

Kitabu

The bi-monthly newsletter of the African School Mobile Library
"African Studies by bicycle"

Issue 11 – an extra - February 2021

Dear Reader, welcome to Kitabu.

Happy Birthday, Godmother Sadie

Today, the 26th of February, here and there around the world, the birthday of Fats Domino will be celebrated; in this special issue of Kitabu, I pay homage to Sadie Peterson Delaney.

I see her walking through the hospital wards, taking her time to get to know each man laying in a bed. Through time taken, she was able to prescribe a remedy for each one. Maybe the poetry of Langston Hughes, or a play by Willis Richardson. As well as librarian, she was a healer: a pioneer in bibliotherapy. To the soldiers in the Veterans Hospital in Tuskegee, Alabama, she must have appeared like a Fairy Godmother; waving her wand of verse and prose, sprinkling the dust of solace.

A poem by Alice Dunbar Nelson, a novel by Claude McKay.

After work at the lauded New York 135th Street Library, where she focused her work on the youth; young offenders, the visually impaired – learning Braille and Moonpoint – and immigrants, she accepted the Tuskegee role, remaining there for thirty four years, until the ancestors happily called her: "Come Sadie, it is time to rest.

She increased the literature available, enhancing the circulation throughout the hospital.. Books for the patients and medical ones for the staff: the continual re-stocking of both libraries. For the former that could not hold books, text was projected on the screen, or there was the option of "talking books." She taught the visually impaired combatant, the usage of Braille.

An essay by Arturo Schomberg, a short story by Zora Neale Hurston.

As well as the informal consultation with the patients, there were the formal ones with the medical staff: the librarian working alongside the doctor, in the treatment of the sufferer. I see her; enthused, facilitating the book discussions and the story telling, the singing of songs and the reading of poetry.

She brightened up the library, taking it from the dour to the invitational - and for those who could not get there, she organised a book cart of regular rounds. In all her work, she took Library Extension Service to the next level and to the one above that one also.

A review by Georgia Johnson, an article by J.A.Rogers.

In her work at the aforementioned New York library, she worked with such luminaries as Hubert Harrison and W.B.DuBois: at the Tuskegee hospital, she worked with the unknown soldiers. Through the library and its varied outreach work, she offered respite: a pathway to the place called dignity.

One day I hope to see the library and hospital where she worked and to visit the Sadie Peterson Delaney African Roots Library. I know I would have been one of those who came to learn from her: they came from all over America, as well as Africa and Europe. From the universities of the world, they came to see bibliotherapy in action: a living and effective tool. As this year, 2021, I intend to gain accreditation in Library Science, I stand and salute the one who completed her training in 1921, going on to become one of the greatest bibliotherapists of all time. I am both humbled and elated, to share my birthday with her: Happy Birthday, Godmother Sadie.

Sources - Book Riot - Wikipedia

In 1924, the remarried Sadie Peterson Delaney took a position as librarian at Tuskegee Veterans Administration hospital. There she developed and evolved the practice of Bibliotherapy, working with doctors to use books to heal both mental and physical wounds. Imagine, a time before television, before the pervasive TV screen appeared in our hospital rooms to distract us, Bibliotherapy was a deeply thoughtful concept that looked at a very holistic approach to healing. Eleanor Roosevelt in her column "My Day" wrote in January 1957 applauding Mrs. Delaney and her practice of bibliotherapy. Roosevelt explained that Delaney served 1,000 patients. She had added a library binding service to give patients vocational experience. She started a department for the blind and classes in braille.

Duchess County Historical Society

A beacon of hope in the segregated South, Sadie Delaney brought books and pride to recuperating Black veterans.

In 1983 New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture received seven bound volumes of letters, clippings and photographs attesting to the accomplishments of Sadie Peterson Delaney, a librarian who became an outstanding twentieth-century practitioner of bibliotherapy. Through these letters from major and minor figures – both black and white – in the fields of literature, politics, library service, hospital administration and race relations, there emerges a portrait of a woman of determination, energy, enthusiasm, patience and magnetism. She chose to use these considerable attributes to bring books into the lives of people who were unable to get them for themselves, working with hospitalized black veterans in the segregated South, from 1928 to 1958. **From Sadie Peterson Delaney: Pioneer Bibliotherapist** – Betty K.Gubert
Questia

The ASML has **THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE HARLEM LITERARY RENAISSANCE**
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