

The contribution of 19th and 20th century black bibliophiles and bibliographers to the construction of a Black Bibliography

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the vital role played by black bibliophiles and bibliographers in the acquisition, preservation, organization, and accessibility of informational resources related to the black, African, and diasporic communities in the United States during the 19th and 20th centuries. Specifically, the paper examines how bibliophilia and bibliography were employed to build collections of information and the formation of special collections dedicated to the black experience, as well as the strategies employed by the black community for information access, book availability, and library usage. The study culminates by highlighting the contributions of five key figures, including David Ruggles, a collector, Arthur Alfonso Schomburg, a bibliophile, and bibliographers Daniel Alexander Payne Murray, Monroe Nathan Work, and Dorothy Porter Wesley, among others. These individuals made substantial contributions to documenting the lives, histories, and experiences of black, African, and diasporic populations and played a crucial role in creating black collections, centers, and libraries that continue to serve as essential sources of information for the epistemic and historical restoration of these communities.

Keywords: black bibliography; black collections; black history; social justice; bibliophilia; United States of America.

INTRODUCTION

The American segregationist era, spanning from 1870 to 1960, was a time of limited access to civil rights and information for the Black population. Discriminatory laws were based on legislation used during slavery. The Southern States initiated the implementation of racial segregation, which was later disseminated throughout the United States via Jim Crow Laws, aimed at maintaining the existing racial hierarchy in the country following the Civil War.

The Black Codes institutionalized the denial of rights to the Black American population, including the right to vote, own property and businesses, marry white people (interracial marriages), and access venues like hotels, cinemas, schools, and libraries. Such laws perpetuated the separation between whites and Blacks and marginalized the latter (Blackmore, 2020), causing informational exclusion of Black and non-white groups and depriving them of the tools necessary to transform their social realities through schools, universities, and libraries (Cresswell, 1996; Cutter, 2011; Poole, 2018; Wiegand; Wiegand, 2018).

Over time, constitutional amendments were enacted to ensure freedom and civil rights for Black people. However, access to information about Afro-diasporic history and culture remained challenging.

One reason was the location of libraries in white neighborhoods, preventing black people from accessing their spaces, services, and collections. Additionally, segregated libraries exclusively for Blacks had limited collections and unsuitable physical structures, denying the community the opportunity to acquire knowledge through the collections and services designed for their use. Finally, collections, data, and informational records on Black history written by and for blacks in public, municipal, and university libraries were insufficient to serve them. Therefore, there was a need to establish bibliographies documenting the experience and contribution of the Black, African, and diasporic populations in the construction of the United States (Porter, 1969a; Jones, 1971; Wiegand, 2017).

According to Dorothy Porter's writings (1969a, 1969b), one of the initiatives used to fill the informational gap for the populations mentioned above was the creation of Black literary societies to promote libraries and reading rooms. Between 1828 and 1846, Black individuals and associations in Eastern cities organized 45 literary societies. For this study, we will limit the focus of analysis to the segregationist era, the period before the establishment of the civil rights movement in the 1960s.

Thus, we seek to investigate the contribution of bibliophiles and Black bibliographers of the 19th and 20th centuries in their efforts to collect, organize, preserve, and make information about, from, and for African-Americans, Africans, and diasporic populations available in a time when libraries failed to fulfill this role.

This bibliographic and documental study aims to recover information about bibliophiles and Black bibliographers in the scientific production of Black American Librarianship, published in books, chapters, articles, and bibliographies from 1830 to 1960. Therefore, this paper consists of six parts: an introduction with the general objective of the research, an introduction to Bibliography and Bibliophilia in the constitution of collections, the conceptualization of Black bibliography and its role in fostering social justice and epistemic reparations, the Special Black collections, and the role played by Black bibliophiles and bibliographers in the creation of current collections, centers, and libraries. The article concludes with final considerations about the study.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND BIBLIOPHILY IN THE CONSTITUTION OF COLLECTIONS

Across antiquity, the medieval, modern, and contemporary periods, the collection of written culture has been understood as the art and science of loving books, traditionally called Bibliophilia (biblio + philie). The long history of Bibliophilia reports that the love for graphical documents crosses both the desires of frivolous possession of such objects and even the ostentation of large private libraries populated by characters that remain in the territory of literary culture, restricted to the chosen few. Bibliophilia is, above all, a sociocultural practice (Sordet, 2002) that encompasses a wide range of sensibilities around text collecting. From a formal and material perspective, such texts can be called books, pamphlets, and leaflets of an ordinary, ancient, rare, precious, or curious nature.

Bibliophilia objects are chosen according to their differences in value, ranging from their usefulness to one's desire to possess erudition, assert social-patrimonial distinction, or to a possession associated with the dysfunction called Bibliomania - the love for the graphical object. While Baudrillard (1969, 2009) has presented an approach to object collecting that can be applied to studies of bibliographic collecting, our focus will be on something other than this particular aspect.

Regardless of the different temporal and cultural contexts that surround Bibliophilia and Bibliography, the bibliophile and bibliographer play essential roles in creating a bibliographic identity that comes to life in the form of a library with textual narratives (words-images) that hold special meaning to them. Throughout the history of texts and their materialities, Bibliophilia has been crucial in selecting, collecting, and preserving unique texts as cherished memories that must endure "forever."

The constitution of a private collection in Bibliophilia involves selecting documents that are intertwined with the sociocultural webs that impact its formation. Such selection will have to deal with factors such as (a) the relevance of the text to the theme it addresses, which is shaped by social, political, and economic values that determine which discourses are considered valid and representative of knowledge in a given society and (b) the production and circulation of the text, from media (such as parchment, paper, leather, and digital screens) to printing techniques and the publishing market. In this arena of values for the constitution of private collections, a bibliography is present, whether in its most recurrent repertorial facet, as a source of information, but also as a science dedicated to the technical-formal organization and thematic-conceptual definition of collections.

The presence of private collections created by bibliophiles is recurring in the history of the university, public, or private libraries - where such collections will create collections of memory that could be identified as special collections due to the nature of their origins in a private personal collection, the topics addressed; the social, political, and cultural trajectories that led that collection to a particular institution as repertoires of memory and identity. From this perspective, Bibliophilia first helped preserve texts referring mainly to hegemonic and dominant discourses in written culture, which was one of the significant contributions of Bibliophilia.

Such a phenomenon is mainly linked to this empire of rarity¹ in its various manifestations, which defined the universe of the graphical document that should be collected, making Bibliophilia a relevant contribution to preserving graphical documents representative of the culture of the global north. However, Bibliophilia also had in its ranks people who selected as the subject of their collections discourses not validated by their society and contributed to the constitution of collections that have metamorphosed into the presence of private collections created by bibliophiles is a recurring phenomenon seen in the history of public, and private universities libraries.

Such collections, due to the nature of their origins in a private personal collection, the topics addressed, and the social, political, and cultural trajectories that led the collection to a particular institution, could be identified as special collections - repertoires of memory and identity. Initially, Bibliophilia helped preserve texts referring mainly to hegemonic and dominant discourses in written culture, which was one of its significant contributions. This phenomenon is mainly linked to the empire of rarity in its various manifestations, which defined the universe of the graphical document that should be collected, making Bibliophilia a relevant contribution to preserving graphical documents representative of the culture of the global north.

However, Bibliophilia also had people who selected as the subject of their collections discourses not validated by their society and contributed to the constitution of collections that have metamorphosed into collections of memory today.

Which contexts and actors choose the texts that make up these collections and archives for memory? To what extent did the questioning and confronting of a predominantly colonial bibliophilic and bibliographic system result in perennial initiatives and trajectories that fostered the creation of collections of multiple memories? The imposition of one culture to the detriment of another is evident when dealing, for example, with the constitution of collections and bibliographic repertoires of black history and culture – which almost always reflect the exploiter's narrative discourse and even the silencing of compromising documents about them in the creation of bibliographies.

In this sense, we aim to establish a Black Bibliography directed towards filling historical gaps regarding the Black contribution to the construction of various fields of knowledge and our world. This effort includes repairing epistemic violence and injustice inflicted upon Black knowledge through colonial discourse.

BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND BLACK EPISTEMIC REPARATION

When we approach social justice, we presuppose fair treatment and distribution of epistemic resources and goods (information, education, and knowledge) for all individuals, guided by values such as ethics, solidarity, care, and mutual respect among subjects (Brownlee *et al.*, 2012; Mathiesen, 2016; Mehra, 2015; Silva; Garcez; Silva., 2022). Conceptually, social justice refers to the ability of people to participate as peers within society (Fraser, 2008).

Therefore, the starting point involves understanding that to achieve social justice through bibliography; we must first overcome the principle of absence (Kilomba, 2020) imposed on the knowledge produced by black, African, and other ethnic-racial groups that remains on the margins of libraries, collections, and other information spaces. In other words, it is paramount to give visibility and accessibility, as well as equal treatment, to the information contained in different media about what it means to be a black person in American society and other parts of the globe, as well as the historical, cultural, political, and educational processes of ethnical and racial marginalization experienced by those group. Bibliographies can help confront the epistemicide and memoricide committed against blacks and Afro-diasporic populations (Missiatto, 2021; Patin *et al.*, 2020; Silva; Garcez; Silva, 2022) by promoting Black Bibliographies that meet the principles of social justice in broader aspects, such as racial, ecological, gender, and informational (Silva *et al.*, 2021a), especially by focusing on the thought and ancestral legacy of, about, and elaborated by ethnical-racially groups oppressed by colonization and capitalism and by the centrality of race in Western societies. The concept of Black Bibliography refers to the gathering, production, organization, representation, and availability of documents that portray black life experiences about and from the perspective of African, black, and African diasporic populations via bibliography. Beyond epistemic and historical reparation, Black Bibliography highlights the struggle against the epistemic apartheid (Rabaka, 2010) that intellectually segregates the knowledge produced by historically excluded ethnic-racial groups, especially those outside universities' walls (Silva; Silva, 2022). In segregated America, the production of a black bibliography played a fundamental role in the constitution of collections - which reveals, above all, the commitment to black epistemic reparation (Silva; Garcez; Silva, 2022), and the agency of black bibliographers and bibliophiles who acted to overcome the silencing and erasing of their people's memory.

Before presenting such actors, we will contextualize the Special Black Collections in the Rare Book field in Librarianship. Such collections were built to preserve the black ancestral legacy for future generations.

SPECIAL BLACK COLLECTIONS

The field of Rare Book Librarianship, a traditional branch of Library Sciences, has been formally established in countries in the northern hemisphere, particularly in Europe. Although it is predominantly practiced in English-speaking countries, other cultures have also devoted themselves to this field and even adopted the same terminology, "Librarianship of Rare Books," to define the vast range of practices associated with old and rare bibliographic collections.

It is possible to trace the origins of bibliographic practices in medieval religious order libraries, where certain graphical documents were privileged for their preciousness and antiquity. These practices have been passed down to the modern era, which produced a legacy of revering rare books.

In Europe, bibliographic practices established by Conrad Gesner (1516-1565), Gabriel Naudé (1600-1653), and other bibliographers of the 16th and 17th centuries contributed to establishing the pillars for building the "ideal library." This ideal was closely linked to book collecting, which was intertwined with the historical constitution of public and university libraries. Such context culminated in producing a facet of Library Sciences focused on old, precious, rare, and unique graphical documents.

In England, for example, the acquisition of the Bodleian Library² by the University of Oxford also created the need to establish library practices for rare books from private libraries donated to the institution. The English librarian Bulkeley Bandinel (1761-1861) dedicated his work to that university's special collections and rare books section. In the 18th century, Bandinel created the Bodleian Auctarium to safely keep books of a rare and unique profile. According to Feather (1982), Bandinel:

[...] considerava como os mais excelentes da biblioteca: manuscritos iluminados, incunábulos, belas impressões, grandes cópias em papel, editiones principes dos clássicos Aldinos, Elsevier e encadernações de luxo. [...] Na tentativa de reproduzir, em grande escala, as atuais modas bibliofílicas, Bandinel involuntariamente criou a ideia da Biblioteconomia de Livros Raros como é agora entendido: o lugar especial e o tratamento de forma arbitrária de categorias predeterminadas de livros (Feather, 1982, p. 32, tradução nossa).³

The 'special place' for preserving graphical documents deemed worthy of memory took into account their rarity as inseparable from hegemonic discourses.

In the following centuries, 19th and 20th, Anglo-American theorists continued to use the expression Rare Book Librarianship and Special Collections, among them Berger (2014), Cave (1976), Galbraith and Smith (2012) and Traister (2003).

During those two centuries, library practices dealing with special collections in other continents and countries also had significant local variations that were generally influenced and guided by the normative-arbitrary European model for establishing book rarity⁴.

The names attributed to these old and rare collections vary significantly, ranging from Historical Library, Heritage Library, Special Collections, Ancient Funds, Rare Works, Treasure Room, Ancient Books, and Heritage Collection, among others, but Special Collections is the most recurrent one. These Special Collections are distinguishable from ordinary collections intended for book loans and local consultation in a library.

A Special Collection may contain antique, rare, and contemporary books. The collection scope indicates whether it will be entirely made up of rare books or even if it will have a specific time frame, such as books printed in Pernambuco in the first fifty years of the twentieth century, for example. The history behind the creation of a Special Collection, more precisely why such a collection came to life, is sometimes linked to a bibliophile that collected those rare and unique books, which later could have been incorporated into a collection of a public library.

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture Collection⁵, for instance, originated from the personal collection of bibliophile and librarian Arturo Alfonso Schomburg, which the New York Public Library later acquired. A particular institution could also develop a Special Collection to gather and preserve old and current books that deal with a specific topic, such as the history of science.

There are many other examples, but we want to emphasize that special collections are manifold in their documentary characteristics, provenance, and scope. They can contain only one documental typology but can also be hybrid – formed by both bibliographic and archival documents. Still, regarding their documentary characteristics, if predetermined, special collections may include a mixing of thematic typology, literary genres, and categories in their composition. As examples of such elements, we can mention: rare books in the area of medical sciences, old books in the area of legal sciences, and artists' books produced in Mexico, among others.

It is outside the scope of this paper⁶ to conceptualize the genres and categories of graphical documents included in special collections, such as rare, ancient, exotic and unusual. Agreeing with Araújo and Reis (2017) and Sordet (2002), we understand that, in bibliographic collecting, the adjectives "exotic" and "unusual" can also be considered manifestations of bibliophilic rarity.

Finally, once selected the guidelines for their formation (documentary typologies, genres/categories, time frame, language(s), thematic coverage, among others), special collections will reflect a particular meaning (in both Bibliophilia or public institutions) of the specific community that, either in the past and in the present, decided to preserve to current or future generations, a collection of documents considered relevant for their content of because what they represent.

In addition to discussions of memory and rarity, special collections are distinguished from current collections “by their thematic constitution, purpose, material characteristics, the heritage relevance and meaning they have to the institution that preserves them” (Araújo; Reis, 2016, p. 184). For our purpose, more relevant than the management models of these special collections, it is crucial to highlight the conceptual model that underlies the constitution of a special collection, usually precepts of a colonizing, white, and European culture.

Such a model, which reflects the social structure of exclusion of black culture, undermines black memories that, when converted into material text, end up not complying with predetermined features used in creating the so-called special collections. In this sense, there are memory collections with graphical documents that usually materialize texts that preserve the views and voices of the colonizer but not of the black culture.

In the United States, from the 1960s onwards, an increasing number of Special Black Collections began to appear due to educational needs in high schools and universities. Black collections were a research source containing “contêm uma riqueza de conhecimento que apoia, aumenta e inspira não apenas os estudos negros, mas potencialmente também qualquer investigação pertencente a pessoas da diáspora africana” (Bledsoe, 2018, online, tradução nossa)⁷. The proliferation of black collections was also due to the works of black bibliographers and bibliophiles of the 19th and 20th centuries, which we will underline further in the paper. When surveying special black collections in US universities and colleges, Smith (1974) points out that despite being essential for preserving the history of black culture and the quality of the professionals involved with such collections and the valuable services they offered.

However, Smith also highlights the difficulties in the development and establishment of these collections: (a) scarce financial resources for their maintenance (contrary to what happened with special collections outside the influence of social segregation); (b) identification of graphical documents produced by black people due to the scarcity of their production, the estate of preservation of old documents and the scarcity of bibliographies gathering such documents; (c) the lack of black librarians involved and interested in preserving the memory of black culture; (d) the need for bibliographic control of the production. Such Special Black Collections are not exclusively bibliographic in nature but include archival documents and items of black memorabilia, especially those concerning the materialities of the black experience. Such collections have become instruments for facing hegemonic perspectives as they confront the principle of absence by making these collections and informational resources visible and available to the public for consultation and research (Kilomba, 2020; Silva; Garcez; Silva, 2022). In addition, such special collections represent black resistance tactics in libraries and Bibliography by highlighting records of black experience and knowledge throughout history. In the next part, we will introduce some bibliophiles and bibliographers responsible for building collections, bibliographies, and libraries that represent examples of what we consider a Black Bibliography.

BLACK BIBLIOPHILE AND BIBLIOGRAPHERS OF THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BLACK COMMUNITY

This section concentrates on the black bibliophiles and bibliographers who helped to build a black ancestral legacy. During the segregation era in the US, the years in which this research focuses, we found black bibliophiles, bibliographers, and collectors who collaborated in the collection, organization, and production of bibliographies that contributed to a better understanding of black and afro-diasporic history and experience in the US and worldwide.

In this context, the formation of libraries – with and without walls – on the black population was pioneered by a few key actors. Below we will highlight, in chronological order, a brief exposition of the contribution of each one of them.

- a) 1830 – David Ruggles (1810-1849) was a radical black abolitionist, journalist, pamphleteer, and publisher, considered the first collector of books on the black and Afro-diasporic community. Ruggles' radical abolitionism encompassed different activism trends, such as evangelical religion, temperance, education, black migration to Canada, opposition to the American Colonization Society, antislavery legislation, and advocacy for black civil rights improvements with a strong defense of fugitive enslaved people in opposition to slave traders (Hodges 2010). In his antislavery activism, Ruggles wrote hundreds of letters to abolitionist newspapers, published five pamphlets, and was the editor of the first African-American magazine, the *Mirror of Freedom*. He was the first African-American to own a publishing business. Ruggles published his first pamphlet in 1834, an accomplishment that underscores the autonomy conquered by black people in the printing world. In 1830, he created the first itinerant bookstore and library to publish books and printing materials on and about the black population, antislavery, and anticolonization available to the African-American readers of New York. To keep his publications, Ruggles charged a fee of twenty-five cents a month for renting his books. He also did print work, printed letters, framed pictures, wrote letters, and offered book binding services. A few years later, Ruggles provided a reading room for blacks and non-white people excluded from literary institutions, lectures, and reading rooms provided primarily for white people. Ruggles believed such a room was necessary for the black population to achieve the moral virtue acquired by observation, reading, and reflection. He also hoped that the room would become a "literary attraction for young people" thirsting for information and knowledge.
- b) 1871 – Daniel Alexander Payne Murray (1852-1925) was a bibliographer, historian, and librarian⁸ at the Library of Congress between 1871 and 1923, and one of the first African-Americans employees hired by the institution. In 1900, Murray published the *Preliminary List of Books and Pamphlets by Negro Authors for Paris Exposition and Library of Congress*, considered the first bibliography of African-American literature compiled at the Library of Congress. Murray's compilation consisted of titles, including works by Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Du Bois, Paul L. Dunbar, Sojourner Truth, Booker T. Washington, Phyllis Wheatley, and many others. The list covered topics ranging from African history and African demography, black history in America, slave narratives, sermons, black church history, and poetry. In addition to writing about the black American population's history, life, and literary achievements, Murray was also a political activist who claimed that black people had made relevant contributions to science. He advocated, alongside leaders such as W. E. B. Du Bois, against eugenics theories of the time that presumed the existence of black racial inferiority. Determined to confront this eugenic perspective and eager to disseminate the knowledge produced by African-Americans, Murray began to focus on the work that would become his main contribution to the field: *Murray's Historical and Biographical Encyclopedia of the Colored Race Throughout the World* (Murray, 1912), with 153 pages, containing 250 biographical entries, as well as pamphlets, synopses of novels and musical compositions of black authors. Despite all his efforts, Murray did not get financial or editorial support to publish his multi-volume encyclopedia.

Even today, few people know of his remarkable achievement as the author of one of the most significant bibliographies of African-American history (Cole, 2021; Harris Jr, 1976; Walker, 2005).

- c) 1900 – Monroe Nathan Work (1866-1945) was a black bibliographer and sociologist who wrote many essays on African-American life and experience in North America and publications on African institutions and customs. A descendant of enslaved people, he has an extensive scholarly production on the racial problem and its consequences. His first publication was *The Negro and Crime in Chicago*, the result of his final graduation paper at the University of Chicago, published in 1900 in *The American Journal of Sociology*.⁹ He also authored the renowned *The Negro Year Book*, which comprised a compilation of economic, social, and historical data about the black population in North America. As the book editor, Nathan Work released it free of charge in 1912 by Tuskegee University. The book proved very popular among readers, with later editions priced at 25 cents. The purpose of this bibliography was to meet the demand of readers from all over the US and the world for accurate and concise information regarding the history and achievements of the black African diaspora populations. *The Negro Year Book* has a section titled *A select bibliography of the negro* containing 408 references. In addition to pamphlets, the book also displays a list of various articles and publications systematically organized for easy search and to meet the needs of those interested in the subject. For 40 years, *The Negro Year Book* only went unpublished in 1920/21, 1923/24, 1927/28, 1929/30, 1933-36, 1939-46, and 1948-51. Nathan Work also published the *Bibliography of the Negro in Africa and America*, released in 1928 with over 17,000 entries, which included several rare items.

This bibliography aimed to provide an accurate and comprehensive guide to the titles and authors of the most influential books, pamphlets, and journal articles published about the black community in Africa and America. This work began unpretentiously in 1905 when Nathan Work became interested in the study of Africa. He assembled a list of references to facilitate the systemization of the collected information. Work noticed that the Library of Congress had several cards with information about Africa for sale. After the success of *The Negro Year Book*, there was a growing demand for more bibliographic material for studying the history and experience of black and Afro-diasporic populations. In 1921, the Carnegie Corporation of New York awarded a research grant to the Department of Records and Research at the Tuskegee Institute, which had Nathan Work as its director then. This grant allowed him to compile a broader bibliography on the black population. The first edition of the *Bibliography of the Negro in Africa and America* was born from the research conducted for the grant. That bibliography initially consisted of more than 3 thousand references related to the black and Afro-diasporic population in the USA. Subsequently, from the partnership between the Phelps-Stokes Fund and the Tuskegee Institute, Nathan Work had the opportunity to travel to Europe, consult with authorities on African languages and cultures, and collect references for the bibliography. He added over 40,000 publication titles in different languages released before 1928. In short, that bibliography displays a list of subjects that cover many aspects of black life and history, with topics as relevant and diverse as African Civilizations, Christian Missions in Africa, the situation of the Enslaved people in the USA, the modern Ku-Klux-Klan, Black Secret Societies in the USA, Black Women in the USA, Current Conditions of the Negro in South America. Additionally, it contains a series of maps, an atlas, and manuscripts related to the early history of Africa (Carter, 2010; Guzman, 1949; Work, 1900, 1919, 1928, 1929).

d) 1925 – Arthur Alfonso Schomburg (1874-1938) was a black bibliophile, self-taught curator, and historian responsible for assembling one of the most notable collections of informational data related to history, culture, and life experiences about Afro-America, the African and its diaspora. The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, selected as a US National Historic Landmark in 2017, is today part of the New York Public Library System. In 1925, when Schomburg created it in the 135th Street NY Branch Library, the Center was called the Division of Negro Literature, History, and Prints. The Center initially intended to meet the community's demand for information, filling this informational gap. The Center was developed around Schomburg's personal library, which in 1926 was purchased by the Carnegie Corporation and donated to the New York Public Library (New York Public Library, 2021; Porter, 1969a; Sinette, 2000).

e) Dorothy Burnet Porter Wesley (1905-1995) was a black collector, bibliographer {nos exemplos anteriores as palavras bibliógrafo e/ou bibliófilo apareceu em itálico, menos nesse, acho que os autores esqueceram de colocar}, and librarian that worked at Howard University since 1928. She is recognized for her contribution to the creation of the Moorland-Spangarn Research Center. During a career that spanned over 40 years, Dorothy Porter Wesley produced one of the most comprehensive collections of black, African, and Afrodiasporic history and memorabilia. Concerning bibliographies, Dorothy Porter Wesley was the editor of *The Negro in the United States: a selected bibliography*, a publication with 1,781 references produced by black people, divided into 40 subjects displayed in alphabetical order. According to Wesley, there was a growing interest in black history and culture, manifested by the introduction of these thematic in university courses, disciplines, and higher education curricula, which generated a demand for references that could be used to support such studies.

Therefore, *The Negro* was a bibliography designed to meet the needs of students, faculty, librarians, researchers, and the general public for introductory reading material on Black and African Diaspora Studies in the US. As a selective and non-exhaustive bibliography, the work addresses many topics such as urban blacks, ethnic-racial relations, black cultural history, discriminatory practices in different areas of society, and the black struggles to achieve political and economic freedom and education. The volume also deals with black religious life, the social conditions in which the black population lived, and its historical past. In addition, the bibliography references work depicting the lives of prominent black people – abolitionists, fugitive enslaved women, educators, civil rights leaders, scientists, journalists, religious leaders, artists, athletes, and literary figures. She also authored the *Early American Negro Writings: A Bibliographical Study* (Porter, 1945) and *Afro-braziliana: a working bibliography* (Porter, 1978), all compiled seeking to highlight the experiences, lives, and works of black people in the USA and the African diaspora (Porter, 1938, 1945, 1970, 1978; Silva *et al.*, 2021b, 2021c).

The formation of libraries and the creation of bibliographies involve the engagement of these actors in the development of a black bibliography. We highlight their actions, grounded in scientific education and historical and sociological studies, as acts of rescue and social justice for the African American and global black population's history, culture, and experiences.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As support tools for building collections, bibliographies (ideally) list everything one wishes to identify on a topic. However, they are not immune to the limits imposed by written culture, which may lead to the silencing and erasure of marginalized group narratives.

This recovery of the actors and contexts that contributed to constructing a Black Bibliography in the United States aims to highlight the formation and availability of texts on the Black experience, history, and culture. It is evident that Black Bibliography went through complementary and indissoluble phases of development: one focused on producing bibliographic repertoires, and the other was dedicated to forming collections, including special bibliographic collections and rare documents. These two phases entangle Bibliography, Bibliophilia, and Library Sciences in creating the written memory of the Black population and emphasize the possibilities of building bibliographic identities for Black cultures and experiences from written culture.

The importance of studying and producing Black bibliographies in Brazil is still an understudied subject with many challenges to overcome that would allow for constructing new narratives about the past of Afro-Brazilian Black culture.

This study is also an endeavor to recover the histories of Special Black Collections in the United States, which can help us understand the nature of Special Black Collections in Brazil and how they could be used to rescue Afro-Brazilian culture.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 The debates concerning rarity are not the focus of this paper, for a discussion on the subject see: Viardot (1983, 1986, 2008). On the theory of rarity and the conditioning and quantitative elements of rarity see: Araújo, Silveira e Reis (2018).
- 2 Sir Thomas Boadley (1545-1613) “doou sua coleção de livros à Universidade de Oxford” (Burke, 2003, p. 66). Translation: “donated his book collection to the University of Oxford.” (Burke, 2003, p. 66, editorial translation).
- 3 Original: “[...] regarded as the Library’s choicest books: illuminated manuscripts, incunabula, fine printing, large paper copies, editions principes of the classics, Aldines, Elzeviers, and fine bindings [...] In attempting to reproduce, on a grand scale, the current bibliophilic fashions, Bandinel had unintentionally created the idea of rare-book librarianship as it is now understood: the special housing and treatment of arbitrarily predetermined categories of books” (Feather, 1982, p. 32).
- 4 For a discussion on rarity in the Brazilian Library Science see, Araújo e Reis (2016, 2017).
- 5 On the Schomburg Center see: <https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/schomburg>. Accessed on: 10 Feb. 2023.
- 6 On another occasion, we will delve deeper into the discussion about such adjectives and their intersections and erasures concerning special black collections.
- 7 Original: “They contain a wealth of knowledge that supports, augments, and inspires not only Black Studies, but potentially also any investigation pertaining to people of the African diaspora” (Bledsoe, 2018, online).
- 8 Murray did not receive formal education in Library Science to work as a librarian. He obtained this title by being mentored by the Library of Congress librarian, Rand Spofford, who made Murray his assistant librarian. As such, he trained and encouraged Murray to learn the practices of the Institution's librarians (Cole, 2021).
- 9 Published with the title: *Crime among the Negro of Chicago: a sociological study*.