

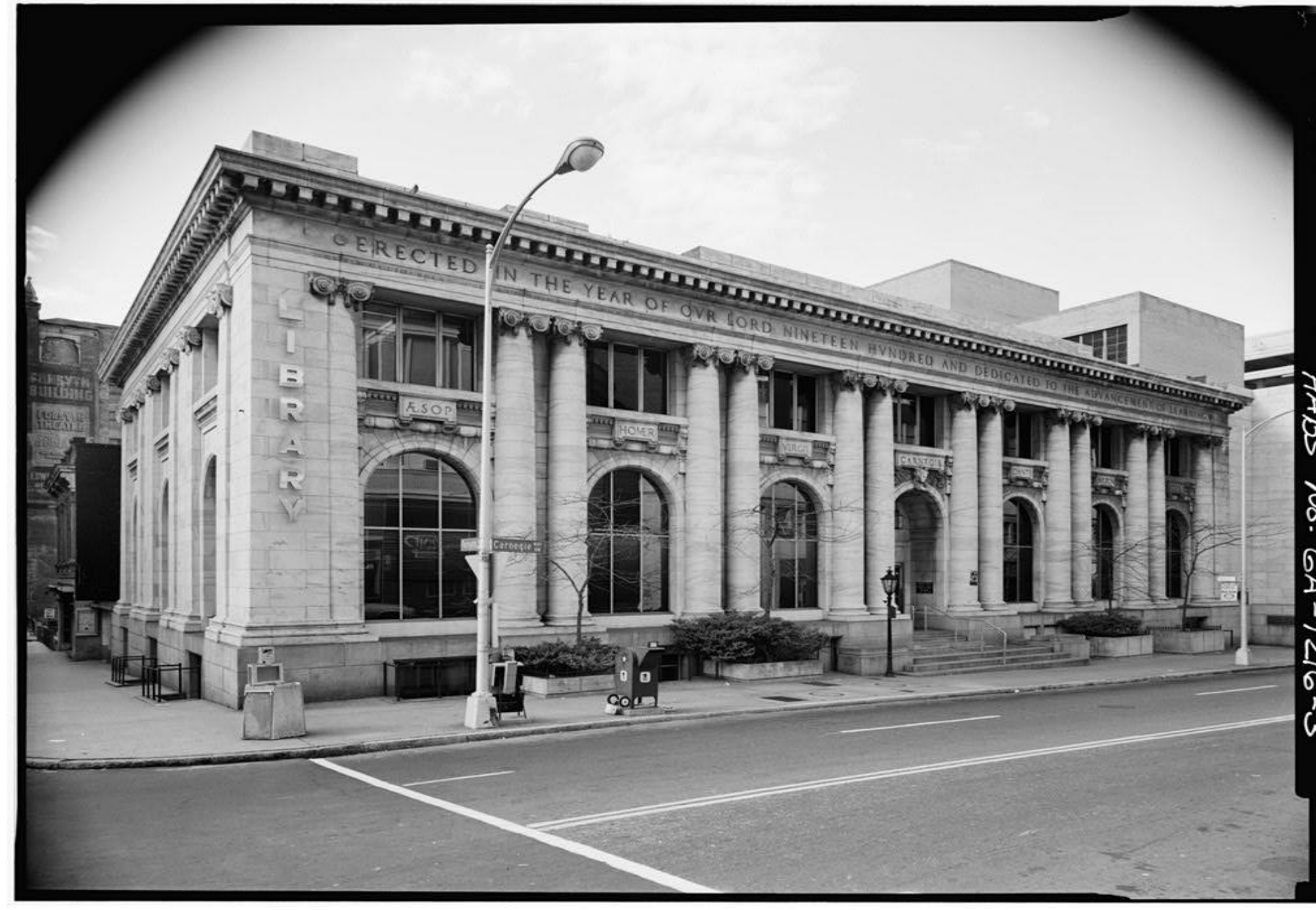
History of Access to Public Libraries in the American South

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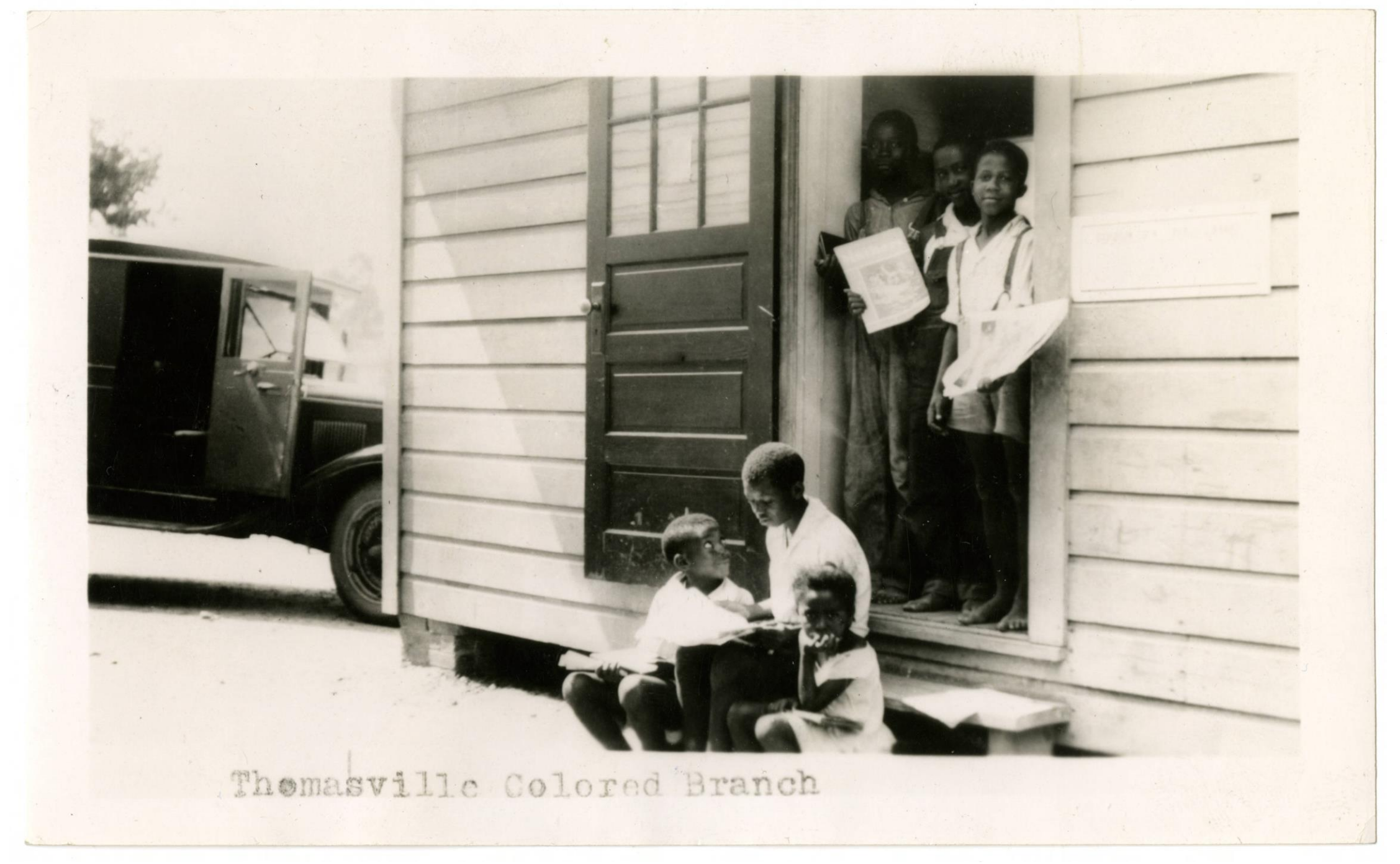
Bookmobile in North Carolina, 1951

Photograph obtained from North Carolina Digital Collections
<http://digitalstate.lib.nc.edu/ncdncollections/p249901coll36/id/85>
Librarian Katherine Case and Pack Library bookmobile



Carnegie Library in Atlanta, Georgia, 1902

Photograph obtained from Library of Congress Website
<https://www.loc.gov/item/gg0119/>
Carnegie Library of Atlanta, 126 Carnegie Way, Atlanta, Fulton County, GA



African American Library in North Carolina

Photograph obtained from North Carolina Digital Collections
<http://digitalstate.lib.nc.edu/ncdncollections/p249901coll36/id/583>
African-American children hold books in doorway of 'Thomasville Colored Branch' library

Were Public Libraries in the South always equally available for everyone?

Rural Population:

- Bookmobiles bring limited access
- **1867-** libraries are almost exclusively in large cities
- **1920-** Only 17% of rural Americans have library access
- **1956-** 26 million Americans have no reasonable access
- **2000's-** some rural Southerners 40+ miles from nearest public library

Women:

- **Late 1800's-** Charge desks separated men and women
 - Separate entrances
 - Restricted access to collection

African Americans:

- Many library leaders are outspoken racists
- **1910-** only 15 African American libraries
 - Inferior materials
- **1940's-** 2/3 of African Americans have no library access
- **1949-** ALA requests equal dealings with all people in public libraries

Children:

- **Before 1900-** most libraries did not allow children
- **After 1900-** Children's areas separated
 - Unwelcoming architecture

Poor:

- **1800's** – Most libraries required payment to join
- **Late 1800's** Carnegie established free libraries

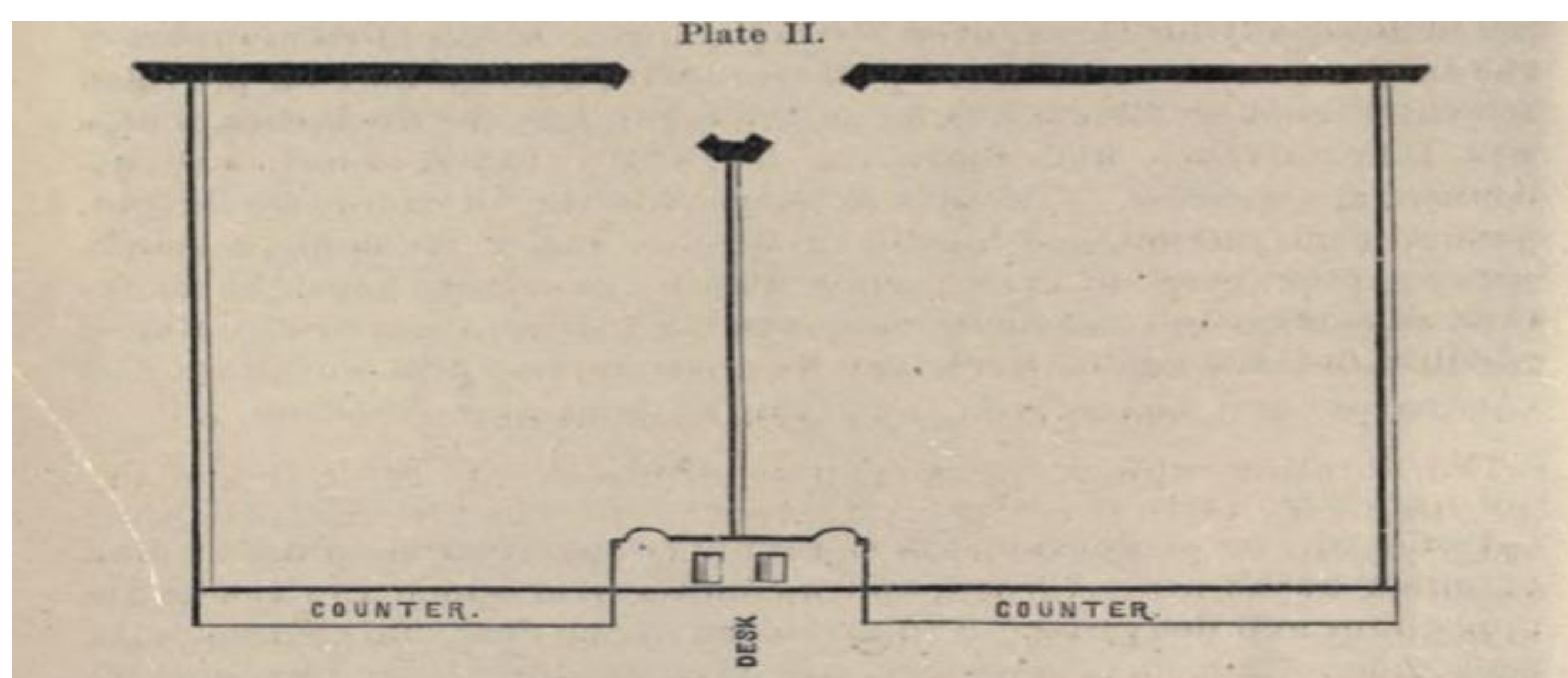


Diagram from 1876 Bureau of Education Report showing separate check out counters for men and women

Public libraries in the United States of America; their history, condition, and management. Special report, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education. Part I. 1876

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Conclusion:
Public Libraries in the Southern United States have not always allowed equal access to all Americans, but are becoming more open to everyone.