

# Censorship and Selection in Prison Libraries

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## **Introduction and Scope**

This bibliography discusses how censorship impacts selection practices in prison libraries. Articles are included to show how political, professional, social and historical processes influence what information, and in what form, is available to inmates at prisons, correctional institutions, and detention centers. Three articles are surveys of prison libraries in order to describe the structures of prison facilities and scope of collection policies. The history of collection and selection in prison libraries is briefly discussed. Several authors discuss why or how prisons should follow the public library model, which means acquiring books that meet the needs of the populations, and another describes public library service to prisons. Articles were also selected to illustrate models of current or previous inmate book selection, in essence the opposite of censorship. Finally, while this bibliography focused on general prison libraries, one article was included to represent developments in inmate access to prison law libraries, and one article represents the potentials and restrictions of internet education for inmates, respectively. The articles were published from 1980 to 2012, and most were published in the United States. This bibliography is limited to peer-reviewed articles, although there are many relevant dissertations and trade magazine articles that examine current developments in this topic.

## **Description**

By definition, prisons, correctional institutions and detainment centers, are based on withholding privileges and information. Censorship is discussed much more frequently in theoretical and concrete terms regarding public and school libraries, than those located in prison and other correctional facilities (Wengert, 2001). Many librarians who work in prisons describe censorship in practical details in collection policies and surveys. These practices of censorship are not frequently explained as infringements of intellectual freedom, but are indicative of institutional regulations and restrictions. Collection policies are not completely standard in United States prison libraries, and so

the extent of censorship in prisons is not known (Lehman, 2011). Access to the internet remains restricted for inmates (McIntyre, 2001). There is a definite need for more academic investigation into finding ways of incorporating actual inmate experiences into how collection policies are enacted. Conrad's recent article is a promising indication of critical public discussion over privacy, censorship and reading lists of prison inmates (2012).

### **Summary of Findings**

Lehman provides a recently published overview of prison libraries, and discusses the development of standards of collection in participation with the American Library Association (Lehman, 2011). At the state level, as Liggett's survey of prison libraries in Ohio indicates, individual prisons function according to different standards and censorship practices (1996). Some prisons record these censorship practices and others do not, so the information is not consistent. At an even smaller scale survey of prison, Mark (2005) describes her experience of her internship at Oshkosh Correctional Institutional Library and talks specifically about how censorship is practiced for different topics and groups. Mark also provides many moments of self-censorship (Mark, 2005, p. 103). These surveys demonstrate that even with some cooperation with national organizations like the ALA, collection practices for prison libraries are not standardized in the United States, and the extent of censorship in prison libraries is not known.

Perhaps because the contemporary prison system in the United States is based on isolation, division and removal from society, there is a general lack in literature that explores the theoretical practices of censorship in prison settings. Suzanna Conrad illustrates this tension by discussing a 2007 court case in which the reading list of an inmate was provided to a jury as an indication of criminal intent (Conrad, 2012, p 407-408). Conrad discusses American Library Association's position that the circulation records in prisons should be confidential, and the impact of policies that impact prison library collection policies. Conrad perfectly articulates the underlying critical problems

of prison censorship by asking, "What books should be accessible to prisoners?" (Conrad, 2012, p. 407).

Historical prison reform movements in the United States often claimed that prisoners could benefit from books, and thus limited available books to certain religious texts, and other approved texts. For instance, Larry E. Sullivan quotes the Boston Prison Discipline Society which wrote in 1840, that, "Next to labor, reading is the most valuable and extensive means of improvement" (Sullivan, 1998, p. 113.) As different waves of prison reform movements impacted prison library collections, there were different ways that collections were developed, and included broader selections (Lehmann, 2011, p. 491-494)

In contemporary practice, many articles dispute that prison libraries are can or should implement reformatory reading practices, or use censorship practices to "improve" the minds of people in prisons. Suvak (1989) decries "change-based model" for prison libraries in which only "prisoners who want to change" are served. Suvak writes, "By virtue of the 'library,' this service is heir to a wealth of goals and ideals, not the least of which is the Library Bill of Rights" (Suvak, 1989, 32). Some authors argue that information should instead be provided on a public library model. Because prison libraries face increasing populations and limited resources, McCook (2004) suggests that public libraries should conduct outreach to incarcerated populations, in local prison and jails. Public libraries often have written collection policies, which is one defense against censorship practices.

Even if the official power structures in prisons and other institutions restrict resources to prisoners with the goal of selective access, how "effective" can this censorship be? Dick Archie, writing about political prisoners in South Africa during Apartheid, argues that even if prisons practice rigorous censorship practices, the "reading space" inhabited by prisoners cannot be effectively controlled (Dick, 2008, p. 1-2). Referencing letters and other records by political prisoners and two censors, Dick cites specific tools of censorship including forbidding the sharing of books, the ceasing of study privileges, limited language options and the deliberate slowness of censors.

(Dick, 2008, p. 9-10). This article offers a unique perspective about a historical period in which certain political practices have been documented, including censorship.

Censorship is the repression of information; what if inmates select resources directly? Bashore (2003) provides an interesting example from the 1880's of Mormon men arrested for violating anti-polygamy laws after statehood in Utah. With community support, and powerful influence within the prison, they started a subscription library that included religious texts, but also the novels of Dickens-- the Mormon Church had recently recognized fiction as a "legitimate didactic tool" (Bashore, 2003, p. 240- 241). Susan McDonald presents a suggested reading list for a prison library compiled by David Allen Coe, "the high priest of country music," and a former prisoner. Besides recommending two books he wrote himself, Coe suggests a wide variety of books, including Self-Help, Fiction and true crime, including *In Cold Blood*, by Truman Capote (McDonald 1983, p. 29-30). McDonald acknowledges the possibility of allowing patrons from prison libraries to directly select books, although she also includes guided suggestions from a former prison librarian.

In his survey of prison collections, Roberts uses a long quote from an inmate named Willie Sutton, who says, "long ago I discovered the value of books. Every prison has a library, and prison wardens knowing that you can't file through the steel bars with a copy of Tom Sawyer, let you have all the books you want" (Roberts, 1980, p. 75). Roberts' survey includes feedback from inmates about why they use the library, as well as collection information provided by prison librarians. This direct feedback from inmates helps illustrate the benefits of prison libraries, as Roberts also discusses the categories of censorship and other collection limitations. The line between the preferences and needs of inmates and the model of punishment will likely remain in conflict; Conrad writes that preferred reading sometimes includes murders other "potentially offensive subjects" (2012).

Finally, the scope of prison libraries have changed drastically in the past few years because of two large factors, that I have not had space in this bibliography to discuss in depth. Law libraries used to be available for inmates until *Lewis v. Casey* (

1996), which ruled that there was not an absolute right (Gerkin, 2003). This has had the effect of closing law libraries down inside prisons, and producing more of need for law resources for the general libraries. The second major factor affecting access to information inside prisons the internet. While the internet is not available directly to the inmate population, the internet has potentially expanded educational programs, but also is treated as a potential security threat by staff (McIntyre et al., 2001). While these two issues are distinct from my original question concerning how censorship impacts collection policies, I felt that they should be considered as part of the ever-shifting challenge and potential of how inmates access information within prison walls.

## **Bibliography**

Bashore, M. L. (2003). Behind adobe walls and iron bars: The Utah territorial penitentiary library. *Libraries and Culture*, 38(3), 236-249.

**Abstract:** "Drawing upon a wealth of detail recorded in the writings of imprisoned Mormon polygamists and other published and unpublished records from the Utah Territorial Penitentiary, we get a glimpse of the educational and intellectual life of an inmate population unique in the annals of American penal history. Utah lagged behind other state and federal prisons in establishing a prison library. It also differed somewhat in the way in which the library was founded. This frontier library was popular with inmates, and the bulk of the collection contained classics and good literature."

**Annotation:** I read this article at the beginning of my research when I was collecting articles about the history of prison libraries, before I

narrowed my search to consider collection and censorship. Yet, I kept thinking back to Bashore's article because connected it with a small handful of academic literature that discusses the process of inmates being allowed to select their own books. The subject complicates the notion that all prisons I feel that this is a possible alternative to some kinds of censorship within certain institutions. I decided to include this article to add a historical perspective to my research.

**Search Strategy:** In preliminary research, I decided to consult a fully-indexed database and experiment with some general keyword search phrases. I wanted to learn more about the history of prison libraries. While I had full pdf access to this article in Project Muse through Drexel, I completed a title search in ProQuest Academic in order to get, full text , as well as controlled vocabulary/abstract. I clicked through to The MLA International Bibliography to find complete information about the article.

**Database:** Project Muse  
ProQuest (The MLA International Bibliography)

**Method of Searching:** keyword search

**Search String:** (Project Muse) prison libraries history

**ProQuest (MLA) ti**(Behind adobe walls and iron bars: The Utah territorial penitentiary library)

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** Modern Language Association indicates that this article is peer-reviewed.

Conrad, S. (2012). Collection development and circulation policies in prison libraries:

An exploratory survey of librarians in US correctional institutions. *The Library Quarterly*, 82(4), 407-427.

**Abstract:** "Prison libraries have traditionally fulfilled many purposes for their incarcerated patrons, and these libraries often carry a diverse collection to serve varied patron needs. However, during the trial of Steven Hayes for the Petit family murders, the prosecution questioned the collection development policies of the institutions where Hayes had previously been incarcerated, requesting the reading lists in efforts to prove that his salacious choices in literature fueled his crimes. This request by prosecution brought two major issues into question, including (1) the collection development policies of US prison libraries and (2) the question of patron privacy in prison libraries. This article investigates current prison library policies on collection development and confidentiality of patron borrowing records through an exploratory survey of seventeen librarians currently working in correctional institutions throughout the United States. Their responses detail collection development policies in the prison library and present the ambiguity for handling the confidentiality of patron borrowing records."

**Annotation:** While Conrad does not specify censorship as the main topic of her research, her discussion of privacy and ethics correlates to the question of what factors dictate inmates access information. Her example of The inmate Steven Hayes demonstrates that the perception of crime and intellectual freedom are always in flux. This is a very recent article that has not been cited yet, but I look forward to seeing how this connects with future articles about inmate privacy and prison libraries.

**Search Strategy:** This was one of the first articles I found. I wanted to explore controlled vocabulary in both ProQuest platform for ERIC and LISA, respectively. I was not satisfied with the thesaurus option for ERIC ( Prison library > Special Library, which is much too broad.) LISA had "Prison library" as a thesaurus choice, and this was a productive place to start this research. Also, this article lead me to other articles that I found very helpful for developing the scope of my bibliography. This article was offered full text from ProQuest LISA.

**Database:** ProQuest LISA

**Method of Searching:** Controlled Vocabulary (Thesaurus)

**Search String:** SU.EXACT.EXPLODE("Prison libraries")

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** Ulrich's lists *Library Quarterly* as a refereed and academic/scholarly journal. It is printed by the University of Chicago.

Dick, A. L. (2008). 'Blood from stones': Censorship and the reading practices of South African political prisoners, 1960-1990. *Library History*, 24(1), 1-22.

**Abstract:** "This article shows how political prisoners undermined censorship in the apartheid jails of South Africa. The jail diaries, authorized biographies, autobiographies, prison memoirs, interviews, and prison letters of more than fifty political prisoners and two prison censors are analyzed to describe the reading practices of South African political prisoners. The article, demonstrating the ways in which readers regulate their own reading space, concludes that the books that ended up fortuitously or filtered by censors in prison libraries in South Africa and in the possession of political prisoners, profoundly affected their thinking. From information fragments the prisoners reconstructed news and life experiences denied to them by prison authorities. Reading in a way that subverted the intentions of the censors in effect allowed the prisoners to continue their political struggle."

**Annotation:** This article provides a unique perspective on censorship in prison libraries because it focuses on a specific political era of suppression, imprisonment and racism. Some United States scholars maintain inmates of the prison industrial complex are in essence political prisoners. While the focus of my research was on United States

prison libraries, Dick's excellent article effectively describes the way that censorship could be enacted upon prisoners in any setting.

**Search Strategy:** I selected Library and Information Science Abstracts as an authoritative resource of articles related to libraries. I started with searching for prison library or libraries in the abstract. I used the thesaurus to specify "censorship" as controlled vocabulary. After spending some time finding results about contemporary subjects, I was interested in finding a historical look at censorship in prison libraries, so I added "history" as a keyword. I requested this article through interlibrary loan.

**Database:** LISA

**Search String:** SU.EXACT("Censorship")  
ab(prison librar\*) history  
S10 AND s12 AND S13

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** After completing the above steps, in LISA, I was surprised to see that it was not marked as refereed. Further, I saw that no articles from this journal are listed as refereed in LISA. However, according to Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory, this is a peer-reviewed, academic/scholarly journal. Based on

the meticulous academic scholarship of this article, I agreed with Ulrich's that this is a peer-reviewed academic article.

Gerken, J. L. (2003). Does Lewis v. Casey spell the end to court-ordered improvement of prison law libraries? *Law Library Journal*, 95(4), 491-513.

**Abstract:** "Considers whether the Lewis v. Casey case, wherein the United States Supreme Court has held that prisoners do not have an abstract, freestanding right to a law library, spell the end to court-ordered improvement of prison law libraries. Paradox created by the actual injury requirement; Case's representation of a critical departure in the analytical approach to access to court cases."

**Annotation:** While I decided not to deeply investigate law libraries inside of prison, I found the discussion Lewis v. Casey relevant to how information may be blocked or granted depending on changing interpretations of the law. While it is a theoretical position to argue that the Supreme Court is withholding information based on a narrowly defined basis of prisoner rights, nonetheless, access to information is always changing based on social, political powers. Prisoners now may access paralegal assistance, but this court case may shift more demand of law resources into non-law prison libraries, and should be considered as part of selection policies.

**Search Strategy:** I was looking for articles that discussed how the law and courts impact prison libraries. In LISTA, I was looking at the wide pool of articles retrieved by SU (prison libraries), and then used a Boolean phrase to limit the relevant articles to those that included the word law. While I continued to browse by clicking on controlled vocabulary provided in LISTA, I ultimately selected this article. It was available in full text from LISTA.

**Database:** EBSCO Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (LISTA)

**Method of Searching:** Controlled vocabulary

**Search String:** **prison libraries**  
**law**  
**prison libraries AND law**

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** *Law Library Journal* is the official journal of the American Association of Law. According to Ulrich's, it is a peer-reviewed, scholarly journal.

Lehmann, V. (2011). Challenges and accomplishments in U.S. prison libraries. *Library Trends*, 59(3), 490-508.

**Abstract:** "This article focuses on the evolution of prison library services in the United States and the changes in the roles and purposes of prison libraries over the last two

centuries. The development of standards and guidelines for prison libraries under the leadership of the American Library Association and the American Correctional Association is discussed. The characteristics of the offender population are described as well as how prison libraries have responded to the specific needs of this special user group. The challenges of the unique prison environment are highlighted, especially as they relate to the delivery of library services. Examples of successful library services and programs are included, with descriptions of technology projects, resources for prison library staff, collection development policies, law library services, literacy programs, and resources to assist inmates with the transition back to society. “

**Annotation:** Lehmann provides a superb overview of United States prison libraries. With a concise history and explanation of the structure of the prison system at federal and state level, this article is the best contemporary point of introduction that I found for learning more about prison libraries. Furthermore, her discussion of the development of standards and guidelines by American Library Association is an important touchstone of how censorship is defined and challenged in prisons.

**Search Strategy:** I decided to try Web Of Science, with SSCI selected in a new search because I have found the citation features helpful. I wanted to find an article about prison libraries and the American Library Association, and had not had productive results in LISA. By

combining the terms “prison library” and American Library Association, I had one result. Happily, this proved to be a highly relevant article. I also found this article in ProQuest Research Library (where I accessed the full text) but it was not in ProQuest access to ERIC or LISA.

**Database:** Web of Science, SSCI

**Method of Searching:** Keyword

**Search String:**

10. Topic=(American Library Association)  
Databases=SSCI Timespan=All Years
11. Topic=("American Library Association")  
Databases=SSCI Timespan=All Years
12. TS=(prison library)  
Databases=SSCI Timespan=All Years
13. #11 AND #12 results: 1  
Databases=SSCI Timespan=All Years

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** Ulrich’s confirms that *Library Trends* is a refereed, academic/scholarly journal, published by John Hopkins University.

Liggett, J. M. (1996). Survey of Ohio's prison libraries. *Journal of Interlibrary Loan, Document Delivery and Information Supply*, 7(1), 31-45.

**Abstract:** “Reports a 1988 questionnaire survey of Ohio, USA's 22 prison libraries to create a profile of them and their librarians which had a return rate of 57 per cent. Findings covered: size; security classification; library staff personal security; materials; circulation figures; use of the library loan; orientation programs; hours; funding; budgets; censorship; square footage; library technology; and qualifications of staff.”

**Annotation:** In the course of doing research, I discovered the wide varieties of prison libraries and types of policies concerning censorship. Although Liggett introduces her statewide survey as an introduction to the profession of prison librarianship, I found that the statistics that she provides can help inform potential investigations into censorship. These numbers illustrate a discrepancy between needed and actual services for inmates. This state-wide survey provides a building block of larger surveys that need to be performed.

**Search Strategy:** I decided to try Web Of Science, with SSCI selected in a new search because I have found the citation features helpful. I wanted to find an article about prison libraries and the American Library Association, and had not had productive results in LISA. By combining the terms “prison library” and American Library Association, I had one result. Happily, this proved to be a highly relevant article. I also found this article in ProQuest Research Library (where I accessed the full text) but it was not in ProQuest access to ERIC or LISA. through Interlibrary loan.

**Database:** N/A

**Method of Searching:** footnote chasing

**Search String: cited in** Conrad, S. (2012). Collection development and circulation policies in prison libraries: An exploratory survey of librarians in US correctional institutions. *The Library Quarterly*, 82(4), 407-427.

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** While the title of this journal made me think that it is a trade magazine, it is a peer-reviewed academic journal, as Ulrich's confirms. Furthermore, the journal website says that that "All articles in *Journal of Interlibrary Loan, Document Delivery, & Electronic Reserve* have undergone editorial screening and peer review."

Mark, A. (2005). Libraries without walls: an internship at oshkosh correctional institution library. *Behavioral & Social Sciences Librarian*, 23(2), 97-111.

**Abstract:** "An internship in a prison library provides excellent training both in basic library services and in dealing with under-served populations. This type of internship, one that imparts an alternate view of librarianship, provides an understanding of how organizations work and develops professional integrity and supervisory skills. A prison internship experience has wide application in the library field, grounding students firmly in customer service and library instruction skills."

**Annotation:** While Mark emphasizes her practical internship skills as the focus of this article, I found this to be an excellent article discussing broad factors of censorship and access in prison libraries. In particular, her discussion of censorship is specific, and describes the quotidian

practices that prison librarians negotiate between other prison staff and inmates. I believe I would have discounted the applicability of this article based on the title, since I was not interested in site-specific articles. However, I found this article in the footnotes of a newly published peer-reviewed academic article (Conrad, 2012), and accessed it.

**Search Strategy:**

I first tried using the cited references feature in Web of Science, by doing a title search for Conrad 2012. Already knowing I wanted this specific article, I looked in cited references, but this article by Mark is not included in Drexel's access. I was able to request it through ILL by using the "Get It Button." I also attempted to use the Cited Reference Search, but even though I found the article by searching for author, year and journal, WoS did not offer access to the actual article. I then did a title search in LISA, and was able to access the article to look at relevant information including controlled vocab, abstract and references.

**Database:** Web of Science (found minimal citation and requested article through ILL)  
LISA (accessed indexed information)

**Method of Searching:** footnote chasing

**Search String:**       **Cited in:** Conrad, S. (2012). Collection development and circulation policies in prison libraries: An exploratory survey of librarians in US correctional institutions. *The Library Quarterly*, 82(4), 407-427.

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:**       LISA indicated that this was a peer-reviewed article. Additionally, Ulrich's showed that Behavioral & Social Sciences Librarian is an academic/scholarly, peer-reviewed article.

McCook, K. D. (2004). Public libraries and people in jail. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 44(1), 26-30.

**Abstract:** "Examines the library philosophies of service relating to the incarceration of people in prisons, particularly in the USA, and examples of public libraries providing services to people imprisoned in local detention centers, described in the literature. The literature review is arranged according to: the philosophy of library service to prisoners; service to detention facilities in prisons; public libraries serving prisons; and the way in which prison library service builds community."

**Annotation:**               This is highly relevant discussion of the philosophy of library service in prisons. In my research, I found that this discussion needs to be developed more fully in the public sphere of librarianship. McCook considers how organizational standards, such as those created by American Library Association can benefit all of society.

**Search Strategy:**           Using the citation tool in Web of Science, I selected this article by McCook as one that had cited Vogel's work, and I

was compelled to track it down. Since this article was not available through WoS, I used JSTOR to access the full-text.

**Database:** Web of Knowledge; Web of Science

**Method of Searching:** Citation chasing.

**Search String:** N/A

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** *Reference & User Services Quarterly* is a refereed, scholarly journal printed by the American Library Association.

Mcdonald, S. (1983). Acquisitions for prison libraries. *Library Acquisitions-Practice and Theory*, 7(1), 29-33.

**Abstract:** "In 1978 David Allan Coe, 'outlaw' country singer, was invited to suggest books for prison libraries. In 1982 he submitted a list of books under the headings: biographies; prisons and crime; fiction and poetry; self-help and how-to; and general. Christine L. Kirby, who worked as a prison librarian, comments on the list. Prisoners' interests are comprehensive. Especially popular are black literature, 'street life', prison and crime, escapist and action fiction, magazines, all sorts of philosophy and religion, games and physical activities requiring little equipment or space, legal materials and dictionaries and help in facing outside life."

**Annotation:** This article, though older, is a great supplement to the literature included in this bibliography, because it is a truly unique commentary on how books are selected for prison libraries, and how they could be chosen. While at the time that this article was

published, David Allan Coe was a previous inmate, his list of books is a shift of power distinct from where books are usually selected or withheld. This could be a great starting point for new research into collaborative exploration.

**Search Strategy:** While looking in ProQuest Academic, I clicked though the subject "Prison libraries." I wanted to look through the largest recall of articles (391), and try browsing through. I was beginning to be interested in acquisitions in my research, so I clicked on this title. I requested this article through Interlibrary loan.

**Database:** ProQuest Academic.

**Method of Searching:** Browsing

**Search String:** subject("Prison libraries")

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:**

McIntyre, T., Tong, V. M., & Perez, J. F. Cyber-lock down: Problems inherent with the use of internet technology in correctional education settings. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 52(4), 163-165.

**Abstract:** "The availability of internet based learning offers great promise for educating incarcerated youth. This article describes the various concerns and offers suggestions for overcoming these barriers."

**Annotation:** While this is an older article, and technology has changed since 2001, I felt that this article demonstrates the challenge of access issues both inmates and librarians. The authors are skeptical and

negative about the possibilities of using the internet at all. Newer articles indicate that internet access is still restricted, or simply not available to inmates individually.

**Search Strategy:** I wanted to find an article specifically about how the internet is being used in correctional institutions, and how it was affecting educational programs. I used the ERIC thesaurus to build up a search based on these two concepts. The Thesaurus led me to try “correctional education,” from the broader subject of Education. I requested this article through inter library loan.

**Database:** ProQuest ERIC

**Method of Searching:** Controlled Vocabulary

**Search String:** S11 SU.EXACT("Correctional Education")

S13 SU.EXACT("Internet")

S15 S11 AND S13

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** *Journal of Correctional Education* is a refereed, academic journal published by Ashland University, as confirmed by Ulrich’s.

Roberts, A. R. (1980). Library services and censorship in corrections. *Journal of Offender Counseling, Services & Rehabilitation*, 5(2), 75-84.

**Abstract:** “Interviews were conducted with 28 inmates while they were serving time in correctional facilities in Maryland, New Jersey, and New York. Inmates reported that

the library was important to them for entertainment, information, and personal growth. Strong points of the libraries were reported to be the Enoch Pratt lending system and librarian efforts to secure the books requested by inmates. Weak points were indicated to be lack of a firm schedule of hours, weekend closings, poor circulation, insufficient material, and insufficient copies of law books. Further, a 2-page questionnaire was mailed to a selected sample of the 50 most populated prisons listed in the American Correctional Association directory. Responses were received from 34 of the librarians representing all the major regions.”

**Annotation:** While this is an older article, I decided to include it because after spending time with the literature about censorship and selection in prison libraries, I appreciate how Roberts published results of a survey given to inmates. While other articles may suggest giving surveys to inmates, I did not see other results published like this, and so it is a significant , yet underrepresented perspective in the review. This would be a fantastic point of departure for new research.

**Search Strategy:** I found this by clicking on the right hand side “Similar Articles” button in ProQuest ERIC when looking at articles on intellectual freedom. Perhaps since Roberts (1980) is an older article, it only has Subject headings as “Libraries” and “Freedom of the press” respectively, and I did not come

across it in previous searches for censorship and correctional institutions. I requested this article through inter library loan.

**Database:** ProQuest ERIC

**Method of Searching:** Browsing

**Search String:** **ti(Censorship) AND corrections**

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** Ulrich's lists *Journal of Offender Counseling, Services & Rehabilitation* as a refereed, scholarly journal. The website describes the journal as "is a multidisciplinary journal of innovation in research, services and programs in criminal justice and corrections."

Sullivan, L. E. (1998). Reading in American prisons: Structures and strictures. *Libraries and Culture*, 33(1), 113-119.

**Abstract:** "Special issue of this journal devoted to the proceedings of an international conference on the History of Reading and Libraries in the United States and Russia, held in Vologda, Russia, in Jun 1996, and organized by the IFLA Roundtables on Library History and Research in Reading. Discusses reading for self-improvement and

the role of prison libraries in US penal reform. Examines prison library policies, collections and inmate reactions. Nietzsche was found to a popular icon.”

**Annotation:** Larry E. Sullivan is one of the most prolific authors to write about prison libraries and censorship. I came across his name at the very beginning of my research when I was reading Brenda Vogel’s book *The Prison Library Primer*(2009), and looking through the footnotes. I saw his name referenced in articles as well. This article is one of the few theoretical approaches to the historical construct of censorship in prison libraries in the United States. I feel that the abstract does not fully characterize the content of the article.

**Search Strategy:** I decided to do an author search in WoS, but observed that the recall was too low (4 articles). I tried an advanced search in WoS, using author field and a keyword, but felt that articles were not showing up. I looked in LISA, and then finally used JSTOR to do an improvised author search. Since JSTOR is fully indexed and does not have advanced field searching options, I tried searching “Larry E. Sullivan,” with no quotes. Results were too broad, so then I put quotes around the name. This article popped up, and I was compelled to read it. It was available in full text from JSTOR.

**Database:** JSTOR

**Method of Searching:** Browsing/Keyword.

**Search String:** Author Search. **Larry E . Sullivan**  
**“Larry E. Sullivan.”**

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** According to Ulrich’s, *Libraries and Cultures* is a refereed, academic/scholarly journal. This journal is printed by University of Texas.

Suvak, D. (1989). 'Throw the book at 'em': The change-based model for prison libraries.

*Wilson Library Bulletin*, 64(2), 31-33.

**Abstract:** “Contribution to a special section on prison libraries. Examines 2 cases, quoted in William Coyle's book: *Libraries in prisons: a blending of institutions to illustrate the problems of intellectual freedom and censorship in the context of prison libraries.*”

**Annotation:** Since I wanted to focus on articles that are critical of prison censorship, I found this article highly relevant. Suvak examines the idea that a “change-based” model, or only using books that are approved to help reform inmates, is beneficial for inmates or libraries in institutions. While this is one of the older articles that I found, and not peer-reviewed (please see below, at **Scholarly/Refereed Status**) this article is helpful for identifying models of collection selection as censorship.

**Search Strategy:** The excellent literature review in Mark (2005) notes that Wilson Library Bulletin had a special issue with several articles devoted to the topic of prison libraries. This article was one listed. I was curious about the title of the article, so I looked for it.

**Database:** Accessed through Drexel catalog, by searching digital holdings; There was a glitch in going directly from the catalog to the article, so I went from Drexel to the Wilson Library Journal holdings in EBSCO, where it was available in full text.

**Method of Searching:** Footnote Chasing

**Search String:** Referenced in : Mark, A. (2005). Libraries without walls: an internship at oshkosh correctional institution library. *Behavioral & Social Sciences Librarian*, 23(2), 97-111.

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** After locating the article through the citation, by title in LISA to get more information about the article status. According to LISA, *Wilson Library Bulletin* is a trade journal, but Ulrich's indicates it is Academic/scholarly. While this article is not peer-reviewed, I decided to keep it because it is an important contribution to the body of my bibliography.

Wengert, R. G. (2001). Some ethical aspects of being an information professional. *Library Trends*, 49(3), 486-509.

**Abstract:** "Discussions of ethics and libraries frequently focus on rights, especially the right of privacy and its role in supporting resistance to censorship. This article, using issues of censorship as particular examples, questions whether a focus on rights leads to a narrow idea of the library profession and its clients."

**Annotation:** This article provides an insight into the active ethical debates about censorship in librarianship as a whole. While Wengert does not discuss prisons in particular, I found that it was important to look outside of the available literature about ethics and prison librarianship to take a broader look at what critical approaches are needed.

**Search Strategy:** I had not used Lista before and was curious about exploring its thesaurus. I spent some time looking through and trying to combine different controlled vocabulary. While the thesaurus vocabulary produced small results, I did end up with an excellent article about the broad concepts I was looking for how the ethic of librarianship affects collection policy. This was available full text from EBSCO LISTA .

**Database:** EBSCO LISTA

**Method of Searching:** Controlled vocabulary

**Search String:** S22(DE "LIBRARIANS – professional ethics")

S24(DE "RIGHT of Privacy)

S27 S22 and S24

**Scholarly/Refereed Status:** Ulrich's confirms that *Library Trends* is a peer-reviewed academic and scholarly journal. It is published by John Hopkins University.

### **Conclusion and Personal Statement**

One of the challenges of collecting information about censorship and collections practices in prison libraries is the limited visibility of prison libraries in contemporary academic discussion. Indeed, many articles that I found relevant to this discussion were from the 1970's and 1980's, when, as McCook notes, the focus on serving incarcerated people was much more pronounced (McCook, 2004, 26-27). But the United States currently has the largest prison population in the world; what people access information in prisons affects all of us. I found that articles that discussed censorship were mostly surveys. Although these articles are useful for comparing services, they do not address larger issues of intellectual freedom, access to information. If the ethics of librarianship dictate that underserved populations have a right to read (Wengert, 2001), then this concept needs to be reconciled with all the structures that prisons take. There is a noticeable absence of critical articles that address the intersection of punitive systems and censorship.

I learned that censorship practices are very common in prison libraries, and this is seen by many prison librarians as a necessary practice. I still am asking if standardized collections policy can be reconciled with the situational censorship

practices in prisons. My research did not satisfy my question. I was humbled by how much information is available about libraries, and how many professional organizations maintain academic and refereed journals. I was introduced to major names in this field, and this helped inform my overall work. Importantly, I felt that my research complicated my original research question, and my understanding of how information is accessed and shared in prisons is still developing.

I certify that:

- This assignment is entirely my own work.
- I have not quoted the words of any other person from a printed source or website without indicating what has been quoted and providing an appropriate citation.
- I have not submitted this assignment to satisfy the requirements of any other course.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_Katie Lewis \_\_\_\_\_

Date 3/19/2013