Reform and Revolution

JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER LIBRARIES IN THE 1970S

Jeanie Austin
iSchool at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign

ABSTRACT: Librarians working with incarcerated populations during the 1970s drew from and contributed to ongoing movements against oppression based on race, gender, and sexuality. These movements shaped the ideologies and actions of librarians working with incarcerated youth. Librarians’ ideological approaches were not always articulated through publications. This article examines publications in special issues of library journals during this period alongside associational archives and the revolutionary newsletter Inside-Outside to interrogate how ideologies of reform or revolution shaped library practice in juvenile detention facilities during this time. Inherent in this undertaking is an evaluation of how mainstream avenues for publication and association proceedings may have favored reformist positions. Available publications and records that relate to juvenile detention center libraries in the 1970s are framed in a larger discussion of youth incarceration.

KEYWORDS: Incarcerated populations, social movements, young adult librarians, 1970s, United States

Librarians providing services within the juvenile justice system during the 1970s were positioned in a social and political field that included prisoner uprisings and calls for recognition, rights, and access. Librarians working in juvenile detention centers did not always, or completely, answer these calls. Often, librarians were concerned with the daily functions of the library or of funding, taking up a political position of continued services that spoke to reform rather than the revolutionary stances taken by prisoners during this period. A vivid exception to this is found in an exploration of Inside-Outside, a publication that combined contributions by librarians and the incarcerated, portraying an idea of equality in who should speak and who should be heard. This combined with radical illustrations and texts that openly addressed, and resisted, systems of oppression.

This article presents a situated analysis of how social movements and juvenile justice coupled to shape library services to incarcerated youth during
Juvenile Detention Center Libraries in the 1970s

241

the 1970s. It opens with a review of census data on juvenile incarceration throughout the decade. This is followed by information on juvenile detention center librarianship in the 1970s and a review of special-issue publications from the decade.¹ The available run of Inside-Outside, a publication by librarians and incarcerated people, is also included for analysis. These publications are positioned alongside the formation of the Library Services to Young Adults ad hoc committee and the creation of Library Standards. Given Coyle’s analysis that “prison library service had become a social issue” by 1968, attention is given to the implied or expressed political positions of librarians throughout the descriptions of publications and materials.²

Two major ideological positions related to youth incarceration emerge through this review—reformist or revolutionary. Librarians evince a reformist position when they fail to question the underlying structures of youth incarceration or when they propose that juvenile detention can be shaped into a social good through intervention. Revolutionary positions are illustrated through implied or explicit stances against imprisonment. From reformists to revolutionaries, individual librarians practiced their ideological positions in the collections and programs they provided within the contexts of juvenile detention and the ways in which they documented these services.

This review offers a view of the past that may inform present services, illustrating that then, as now, ideological positions shaped the implementation of library services. It reveals an often-hidden history—one in which librarians deploy languages and ideologies of larger social movements to meet their goals. Forty-eight prisoner-led uprisings had occurred between 1968 and 1971, notable among these the Attica uprising.³ Prisoners were actively making demands for improved conditions and access to materials that were, at times. Their demands were met with harsh repression. Librarians working with incarcerated people were often explicitly aware of prisoner resistance and other movements against oppression.

A pivotal conflict is also evident within this review. Institutional formations, such as the Social Responsibilities Round Table, helped to create and spread awareness of library services to incarcerated youth in the 1970s. Simultaneously, librarians may have presented their efforts as reform due to institutional constraints, including the assumed or explicit positions of professional associations and journals. This research uses a critical lens that considers how publications are shaped by these professional structures. It is possible that librarians publishing about their work in juvenile detention centers during the 1970s withheld their revolutionary sentiments due to their positions
in institutions. Still, the majority of publications reviewed in this analysis espouse the idea that juvenile detention is or can be a site of rehabilitation. Inside-Out offers an alternative to this, illustrating that it was necessary to go beyond the purported roles of institutions. The revolutionary project of Inside-Out involves publishing as a conversation between librarians and incarcerated people. Topics covered, books reviewed, and the incorporation of abolitionist images work together to solidify the newsletter’s defiant, revolutionary stance toward information provision.

**Juvenile Incarceration in the 1970s**

Juvenile detention, as discussed in this article, encompasses a number of institutions that contained youth. Institutional placements utilized in the 1970s included training schools, detention centers, ranches, camps, and farms as well as halfway home placements. Juvenile detention acted as a short-term placement for both preadjudicated and adjudicated youth, with an average length of stay of eleven days. Shelter placements lasted an average of twenty days. Adjudicated youth faced longer stays in diagnostic centers (an average of fifty-one days) and in correctional facilities with stays that averaged 7.8 months. Group homes were a particularly urban, and less restrictive, placement—a high contract to rural placements at ranches and camps. Urban home placements involved (adult, white, and middle-class) “controlled exposure to the community” alongside “individual and group counseling.” These types of placements were justified because incarceration “proved not to be a workable correctional strategy.”

Available information from 1970 shows 76,729 youth in custody. The average age of incarcerated youth in this year was 16.3 years old. Of those youth, 70 percent were male (30% female). For race 60 percent were identified as white, 36 percent as black, and 4 percent as other. Ages of youth in facilities varied from a low of six or younger to a high of twenty-one (these ages were the outliers). One-third of offenses were status offenses (girls were more likely to be convicted for these) and the “least common violations were drug offenses.” The majority of youth discharged from facilities (71%) remained in some form of state-mandated aftercare or on parole. Capacity was contested and dependent on location—“36% of juvenile facilities were operating at under 70 percent capacity” while 16 percent of all facilities were overcrowded by 20 percent or more of intended capacity. Throughout the 1970s, 4,316 youth (under the legal age of eighteen) were
held in adult prisons and 5,864 youth (under the legal age of eighteen) 
were held in adult jail.

The 1974 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act ostensibly 
reduced the number of youth held for status offenses and created a greater 
distance between youth and adults in adult institutions. The act led to an 
increase in diversion programs—designed to keep youth out of institutions or 
reduce time in institutions. This was short-lived. Toward the end of the 1970s, 
state agencies found diversion programs largely ineffective. Additionally, the 
mandate for reduced incarceration for status offenses may have been maneu-
vered against youth to increase the likelihood that youth would be tried as 
criminals in the late 1970s and into the 1980s.

Of all types of facilities, 81 percent reportedly held a library for youth in the 
1970s. This information is tempered by an understanding of the history of 
prison libraries. In early prisons in the United States, “education and reading 
played a natural part in the Utilitarian scheme for the reformation of charac-
ter. Ideally, reading materials would induce an ethical and moral change in the 
convicts.” Libraries in prisons were censored and controlled in keeping with 
the intentions of the prison system. This changed somewhat throughout the 
1960s as prisoners demanded rights to read. Of course, access was not always 
granted. In the case of juvenile incarceration, where Progressive narratives of 
rehabilitation tend to outweigh narratives of punishment, the idea of edu-
cation and reading as behavior-molding activities lingered. This provides 
one explanation for the abundance of libraries claimed by juvenile facilities 
in 1970. Conversely, Chavez-Garcia describes the ways in which education 
and access to materials were systemically used against youth who belonged 
to groups targeted for incarceration. Eugenicist logics combined with stan-
dardized intelligence testing to strategically place young people of color into 
the juvenile justice system.

Researchers on prison libraries and youth incarceration tend to couple 
narratives of education or access to materials with those of rehabilitation. 
The influential 1978 Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention 
(OJJDP) Project READ report contributed heavily to this tendency. In this 
study, over one-third of youth were presented as reading at a fourth-grade 
level. Librarians have frequently utilized this study to make arguments for 
reading and literacy as rehabilitative. A philosophy of youth as in need of 
intervention shifts from a focus on humanization to presenting incarcerated 
youth as problems to be solved. Viewing youth as inherently flawed fits 
with some of the reformist ideologies present in librarians’ efforts during this
period. In contrast, viewing youth as informed knowers is a revolutionary approach to services.

**Juvenile Detention Center Libraries in the 1970s**

Examining juvenile detention center libraries in the 1970s through publications and institutional records very much complicates the premise that 81 percent of juvenile facilities contained libraries. Discussions about library services to youth in detention gained pitch and volume within the context of a changing profession through the course of the 1970s. Conversations about race, gender, and sexuality gained increasing prominence among librarians and at ALA conferences. Various librarians credit the social and political awareness of the time for the surging interest in providing library services to incarcerated people. Barbara Vogel sites this tie between larger social change and changes in library services to the incarcerated in the introduction to *The Prison Library Primer*. Stout and Turitz open their 1977 article in the *Wilson Library Bulletin* with a focus on those most affected by the criminal justice system—people of color, people with low levels of education, and the poor. In the same issue, Rubin posits that attention to library service in prisons occurred in response to the “prison reform movement.” This is evidence that librarians drew from and contributed to ongoing movements against oppression based on race, gender, and sexuality.

Prison and juvenile detention center librarians’ work was explicitly or implicitly framed in response to these movements. Works published by and about juvenile detention center libraries reveal this to be true. Special issues of journals (such as *Illinois Libraries*, *Wilson Library Bulletin*, and *Library Trends*) centered on the topic of library services to prisoners, while a newly formed newsletter (*Inside-Outside*) and committee (Library Service to Young Adults in Institutions) sought to provide resources to and organize the library community around library services to incarcerated people. The ideologies behind this undertaking were not always cohesive. Numerous librarians in this review undertook reformist positions, advocating for access without radically critiquing the foundational elements of incarceration in the United States. *Inside-Outside*, however, provides a rich example of how revolutionary social movement principles were integrated into on-the-ground library services to all prisoners, including incarcerated youth.

**Early Publications and Studies—Raising Awareness**

Librarians began to make more explicit demands for library services to incarcerated people in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Surveys, appeals for
publications, and associational changes all reflect this process. A review of published materials available from 1968 to 1972 reveals that librarians’ interest in this area of services (as well as in the implications of providing or failing to provide these services) was growing.

Bob Wang’s 1968 study of institutional libraries provides a stark contrast to the idea that 81 percent of facilities held an actual functioning library by the 1970s. Wang’s publication shows that several states (Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, and Maryland) were providing some form of library services to detained youth. Of these states, only Maryland clearly had a librarian serving youth that were detained.

Demands for more information on the provision of libraries to detained youth followed Wang’s study. MacCormick notes the dearth of available information on these libraries in 1970; in his Brief History of Libraries in American Correctional Centers, he states that there was “no nationwide, complete and up-to-date information” on library services to juveniles. LeDonne extends this sentiment in a 1977 publication in Library Trends when she states that “[a] comprehensive national survey of juvenile correctional facilities has never been done.”

LeDonne’s 1977 article details the 1972 joint study by the Institute of Library Research (ILR) and the ACA. This survey utilized information from juvenile and adult facilities across the country in combination with on-site reviews and interviews in ten sample states. The author describes the major results of this early publication in relation to four specific areas of library function:

- Library services were largely inadequate and not equal to community libraries.
- Librarians were concerned with rehabilitation but not with prisoners’ quality of life post-release.
- It was not clear if library services would be improved by the addition of a library coordinator.
- The idea that libraries should function separately from educational programs was not supported.
- Correctional library services would be “improved by closer cooperative ties with outside libraries.”

LeDonne actively published about libraries for incarcerated people. Her 1974 article describes the process that led to the formation of the American Correctional Association guidelines for libraries. This article reveals the influence of major social and political movements on the development of library
services to incarcerated youth. LeDonne notes the cultural and political shifts that surrounded library services in correctional institutions, including new media, “awareness and pride among minority groups for their traditions and cultural heritage,” public awareness, court decisions, and sources of funding. Placing this alongside LeDonne’s reflective 1977 article illustrates a central theme of this article—librarians’ ideological approaches to providing services to incarcerated people impacted the types of services that were available.

In 1972 the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) Task Force on Service to Prisoners issued a request to ALA members to learn more about library services to prisoners. Shortly thereafter, Rubin published an occasional paper on the topic. She documents the history of libraries in prisons, citing religion, morality, and education as forms of social control in the historical impetus for prison libraries. She also emphasizes the ease of creating theoretical approaches to prison librarianship and the seeming difficulty in implementing them.

Rubin’s rehabilitative approach articulates a central theme in this article. Many librarians publicly made statements of faith in the idea that incarceration could lead to rehabilitation. Rehabilitation claims a certain trust in both the function of incarceration and in the overall functioning of society at large. Revolutionary social and political movements of this time contested the idea that society functioned in any semblance of justice. Rubin’s professed faith in reform is echoed in later publications that specifically focused on juvenile incarceration.

**Library Service to Young Adults in Institutions**

The Library Service to Young Adults in Institutions ad hoc committee formed in response to the 1972 SRRT Task Force on Service to Prisoners call for specialized information relating to library services to incarcerated youth. The committee began as part of the Young Adult Services Division (YASD, now Young Adult Library Services Association) in 1973. Members were officially established in 1974.

Committee members included Susan Madden (chair), Reed Coats, Tom Ploeg, Ed Seidenberg, and Joan Ariel Stout. The committee’s purpose was “to identify the needs of young adults moving in and out of all institutions and to promote programs, resources, and services to meet those needs.” A primary activity of the committee was creating informational packets on serving institutionalized youth. One of the packets concerned services to youth in juvenile detention centers.
Informational packets became available for loan in 1976. A press release announced that packets were intended for anyone interested in starting or expanding library services to young adults in institutions. Packets covered a "wide geographical range" and included "examples of grant proposals, contractual agreements, selection policies and other articles on programs (successful and unsuccessful)." They were originally available for a two-week loan period, and later for one month. Packet contents were distributed through the ALA office. Users were encouraged to make copies of packet contents and to include feedback via a feedback form.

Materials for the packet were gathered through the committee’s research and through a 1975 request for materials made in various library periodicals. While the original contents of the packet are not available in the ALA Archives, a list of potential contents exists in Madden’s communication to the committee members of “YAILS” (the ad hoc committee). This correspondence details the following materials:

1. Jargon List—KC
2. Guilucos School Project
3. N.J. Project
4. Library Standards—Juv. Institutions
5. Job Description
6. “Under Lock and Key”
7. California Youth Authority Conference and Agreements
8. Institutional Library Service Program
9. Role and Function of Lib. in State Insti.
10. Ill. Role of the Librarian in a State Institutions—chapter
11. Library Bill of Rights (communication in February, 1976)³³

Susan Madden, in personal communication to Mary Anderson, lamented the lack of available materials about library services to incarcerated youth. She wrote, “My committee and I have been searching for over two years and have come up with a depressingly small amount. Good services and programs exist, but the people responsible apparently don’t have the time or inclination to write about them. Those that do rarely get into indexed journals and periodicals.”³⁴ Despite this lack of resources, the packets were well and widely received. Between July 20, 1976, and January 17, 1977 there were ninety-seven requests for the juvenile correctional facilities packet, with a reported lag time of up to one year for receipt of the requested materials.³⁵ The Young Adults
in Institutions ad hoc committee became a standing committee in 1977. Membership fluctuated between 1978 and 1982, when the committee appears to have disbanded. Heavy circulation of and requests for the packets is evidence that interest in library services to incarcerated youth was gaining momentum.

It is easy to assume that this propensity toward reformist portrayals of library services was reiterated through the work of the Library Service to Young Adults in Institutions ad hoc committee. However, Susan Madden’s later accounts of her work reveal that she incorporated revolutionary stances. In an interview in 2000 Madden discussed her own impulse to create library services that recognized the realities of incarcerated youth. Her reflections are particularly telling. She mentioned the institutional staff’s complete lack of knowledge about libraries—a lack of knowledge she maneuvered to include a jukebox as part of library services. Madden’s response to a question about her intellectual freedom (IF) advocacy is revealing—

My IF involvement began with caseworkers who thought the kids should be reading “moral and uplifting literature” such as Crime and Punishment or Moby Dick instead of Mad or Iceberg Slim. It stepped up to Youth Service Center administrators trying to remove rap tapes and somehow evolved into public debates with Phyllis Schlafly and local wannabees. . . . I always hark back to the Youth Service Center days where I saw literally thousands of kids in lock-up, and not one of them was there because of something he or she had read, viewed, or listened to!

Madden’s portrayal of youths’ need for information conveys an active trust in youth as knowers and decision makers. This runs a revolutionary counter to rehabilitative approaches to juvenile justice, where youth are viewed as in need of guidance and must be subject to constant surveillance and behavior modification. This article later addresses how institutions and mainstream publications limit the possibility of revolutionary speech and acts after a review of works published around and after the formation of this influential committee.

Illinois Libraries

A 1974 special issue of Illinois Libraries focused on library services in correctional institutions. Editors curated the issue in response to ongoing appeals for more information on prison librarianship that were issued at the American
Correctional Association (ACA)/American Library Association (ALA) joint conference. Griffen opens the issue by stressing the political nature of working in a library for prisoners. The idea that librarianship in prisons is an inherently political act is not reiterated through all of the articles that address (in one way or another) library services in juvenile detention centers. This dissonance in willingness or desire to articulate ideological approaches speaks to the tensions libraries and librarians engaging in these projects experienced.

Articles on juvenile detention librarianship center the practical, rather than the political, aspects of the work. Contributors address topics related to funding, collections, implementation of programs, and the lived experience of juvenile detention center librarians. Notable among these are articles on the Illinois State Library system’s program for services in correctional institutions and Susan Madden’s discussion of her work in King County.

Contributors were very concerned with the scope of services in juvenile detention facilities. Rapking focused specifically on collections. Parks, Bostwick, Slanker describe the bureaucratic structures of libraries. They also provide an in-depth analysis of daily provision of library services. Haering follows this trend, but with a gesture toward the political nature of library provision. Hale presents a reformist approach to libraries in juvenile detention. This is countered by Madden’s humanizing treatment of young prisoners.

Rapking, from the West Virginia Library Commission, presents a history of libraries in youth camps in that state (dating at least as far back as 1967). Libraries Services and Construction Act (LSCA) Title IV funds provided for library operations in West Virginia. Rapking does not clarify whether or not librarians were available on site. Instead the focus of the article is on collections. Rapking states that the “program is one of providing materials, periodicals, books, recordings, newspapers, and all possible legal materials.”

The Tacoma, Washington, library system provided library services to youth in the Cascadia Juvenile Reception Diagnostic Center (CJRD), which acted as the juvenile diagnostic center for the entire state. The CJRD held approximately 180 young adults for five to six weeks at a time. Library services were a partnership between agencies. The library collection was directed toward the purpose of the center. It included information on juvenile corrections and psychology as well as books, audiovisual materials (tapes and films), posters, and magazines. Youth became able to browse the collection, rather than selecting materials from book carts, in 1973 or 1974.

The Illinois State Library was involved in a jointly funded project with the Illinois Department of Corrections and the Illinois Law Enforcement
Commission during the early 1970s. Thirteen juvenile correctional centers received library services through this partnership. Bostwick and Slanker utilized the 1966 library standards created by the ACA for services in correctional facilities to shape state-wide library services to youth and adults. Their documentation of the period between April 1972 and March 1974 provide a rich description of the daily provision of library services to youth in institutions. In Illinois 58,068 print and nonprint materials were circulated statewide in juvenile correctional facilities during the survey period. Most juvenile facilities met at least half of the ACA standards for library services, including orientation, reader guidance, information and reference, interlibrary loan, booklists and bibliographic information, recreational and educational reading, discussion groups, listening groups, and exhibits and publicity.

Bostwick and Slanker also include information from surveys of juveniles detained. The authors show that 68 percent of youth respondents physically accessed books from the library and 29 percent of respondents were able to visit the library multiple times a week. Youth ranked their reading interests; sex, sports, and history topped the list. The majority of youth surveyed felt that the library was moderately to very important. These results are mediated by the fact that the youth survey had a particularly low response rate.

Haering provides information on a library in the Los Guilicos School. This residential facility received library services through the Santa Rosa–Sonoma public library. Haering discusses the process involved in approaching the school with the goal of providing library services. Haering posits that the library provided youth a link to the world outside of the school. The librarian is positioned as a nonpartial mediator between staff and the youth, yet library services in correctional facilities are described as a “socially responsive” act.

Each of these articles includes a gesture toward reformist positions. Rapking mentions the inclusion of legal materials in the collection. This recognizes that prisoners, including youth, need information to navigate the systems of incarceration. Rapking reiterates calls for prisoners’ access to materials mentioned earlier in this article, but does not question the functioning of prisons or detention centers. Parks’s portrayal of the facility library as fitting with the goals of the institution can be read as an expression of faith in the general functioning of juvenile facilities. Bostwick and Slanker incorporate youth input into their survey. This humanizing gesture is mediated by a low response rate and a lack of information that situates why youth valued library access. Haering’s conflicting positions that libraries in juvenile detention can at once be neutral mediators and socially responsive speak to the influence of reformist approaches on
Juvenile detention center librarianship. These articles include incomplete or implicit ideological moves. Reformist ideologies are incorporated into practice without necessarily being central to the implementation of library services.

Hale has a clearly reformist position. Hale describes a rehabilitation-oriented approach to the role of filming in programming in the CJRDC. Hale advocates for libraries in correctional facilities to utilize film to tape programs for review. Hale argues that taped programs could be used to “augment” the “self-development potential” of youth. This (particularly disturbing) move illustrates the dangers of reformist positions. Hale’s promotion of videotape can be read as an extension of the institution. Detention facilities were intrinsically involved in the consistent monitoring of youth. Hale’s proposal increases the ability of the institution to conduct surveillance of youth behaviors and actions.

Madden describes her work with the King County Youth Service Center (YSC). This facility held youth deemed dependent, incorrigible, and delinquent by the juvenile courts, both pre- and post-adjudication. Youth were held in the center for an average of five to seven days, but Madden states that a high rate of recidivism (80%) meant that many youth would return to the center. The YSC library held films, over 100 magazine titles, and over 5,000 books. Madden contrasts the center library to public library services, questioning what librarians actually know about the life experiences of public library users. Madden shares youth reports on public libraries—youth could not find the materials that they desired and were not well received by public library staff. Overall, Madden’s article incorporates a more humanizing bent. Madden does not problematize the youth she served. Rather, she notes the lack of meaningful services to youth available outside of the center. This is a revolutionary turn—Madden does not locate fault in detained youth but in institutional practices.

The special issue of Illinois Libraries offered much needed insight into the opportunities and limitations that surrounded providing library services to incarcerated youth. In regard to library services to youth in correctional facilities, articles in the issue discuss the day-to-day realities of library services and provide insight into the types of institutional relationships, the functioning of juvenile detention center libraries, and youth perceptions of library services. The scope of services varied by location, funding, and bureaucratic structures. Librarians explicitly or implicitly communicated their ideological approaches to library provision, which were largely reformist. A review of these ideological positions reveals that librarians did incorporate language and goals from social movements for prisoners’ rights into their own work.
Library Standards for Juvenile Correctional Institutions

A joint effort of the ACA and the ALA led to the 1975 release of the *Library Standards for Juvenile Correctional Institutions*. These standards covered many aspects of library services in juvenile correctional facilities, with the stipulation that standards applied specifically to long-term residential centers. The standards were the first to focus on library services to incarcerated youth. Three assumptions informed the standards:

1. Librarians are concerned with the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders.
2. Services available to communities, including library services, should be available in residential facilities for juvenile offenders.
3. Such library service recognizes the special needs and interests of juvenile offenders.

The standards primarily outline the requirements for day-to-day operations of libraries. Topics include the purpose of the library, collection development, services, design, personnel, and training. Major sections covered in the original manual concern the following:

2.1. The library supports the rehabilitation of youth.
2.2. The library functions as a “combination school and public library.”
2.3. Materials are selected to “meet educational, recreational, and self-developmental needs of the user.”
2.4. Services include book circulation and reader’s advisory.
2.5. The library will be “functional in design and inviting to youth.”
2.6. The library budget will be covered by the agency responsible for library services.
2.7. Personnel will be carefully selected.
2.8. Personnel “shall be dynamic, intelligent, emotionally mature, and professionally trained.”
2.9. Personnel should have advanced education in library science.

The final three areas concerned the qualifications of library staff (2.10), established the ratio of staff to detained youth (2.11), and advocated for librarians in juvenile correctional facilities to maintain a professional network with others working in the field (2.12).

It is no surprise that the cooperative effort between these two institutional bodies involved a reformist positioning of library services in juvenile detention.
facilities. This is detailed clearly in the first assumption. Representatives from the American Correctional Association would have been unlikely to criticize the popular narrative that juvenile detention could and did lead to rehabilitation. Librarians of the time tended, at least in their official publications, to agree with this logic. Libraries were viewed as an addition to the functioning of the overall juvenile detention system. Looking over the three assumptions behind the standards reveals the complexity at play in their creation. Points 2 and 3 seem to challenge point 1. Point 2 reiterates more revolutionary concepts from Susan Madden’s reflections on library services to incarcerated youth. This carefully worded statement pushes against the idea of institutional libraries as sources of moral edification. Point 3 is open to interpretation. The assumed “special needs and interests” of youth may be read through a reformist position of materials that are assumed to assist in the rehabilitation of youth. Alternatively, these assumed “special needs and interests” could imply access to legal materials and culturally relevant materials.

The introduction to the standards reiterates a central theme of this article. It is obvious that institutional positions deeply influenced what could be published in the standards. Librarians were left to read the standards through their ideological positions on libraries for incarcerated youth. At the same time, partnering with the ACA to create the standards can be viewed as a strategic move that helped to guarantee the provision of library services in juvenile correctional institutions, an almost prescient acknowledgment that the currently embraced narratives of youthful incarceration as leading to rehabilitation could easily return to narratives that proclaimed the need for punitive institutions.

Publications

Wilson Library Bulletin

Two articles address juvenile detention in the Wilson Library Bulletin February 1977 special issue, Breaking In: Library Services to Prisoners. In the first, Susan Madden creates a dramatic portrayal of providing library services in a juvenile correctional facility. Madden describes staff undertaking a balanced approach between coddling and punishing youth, stressing their interactions with youth through programming. Madden also stresses the need for librarians to be adaptive and committed to their work. In the second, Stout and Turitz openly credit recent prisoner-led uprisings as an element in the increasing interest in providing library services to prisoners and the detained. They emphasize the tie between prisoners’ recent actions and the social responsibility of libraries.
Their article closes by advocating that prisoners are also part of the community and ought to be grouped into the category of “information poor,” comparing the access to information of prisoners to that of scholars and researchers.52

The articles by Madden and Stout and Turitz are products of librarians committed to providing library services that incorporate revolutionary ideologies. Madden’s article seems less directly politically oriented than her above statements suggest, but it must be read in relation to her own account of providing services to youth. Stout and Turitz clearly outline a revolutionary position that centers prisoners’ actions and demands for social and political change. Their stance is further articulated in and enacted through Inside-Outside.

Library Trends

The summer 1977 issue of Library Trends illustrates particularly reformist conceptions of library services to incarcerated youth. These conceptions reflect the aspects of the ACA/ALA Standard that stress the rehabilitative nature of institutions. The issue opens with Flynn’s brief description of the changing law enforcement and prison landscape.53 Articles by Werner, Cheeseman, and Pool directly discuss juvenile detention center librarianship.

Flynn uses evidence of a growing prison population and increasingly hard-line approaches to prisons and prisoners to make a case for reformist/rehabilitative approaches to the current prison system in the introductory article. In the process, Flynn draws a distinction between the ages of offenders, their life experience, and the functions of imprisonments. Flynn’s opening places librarians squarely in the reformist position. Flynn describes “prisons of the future” in detail. Flynn views these imagined facilities as an answer to the conditions that had generated recent prison uprisings. This article frames the issue by advocating for a better functioning system rather than interrogating social and political oppression as a force behind systems of incarceration.

Three articles in the special edition touch or focus on library services in juvenile correctional facilities. O. James Werner discusses court cases that have affected access to law materials. Werner briefly mentions illiteracy as another aspect of access.54 Cheeseman’s piece specifically addresses library services to detained youth.55 Cheeseman describes some demographic information of correctional facilities. This is followed by a discussion of the role of the library in a juvenile correctional facility, presenting the library as a link between detained young people and the community. Cheeseman states that librarians’ approaches to youth are affected by the situated nature of the library and cautions librarians against befriending incarcerated people, advocating for the correctional facility library to not serve as a replacement to the recreational
center. Cheeseman also challenges conceptions of youths’ illiteracy. Young peoples’ interest in reading is loosely related to their own lived experiences and relevant materials. These positions undertake humanizing approaches to youth as an incomplete move. Their behavioral changes are positioned as a measure of success of library services, reiterating Cheeseman’s reformist position of the library as mediator.

The closing article in the issue, by Jane Pool, introduces some of the history of library services in institutions. Pool’s piece broadly addresses library services to prisoners, focusing on practical means of gaining funding. It is “a survey of factors which have influenced the growing relationship between public libraries and correctional institutions,” but it does not specifically mention the social unrest and prisoner uprisings that led to an increased awareness of the information needs and desires of prisoners within the library profession.

These articles illustrate the institutional and professional background against which Inside-Outside may be placed. Authors and editors of Inside-Outside worked within an institutional climate of librarianship that tended to push for reform rather than massive change. They engaged in Inside-Outside as a professionally unaffiliated project that positioned itself within the idea of revolutionary change. This is evident even through their chosen form—an independently published newsletter. In the case of Inside-Outside, independence from institutional affiliation may have provided more room for a politically charged approach to discussing library services to prisoners.

Inside-Outside

Inside-Outside, “a newsletter on library services to youth and adults in prisons, jails and detention centers” went into print in October of 1974. The editors, Joan Ariel Stout and Gilda Turitz Perolman, had attended UC Berkeley and were likely influenced by the free speech movement and ongoing student movements on that campus. They were both involved in the 1973–74 Social Responsibilities Roundtable Task Force on Service to Prisoners. Their decision to create the newsletter was obviously influenced by these events and affiliations.

From its inception, Inside-Outside is clearly distanced from affiliation with official organizations. In reference to their own work with the SRRT Task Force, the editors state, “It is NOT our personal newsletter; it’s YOURS.” The first issue references the amount of discussion occurring around library services to the incarcerated and the need for a vehicle for communication between prisoners and librarians. It solicits submissions from all individuals involved with library services in institutions, including prisoners, with a voluntary subscription charge of $2.50 for four issues a year.
Scattered throughout the issues are resources related to race and racism in institutional settings, recommendations for feminist texts, legal resources, ALA conference updates, books for low-level readers and about literacy development, and resources critically related to the function of prisons. Most resources include editor-added descriptions and annotations. The newsletter includes references to political prisoners (such as Angela Davis), information about resources that are free to prisoners, prisoners’ letters and published works, and resources related to life after release from institutions. It also covers relevant court cases, including cases in which access to materials has been contested by the institution (as in the case of Blue v. Carlson, in which a director in the prisoner system tried to place a ban on all “communist, black, and other progressive literature”62).

The pages were marked by small illustrations that recur throughout the issues. Many of these illustrations relate to the oppressive functions of the prison system. Notable among these is an image of prisoners on strike, holding signs that call for prison reforms such as medical treatment and religious freedom, images of a black fist clutching a pen, and an illustration of a prisoner escaping from the bars of an American flag (see fig. 1). These images...

Figure 1. Sample illustrations utilized in Inside-Outside
contextualize the information within *Inside-Outside*, suggesting to readers that librarians and prisoners alike recognize resistance to imprisonment and a history of movements against prisons.

The journal covered all aspects of library services in jails, prisons, and juvenile detentions, and therefore provides a wealth of information about library services to youth held in detention centers. The initial issue describes special issues, associations, and standards (listed above) alongside state-specific library services to detained youth and adults. It also includes book reviews (among
these is a review of Murphy’s *Our Kindly Parent . . . The State*, which, the author states, aims “to penetrate the bureaucratic façade of treatment and concern” for juvenile detainees) and resources for prisoners and librarians serving correctional institutions.63

The June 1975 issue describes collection development, especially in regard to donation materials (at Illinois Youth Center–Valley View), bookmobile and programming services (including films) to detained young men in Maryland, and a brief note about Lynne Dubinar’s presentation on library services in detention centers that was given at the “Children’s Rights” institute of the Association of Children’s Librarians of Northern California.64 Volume 2, number 1, includes information about the School Library Resource program Echo at Glen Children’s Center in Issaquah, Washington. Volume 2, issue 3 includes information about a bookmark creation program at Illinois Youth Center, Valley-View, and the introduction of the Illinois Youth Center Libraries’ newsletter (published through DuPage library) for sharing information for better library service. Volume 3, number 1 (distributed in 1977) contains a description of games in the at the Illinois Youth Center library, a workshop for juvenile detention center libraries that was held at the Illinois Department of Corrections Training Academy, and information about library services (which included book talks and access to cassette tapes, players, and headphones) at the Adobe Mountain School and Arkansas’ Boy School, both in Arkansas.65 Issues published in 1977 include information about library services to youth in detention centers and information on the committee standing of the Young Adults in Institutions Committee, an upcoming ALA workshop on library services to prisoners (to be held at the ALA annual conference), coverage of special issues described in this article, as well as a letter from a librarian working in a residential school for young men in California (El Paso De Robles School) regarding the youths’ reactions to her presence therein. The third volume includes a recap of the 1977 ALA annual meeting, although no information is offered that relates directly to library services for juveniles in detention centers.

It appears that 1978 was the final year that *Inside-Outside* was distributed, due to difficulties in funding the publication. The first two issues of the year include information on the Maryland-based publication *Inside Information*, a summary and critique of the 1977 *Library Trends* special issue (the editors find the issue to be “too academic and removed from the day to day service to prisoners”), an announcement of the new Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA) publication *Voice*, an upcoming conference for National Youth Workers focused
on the deinstitutionalization of youth, and information about a new juvenile detention center library at the Pima County Juvenile Detention Center in Pima, Arizona. The second issue for the year closes with a request for funding and renewed subscriptions.

The sheer volume of programs described in the pages of Inside-Outside stands in stark contrast with those described in the special issues reviewed in this article. Additionally, librarians contributing to the publication frequently offered contact information and stated their institutional associations. This suggests that Inside-Outside was viewed as a vehicle for fostering communication between its recipients and that contributing librarians may have had institutional support for their contributions to the newsletter. Some anonymous contributions were made, especially in cases where the librarian was offering criticism of institutions.

Analysis of the content of Inside-Outside shows that there was a revolutionary political element to providing library services in prisons, jails, and detention centers. It is an inherently revolutionary document, a vehicle shared by prisoners and librarians across the United States. The newsletter’s revolutionary stance positions libraries as a potential site of ongoing prisoner resistance. It stands in ongoing conversation with prisoners’ demands for abolition, increased access to materials, and improved daily conditions. Determining the ideological position in Inside-Outside does not involve much inference, unlike many of the articles reviewed in this research. It was defiantly political and simultaneously useful in day-to-day library practice.

Conclusion

This review makes clear that librarians engaged with youth in juvenile correctional facilities for a number of reasons. Some librarians focused on their role as mediator between institutions, while others discussed the pressures inherent in inhabiting this space. This review illustrates that tensions existed between advocating for youth in detention centers, seeing library services as a political act, and positioning the institution as a social and rehabilitative good. Many librarians placed emphasis on programming for youth, on collections that included print and nonprint materials, and on their roles and relationships to youth and the correctional institution. They also emphasized funding and the types of organizational structures that supported or allowed for their own involvement with juvenile correctional facility libraries.
Despite the fact that not all librarians working with detained youth published works or submitted to Inside-Outs, the demand for the Library Service to Young Adults in Institutions packets shows that many libraries either were providing or were at least interested in providing library services in juvenile detention centers during the period discussed. Association support facilitated this project, particularly through the formation of the Library Service to Young Adults in Institutions committee, and through SRRT calls for awareness around library services to prisoners and the 1976 ALA resolution regarding public libraries and their links to local jails and detention centers.67

Additionally, the social unrest and political activity that preceded this rise in publications related to library services to prisoners and detained youth heavily influenced the ways in which these services were approached. Prisoners were viewed as a part of the larger community and positioned as populations underserved by libraries. Prisoners’ own activity also led to an awareness of the need and desire for library materials and services and increased librarians’ awareness of the legal situations that surrounded access to materials.

Institutional affiliations and mainstream journals appear to have had some influence on whether or not librarians could openly articulate their ideological positions. Librarians’ active and ongoing contributions to Inside-Outs, an openly revolutionary newsletter, stand in contrast to the reformist ideological positions that dominate the special issues discussed in this article. This review affirms Susan Madden’s 1976 statement about the lack of information on “good services and programs”. As Madden stated, these “rarely get into indexed journals and periodicals.”68 The good services and programs were often included in Inside-Outs, suggesting that the reformist positions of journals or their editors, and of library institutions as a whole, may have limited the amount of information available about revolutionary library services.

Increasing recriminalization of the juvenile justice system occurred throughout the late 1970s. By 1979, deterrence-style programs were popularized through the nationally broadcast program Scared Straight.69 Tough on crime approaches and increased funding, through Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), combined with neoliberal policies to centralize the punitive nature of prisons and detention centers. This was often to the detriment of groups heavily active in the social protest movements of the 1960s and early 1970s, especially people of color and the poor.

Carceral logics of punishment influenced library services to prisoners. There was a sharp decline in publications regarding library services to detained youth during this period. The only publication from this period that directly
addresses library services to detained youth squarely situates youth as a problem. In a 1979 article Nancy Pokorny Knepl states:

Some very debilitating problems come into focus when setting up a library skills program:

1. Lack of motivation
2. Strong links between juvenile delinquency and learning disabilities
3. Incredible behavior problems
4. Little previous school and library experience.\(^7^0\)

This decline in publications lasted at least until the mid- to late 1990s and the publication of an updated Library Standards for Juvenile Correctional Facilities. Brenda Vogel’s opening statements in the 1989 special issue of Wilson Library Bulletin address this decline.

Over a decade ago Wilson Library Bulletin published a special feature issue on prison libraries. In the same year, 1977, Library Trends also dedicated an issue to prison library service. Was this the herald of the dawn of concern for library service to prisoners? Not really. Since then an average of only 4.5 articles have appeared in the literature each year, and only two books on the subject have been published.\(^7^1\)

Together, these two examples speak to the influence and impact of ideologies that shape incarceration. The swing back toward punishment created a larger gap between the stated purposes of young adult librarianship and the stated purposes of correctional institutions. Ongoing state surveillance and continued targeting of activists and social movements combined with ongoing tough on crime approaches to limit the available information on prisoner uprisings and demands.

The concerns and joys of present-day juvenile detention center librarians may be echoed in this historical review. We, too, exist in a moment of ongoing social movements against oppression. Black Lives Matter continues to advocate for the humanity of Black people, an act that is still revolutionary at its core. The largest organized prisoner strike in the history of the United States began in September of 2016.\(^7^2\) The racialized nature of policing has become a subject of ongoing national debate, evidenced by
the murders of black men, women, and children across the country. Youth held in present-day detention facilities are often aware of these conversations, calls for humanization, and acts of resistance. It is helpful in times like ours to remember that librarians have responded to these calls in a revolutionary manner. The responses needed will likely take other forms than newsletters and copublications, but they can, and hopefully will, echo the central tenants of the revolutionary projects discussed in this article—that prisoners deserve respect, that they are knowledgeable about their own positions, that the system is flawed, and that the humanity of those targeted by policing and incarceration can guide the day-to-day activities of library services.

JEANIE AUSTIN is a doctoral candidate at the iSchool at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Austin’s research interests include the provision of library services to youth in juvenile detention and the complex political and social systems that surround this work (especially the gendered, racialized, and ability-centric systems that affect youth and their overlap with publishing). They focus on the incorporation of critical praxis in LIS, in academia as well as in the library.

NOTES

1. The majority of publications about juvenile detention center libraries are described in this article. Searches of Library and Information Science Source, Library and Information Science Abstracts, and ERIC Educational Literature databases were conducted to identify any further materials. Search terms were “juvenile correctional facilities” and “librar*” and “juvenile detention” and “librar*”. Search parameters were set for materials published during the 1970s and to English. This search resulted in six additional results during this period—a 1973 report on institutional libraries, a 1973 article on the King County Center library, a thesis project on the Ohio Youth Commission (1975), a bibliography of resources from 1976, an additional article by Susan Madden (1979), and a 1979 publication in the Wisconsin Library Bulletin.


4. As this research engages with the available record, exploring this possibility through interviews, personal journals, or other means falls outside the scope of the current project.

5. A shift toward punitive approaches becomes evident from 1977 and into the 1980s.

12. Ibid., 16.
24. AZ, CA, CN, FL, GA, IL, MT, NY, WA, and WV.
29. Madden: future president of YASD (1988–89); Coats advocated for access for diverse populations (deceased at the time of this publication); Ploeg: deceased at the time of this
publication; Seidenberg: now retired from Texas State Library and Archives; and Joan Ariel Stout, also an editor of *Inside-Outside*.

30. “Library Services to Young Adults in Institutions Committee,” Notes, 1974, Young Adult Library Services Association—Executive Secretary—Committee Files, 1952–1993, 1996–1998, Record Series 32/2/51, Box 2, Folders: Library Services to Young Adults in Institutions Committee American Library Association Archives at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign.

31. “Library Services to Young Adults in Institutions,” press release, 1976, Young Adult Library Services Association—Executive Secretary—Committee Files (hereafter **YALSA**), 1952–1993, 1996–1998, Record Series 32/2/51, Box 2, Folders: Library Services to Young Adults in Institutions Committee American Library Association Archives at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.


33. Susan Madden to **YAILS** Committee members, February 1976, Correspondence, **YALSA**.

34. Susan Madden to Mary Anderson, April 14, 1976, Correspondence, **YALSA**.

35. “Library Services to Young Adults in Institutions” 1976, **YALSA**. I agree this is less awkward of a citation, but am worried that it goes against the guidelines for using the ALA Archives – archival materials must be cited specifically by the collection in which they are included. I’ll leave that decision to you. Here are the citation guidelines - https://archives.library.illinois.edu/ala/files/2014/07/Citation-Guidelines.pdf


38. Ibid., 17.


43. Two of these facilities were closed by the time the article was published; one of them changed into a facility holding both juveniles and adults.

44. This is one of the exemplar texts utilized by the Library Services to Young Adults in Institutions committee.


47. Madden, “Library in Lock-up,” 562–64. Dependent youth were no longer held in the center after January 1, 1974.

48. Long-term is interpreted in the document as a detainment of more than 60 days.


50. Ibid.


56. Cheeseman makes a case that this is in the interest of youth—arguing that facilities claiming the library as a recreation center are not required to provide an additional form of recreation.


61. The price increased slightly over the period that *Inside-Outside* was published, with a final subscription cost of $3.50 for four issues a year.


68. Susan Madden to Mary Anderson, April 14, 1976, Correspondence, YALSA.

69. Bernstein, *America is the Prison*. 

