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Philip Olin Keeney: Checklist of Writings

Compiled by Michael K. Buckland
February 15, 2025

Philip Olin Keeney, born in 1891 and known to his friends as Angus, was an American librarian with progressive left-leaning views. After receiving a Certificate in librarianship at University of California, Berkeley, School of Librarianship, became university librarian and professor of library science at Montana State University in Missoula, but left after winning a significant lawsuit over intellectual freedom and academic tenure. In 1945, after working in library positions Washington, DC, he joined the General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Forces in occupied Japan and became Library Officer in the Civil Information and Education Section. In 1946 Keeney proposed a plan for the development of library services in Japan based on California's county library system: *Unified Library Service for Japan*. In 1947 he was suddenly relieved of his duties and discharged without explanation, apparently having been viewed as a security risk. He was sent back to the USA and died in 1962.

This checklist was created as part of the preparation for the book *Ideology and Libraries: California, Diplomacy and Occupied Japan, 1945-1952* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2021), which includes an account of his work as Library Officer in occupied Japan.

For more on Keeney see also McReynolds, Rosalee. 1997. Trouble in Big Sky's ivory tower: the Montana tenure dispute of 1937-1939. *Libraries and Culture* 32 (Spr 1997): 163-190 and McReynolds, Rosalee & Louise S. Robbins. 2009. *The Librarian Spies: Philip and Mary Jane Keeney and Cold War Espionage*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

A collection of Keeney's profession papers is preserved in Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley: *Philip Olin Keeney Papers*. BANC MSS 71/157.

Writings by Philip Olin Keeney

This chronological list is not claimed to be complete.

Keeney also worked for years on a scholarly book titled "Librarianship: A Social Force." It was never published and was probably never finished. No manuscript is known to survive, but one part of it appeared as an article "The Public Library: A People's University?" in the *Wilson Library Bulletin* in 1938. (Details below.)

The clipping file. *Library Journal* 56 n 1 (Jan 1, 1931): 13-14. Reference staff should maintain a clipping file as aide-memoire and evidence to cite. Needs weeding. Large libraries can subscribe to clipping services.

Graduate library facilities at Michigan. *Library Review* 3 (1931): 17-19. Followed by George H. Bushnell. Notes on Mr Keeney's article.

What about 1933 applicants? *Library Journal* 57, n 12 (June 15, 1932): 582-583. Are applicants to library school getting honest guidance on prospects? "Few librarians are able to free themselves from the chain of routine often forged in library schools?" "A competent librarian, particularly in this difficult period, looks more often and more intently at the welfare of his staff than the book lists of the library's customers."

- Democratic aids to staff responsibility. *Library Journal* 59, n 12 (April 15, 1934): 361. Against autocratic library management. Librarians are better qualified now.
- Flexibility of library organization. *Library Journal* 59 (April 1, 1934): 312-313. Too many confined to ordinary clerical tasks and dull unimaginative routine. "Regular staff meetings intelligently conducted are important in bringing to light all manner of things that may benefit the conduct of the library." Suggestion box.
- The responsibility of being head librarian. *Library Journal* 59, n 6 (Mar 15, 1934): 271-272. 271: Responsible *for* resources (tend to be autocratic); responsible *to* clientele (tend to be bureaucratic); responsible *to* staff, so more democratic internal organization. 272: Merit not seniority. "When head librarians cease to preach that library employment is a labor of love and attempt practical reforms of a democratic nature in their own organization, society will be inclined to support libraries more generously."
- A new style for conventions. *Library Journal* 60 (Nov 15, 1935): 894. At conventions of librarians it seems only elders have a voice. Contradicted by a stirring speech by Mr Sydney Mitchell in Montreal. Plea for greater role for younger librarians at library conferences at PNLA annual conference. "Resolution 1 asked librarians to take an unalterable stand against war and fascism, 3, that the A.L.A. be changed from a bureaucracy to a democracy, and 4, that libraries organize staff organizations which will allow younger members a voice in all policies affecting their welfare." "... until finally youth will make itself heard from the floor at a first general session of the A.L.A." Criticism of the conservatism of ALA.
- [With Agnes Swanson & Gertrude Watson] Editorial comment. *PNLA Quarterly* 1, n 1 (Oct 1936): 4-5. 5: "It is not the intention of the Quarterly to be innocuous and useless, but a help and positive encouragement to every progressive movement pertaining to the library world. It is vitally interested in any development that will improve the working conditions of our professional colleagues regardless of age and status." Also "Editorial" 1 n 4 (July 1937) 52-53. Keeney was the founding editor of *Pacific Northwest Library Association Quarterly* from first issue, Oct 1936, through 1939(?).
- Two theories of public library trusteeship: 1. Trusteeship appropriate to a changing social order. *PNLA Quarterly* 1 (Oct 30, 1936): 5-7. Advocates election of public library trustees.
- Farmers endorse invitation of C. I. O. *Montana Labor News* (Montana State Federation of Labor) v 13, n 35 (Oct 28, 1937) Plea for Montana farmers' union to cooperate with AF of L and CIO.
- The Keeneys tell of southern trip. *Montana Labor News* [v ? n ?] (Feb 3, 1938): 4. Nov 19: Attended Victor Jewett hearing. attended Mooney rally in SF civic auditorium.
- [Letter: I wish to thank...] *PNLAQ* 2 n2 (Jan 1938): 86.
- Library organization indicates healthy growth. *CPL Union News* [Publication of the Chicago Public Library Employees' Union.] 2, n 5 (May-June 1938): 1 & 4. Teachers unionized before librarians. Now 500 locals of AFT. Staff organizations not strong enough. Booth at 1938 ALA annual meeting: "The fact that this campaign is sponsored by an affiliate of the Committee for Industrial Organization may offend the genteel sensibilities of many librarians and their assistants. But to the far-seeing librarians this action of the profession will be a sign of the times in which we live and will indicate healthy growth."
- Keeney, Philip & Mary Jane Keeney. 1938. What S.O.R.T. can do for American librarianship.

Wilson Library Bulletin 13 (Oct 1938): 102-103. Library Assistants Assoc in UK. Rise of staff associations in US libraries. JMRT at ALA worked on bibliography, should have addressed critical problems facing young library assistants. 1936 Staff Organizations Round Table. Now 60 staff associations affiliated with SORT, some unionized, some anti-union. "Library assistants now have an association devoted to their own professional interests; they will soon have an organ; it is up to them to make the widest possible use of both . . ."

The Greeks had a word for it. *PNLAQ* 3 n1 (April 1939): 141-145. Xenophobia.

The public library, A people's university? *Wilson Library Bulletin* 13, n 6 (Feb 1939): 369-377 & 387. [= San Francisco Bay District Library =Discussion Group, acc *PLC Bull* 3,n 2 (Oct 1941):7] Also 428: Supportive editorial.] "Paper read before First district, California Library Association, Discussion Club, Nov 16, 1938. [It] ". . . makes use of, and interprets, some of the research material Mr. & Mrs Keeney have gathered during the past year for their forthcoming book: *Librarianship: A social force.*" 369: Phrase attributed to Thomas Carlyle. "Most librarians agree that these resources should have enduring values, that they should offer readers understanding of the world they live in, and that they should, in fine, be educational in the broad sense of the term." 370: [Libraries] "They best serve the university function when they place in the hands of the individual reader the timely and significant book he needs for the understanding of his world. Those libraries which fulfill the teaching relationship are unquestionably universities of the people, whether they are great foundations or simple structures housing a small collection of well-chosen books." 370: Do they belong to the people? Tax-paid so yes, but like firms "... ownership means little or nothing when it is not associated with control." Who controls: Trustees, head lib, staff. Appointed trustees not answerable to electorate but to the mayor. An anomaly in a democracy. Trustees also lack specialized knowledge. Unrepresentative elite, conservative. Lib boards meet in closed session No role for lib staff who know readers best. Should be elected and representative of community, with chief ex officio and at least 2 staff representatives. 374: Lack of job protection for chief. 375: Need more democracy in internal administration bec more aware, more effective. 377: Staff input on mgt appts. "It is our professional duty as librarians to see that the voice of democracy demands workable changes and feasible innovations." "*We are also the people, ... We librarians are part of the social fabric.*" So become engaged. 377: "Our work will become more than our livelihood; it will have become part of a sounder, responsible and satisfying career, an individual life lived fully and linked with the common life of all."

[Page 428: Supportive editorial.]: "With the support of the American Library Association, the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Association of University Professors, and allied organizations, Mr Keeney has made a valiant fight, not so much for his own reinstatement, as for the protection of democratic rights and the professional right of tenure."

The next case: An open letter to the Chairman [Charle Harvey Brown] of the Third Activities Committee, American Library Association. *Wilson Bulletin for Librarians* 13, n 10 (June 1939): 663-666. Cases of Miss H and Miss B. Miss H sued and lost because no written contract and library board outside of civil service regulations. Urges ALA should act like

- AAUP to defend librarians fired without cause.. Proposes new ALA Committee on Tenure. Seen
- Tenure protection for librarians. *P.L.C. Bulletin* 1, n 1 (Sept 1939): 3. Report on discussion at ALA. Brown agreed but thought it should await certification.
- The Third Committee's proposals on tenure. *P.L.C. Bulletin* 1, n 3 (Dec 1939): 1 & 6. Also need funds for cases.
- Finis to the Keeney case. *Progressive Librarians Council Bulletin* 1 (April 1940): 5-6. [Abstract in LL: April 1, 1940 K resigned "to pursue his career henceforth at the Library of Congress."].
- Keeney, Philip & Mary Jane Keeney. Labor and libraries: A factual summary of their relationship. *CPL Union News* 5, no 2 (June 1941): 9. [Chicago Public Library Employees Union SCMWA Local 88 (CIO). Boston ALA conference issue]. History of library development. Mutual failure of libraries and unions. "Today a strong, revitalized labor movement is changing the picture of labor and libraries."
- Keeney, Philip & Mary Jane Keeney. Labor and libraries. *Labor World in Review* [Vol?] (July 1941): 37-38. Condensed from the *Chicago Public Library Union News*.
- Keeney, Philip & Mary Jane Keeney. Social content in library training. *Wilson Library Bulletin* 14 (Feb & March 1940): 429-434; 497-503. Analysis of courses listed in library school catalogues. History of first professional degree. Little on social content except note of growth of research literature esp. from Chicago GLS.
- Unified Library Service for Japan*. Typescript, with transmittal memo to Lt Col E. H. Farr. 8 April 1946. Repr. in *Toshokanhō seiritsushi shiryō*, ed. by Urata Takeo & Ogawa Takeshi (1968) pp 433-438.
- Memorandum to Lt. Col. Orr. Subject: Library Conference Tokyo 15-18 August 1946*. Typescript original repr. Repr. in *Toshokanhō seiritsushi shiryō*, ed. by Urata Takeo & Ogawa Takeshi (1968) pp 438-441.
- Memorandum to Lt. Col. Orr: Subject: Tour of libraries in northern and western Honshu Hokkaido, 18 September – 30 September 1946*. Typescript repr. in *Toshokanhō seiritsushi shiryō*, ed. by Urata Takeo & Ogawa Takeshi (1968) pp 441-444.
- Teaching of children's librarians*. Mar 3, 1947. GHQ/SCAP Records box 5359, folder 9. CIE (A) 2986-2991.
- Memorandum to: Mr. Orr. Subject: Shikoku Library Conference*. Typescript repr. in *Toshokanhō seiritsushi shiryō*, ed. by Urata Takeo & Ogawa Takeshi (1968) pp 444-448.
- Memorandum to: Mark T. Orr, Chief Education Division. Subject: Kyushu Library Conference 26 March – 3 April*. Typescript repr. in *Toshokanhō seiritsushi shiryō*, ed. by Urata Takeo & Ogawa Takeshi (1968) pp 454-457.
- Japanese librarians are war-damaged. *Library Journal* 73, no. 9 (May 1, 1948):681-684. Copy
- Meet the Japanese librarians. *Library Journal* 73, no. 10 (May 15, 1948): 768-772. Copy. 771: Group photo, "Japan's first national conference of librarians from all types of libraries, Tokyo, August 15-18, 1946" 771n: "Front row, left to right: Mr. Osa, librarian of the ARC Officers Club (also a graduate of the Columbia University Library School), who served as interpreter; Mr.Otobe, Nagano Prefectural Library; Mr. Okada, director of the Ueno Imperial Library; Mr. Kobayashi, chief of the section of Cultural Education of the Mombusho; Mr. Keeney; Mr. Osada, Osaka Prefectural Library, who served as chairman;

Mr. Iwai of the Toyo-Bunko (the private library of Baron Iwasaki that contains the splendid Morrison Collection); Mr. Kajiya, Kagoshima Prefectural Library; Mr. Tominaga, Tenri Sect Library in Nara. Back row: Mr. Shiina, Kagawa Prefectural Library; Mr. Sato of the Noda-Bunko (a library of a manufacturing plant in Chiba Prefecture that was open to the public); Mr. Nagashima, who represented the Bureau of Social Education of the Mombusho; Mr. Ariyama, executive secretary, Library Association of Japan; Mr. Hatsukade, Chiba Prefectural Library; Mr. Ishii, Odowara Town Library; Mr. Okuma, Okayama Prefectural Library; Mr. Kato, Shizuoka Prefectural Library; Mr. Sakatani, Nagoya City Library. Picture taken at the side of the front entrance to the Ueno Imperial Library, Tokyo.”

Reorganization of the Japanese library system. *Far Eastern Survey* 17 (Jan 28, 1948):19-22; (Feb 11, 1948): 32-35. Copy of both. Reprinted in Urata, Takeo & Ogawa Takeshi, eds. 1968. *Toshokanhō seiritsushi shiryō*, pp 419-433.. www.jstor.org/stable/3022376

PK & MJK: *Program for more library service at less cost*. 1948.

PK & MJK: *Program for more library service at less cost. Supplement A: Program adapted to the conditions in Puerto Rico*, 1948. *Puerto Rico*.

PK & MJK: *Program for more library service at less cost. Supplement B: Program relating to conditions in Poland*.

Three independent views. *Far East Spotlight* 4, n 2 (July 1948): 14-15. Review of Lauterbach, Richard E. *Danger from the East* (1947). MacArthur rebuilding Japan as Far East bastion against the Soviet Union. Ball, W. Macmahon. Reflections on Japan. *Pacific affairs* March 1938. Section of forthcoming book. MacArthur is naive. Democratic clauses will be wiped out when occupation ends. Wang Yun-sheng. Japan—storm center of Europe. *Pacific Affairs* June 1948. M’s right-wing emphasis leads to failure of land reform & scaling down in reparations to preserve industry. No change! Paving way for WWII.

[Book review of W. Macmahon Ball. *Japan: Enemy or ally*. (1949)]. *Far East spotlight* 5, n 9 (Nov 1949): 13. SCAP snubbed Far Eastern Commission in Japan. Cleavage exploited by press & Japanese government.

[Book review of T. A. Bisson. *Prospects for democracy in Japan*. (1949)] *Far East spotlight* How the old guard stayed in power.

Testimony of Philip O. Keeney and Mary Jane Keeney and statement regarding their background. Hearings before the Committee on Un-American Activities. House of Representatives. 81 st Congress. First session, May 24, 25; June 9, 1949. Washington, DC: US Govt. Print. Off., 1949, pp 221-[282].