Segregation and the Library--History

"Early Sit-in Reenacted at Library 60 Years Later" by Gordon Flagg.

This tells of the filming of "Out of Obscurity." The story is of the sit-in by five young black men at the Alexandria, VA Public Library in 1939.

"Historical notes: race and librarianship: part I" by C. E. Lipscomb.

In 1936 ALA was holding its annual meeting in Richmond, VA. "ALA was anxious to have Negro librarians attend in large numbers. Because of the traditional position of the South in respect to mixed meetings," ALA felt it advisable to send a "semi-official" letter from a local librarian to African American members informing them of the conditions they should expect.

1) "Although ALA had arranged with the host hotels that all delegates could use the same entrance, hotel rooms and meals were forbidden to black delegates by Virginia laws." [bold lettering and numbering are by this author for emphasis]
2) "Meetings that were part of meals were not open to black delegates, although they could attend sessions followed by meals, if they did not participate in the meals.
3) Seating in the front right hand section of meeting rooms was to be reserved for them."

Because of the situation, ALA responded by creating a Committee on Racial Discrimination in 1936.

"Historical notes: race and librarianship: part II" by C. E. Lipscomb.

Continues the story of ALA’s anti-segregation activities, or lack of them, reported by Eric Moon, editor of the Library Journal.


“Unannounced and Unexpected: The Desegregation of Houston Public Library in the Early 1950s” by Cheryl Knott Malone.