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## Getting by at the Benjamin Mays Black Branch: Library Access for African Americans in Jim Crow South Carolina, 1940-1971

[Jamie Irene Cutter](#). *San Jose State University*

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Debra Hansen

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### Abstract

This thesis examines a chapter of South Carolina history that has been neglected in the historical record, namely segregated libraries of the twentieth century. Previous works have covered the history of black libraries in the entire South, but details of South Carolina's segregated libraries are incomplete. This study looks first at the broader context of segregated libraries in the American South and then reviews the history of African American libraries in South Carolina. Finally, this study provides a case study of the Benjamin Mays Library, a segregated, African American library in Greenwood, South Carolina. The case study uses primary source documents and oral history interviews to establish the library's background and history, with a focus on progress toward integration. The record of this library and the broader background on South Carolina's black libraries will illustrate that there was no one single catalyst for black library establishment in South Carolina. Rather several agents developed and maintained segregated libraries throughout the state until desegregation in the 1960s and 1970s.

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Carolina. Finally, this study provides a case study of the Benjamin Mays Library, a segregated, African American library in Greenwood, South Carolina. The case study uses primary source documents and oral history interviews to establish the library's background and history, with a focus on progress toward integration. The Black Codes outraged public opinion in the North and resulted in Congress placing the former Confederate states under Army occupation during Reconstruction. Nevertheless, many laws restricting the freedom of African Americans remained on the books for years. The Black Codes laid the foundation for the system of laws and customs supporting a system of white supremacy that would be known as Jim Crow. The majority of states and local communities passed "Jim Crow" laws that mandated "separate but equal" status for African Americans. Jim Crow Laws were statutes and ordinances established between The American Libraries collection includes material contributed from across the United States. Institutions range from the Library of Congress to many local public libraries. As a whole, this collection of material brings holdings that cover many facets of American life and scholarship into the... The California Digital Library supports the assembly and creative use of the world's scholarship and knowledge for the University of California libraries and the communities they serve. In addition, the CDL provides tools that support the construction of online information services for research, teaching, and learning, including services that enable the UC libraries to effectively share their materials and provide greater access to digital content. 82.7M 83M. The Boston Library Consortium. Southern Black libraries benefitted from Northern philanthropy and federal funding, which was to some degree paternalistic. Booker T. Washington, a particularly successful fundraiser, showed Northern elites that, with their help, this "bucolic, Christian, exotic black world in the distant south" could be lifted up to adopt a white "sense of high culture and service." By then, "African Americans had turned their attention from building segregated branches to integrating 'white' libraries through legal action and protest." 33 And public libraries, with their democratic symbolism and prominent downtown locations, were frequent targets for sit-ins, read-ins, and other forms of protest.