times with my aunt and Miss Poland, both in her lovely home and at the Osterhout as a child." Broschat's aunt may have been Florence Watts, a library assistant who is pictured in some of the photos and mentioned in Myra Poland's will.
85. Letters between Dewey and James, May 1, 1896-July 15, 1896; November 15, 1896; March 29, May 21, and May 26, 1897, in Box 31A (Correspondence, Hasse-Jordan), Dewey Papers. See also Lee Manchester, *Lake Placid Club, 1890-2002* (Saranac Lake, NY: Adirondack Publishing, 2003), 4-5.
86. "Death of Miss Hannah P. James," *Wilkes-Barre Times*, April 20, 1903.
87. *Wilkes-Barre Record*, April 21, 1903; "Death of Miss Hannah P. James," *Wilkes-Barre Times*, April 20, 1903; "A Good Woman Has Gone to Rest," *Wilkes-Barre Times*, April 23, 1903.
88. Osterhout Library Board minutes, May 1, 1903.
89. Sheldon Spear, *Wyoming Valley History Revisited: With a Few Glimpses Beyond. From Utopian Visions to Post-Anthracite Realities* (Shavertown, PA: Jemags and Co., 1994), 57.
90. Sybille Jagusch, "First Among Equals: Caroline M. Hewins and Anne C. Moore. Foundations of Library Work with Children," Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1990, 36-43.
91. For instance, see Elizabeth J. Clapp, *Mothers of All Children: Women Reformers and the Rise of Juvenile Courts in Progressive America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998).
92. Garrison, *Apostles of Culture*, 176.
93. Hannah P. James, "Special Training for Library Work," in *Transactions and Proceedings of the Second International Conference Held in London, July 13-16, 1897* (Edinburgh: Morris and Gibb, 1898), 34-39.
94. See Trisha Franzen, ed., *Spinsters and Lesbians: Independent Womanhood in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 3.
95. Haynes McMullen, "The Founding of Social Libraries in Pennsylvania, 1731-1876," *Pennsylvania History* 8 (1965): 130-52.

96. For citations to books and articles, see Donald D. Davis and John Mark Tucker, *American Library History: A Comprehensive Guide to the Literature* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1989) and Ed Goedeken, *Bibliographies of Library History*, Library History Round Table, <http://www.lita.org/ala/mgrps/rts/lhrt/popularresources/libhistorybib/libraryhistory.cfm>. For links to Pennsylvania library histories on the Internet, see Bernadette Lear, "Pennsylvania Library History on the Web," <http://www.personal.psu.edu/bal19/palibhisonweb.htm>.
97. Jeanne Ryer, e-mail message to author, August 31, 2006. Ryer, a staff member at Norwell Public Library, transcribed the inscriptions on James's family tombstones on behalf of the author.