

Public Abstract

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Title:A SEQUENTIAL EXPLORATORY MIXED METHODS STUDY OF CARNEGIE LIBRARIES AND THE LIBRARY PROFESSION, 1900-1910

Andrew Carnegie's philanthropy made it possible for thousands of communities in the United States (U.S) to build free public libraries. Contemporary scholarship in library and information science (LIS) that deals with Carnegie's philanthropy tends to place emphasis on generalized historical ideals associated with the construction of public libraries. As a result, it often fails to critically inquire into the relationships between the work performed by librarians and assumptions about the cultural value of Carnegie libraries. This dissertation investigates broad trends in library history in order to better understand the particular experiences of fifteen Midwestern communities that built public libraries with Andrew Carnegie's money in the first decade of 20th century. Mixed methods research supports the synthesis of broad qualitative data with specific quantitative data, which supports assessments of primary sources in relation to scholarship about the library profession and Carnegie's philanthropy. Comparing and contrasting findings from two distinct data sets makes it possible to discuss idiosyncrasies architectural trends and to better understand the role professional rhetoric played in their development within a specific geographic region (the Midwest).