This chronology highlights milestones for libraries and adult lifelong learning and literacy from 1924-2001, including the following events: William S. Learned's "The American Public Library and the Diffusion of Knowledge" is published (1924); establishment of the ALA (American Library Association) Adult Education Section (1946); the "Great Issues" program adult discussion group launched at ALA (1948); funding of the America Heritage Project (1951); funding of the ALA Office of Adult Education (1952); the ALA Adult Services Division (ASD) established (1957); the Adult Education Act (1966); adoption of the "Library Rights of Adults" (1970); merger of ASD and RSD (Reference Services Division) (1972); White House Conference on Library and Information Services (1979); founding of the National Coalition for Literacy (1981); Adult Services in the Eighties project (1983-1990); Library Literacy Program (1986-1995); ALA Literacy Assembly convenes (1989); White House Conference on Libraries and Information Services (1991); ALA Office for Literacy and Outreach Services changes name (1995); ALA adopts literacy as one of five key action areas (1998); development of a national literacy agenda with focus on the role of libraries (1999); National Literacy Summit (2000); and ALA Standing Committee on Literacy established (2001). Reports on related issues are listed throughout. (Contains 48 references.) (MES)
Chronology of Milestones for Libraries and Adult Lifelong Learning and Literacy

Prepared by Kathleen de la Peña McCook and Peggy Barber
For the ALA Committee on Literacy
January 2002

1924. William S. Learned's report to the Carnegie Corporation, The American Public Library and the Diffusion of Knowledge, is published. \textsuperscript{a-1}

The American Library Association establishes the Commission on the Library and Adult Education.

1926. The ALA Commission on the Library and Adult Education issues the report Libraries and Adult Education. \textsuperscript{a-2}

The ALA establishes the Board on Library and Adult Education (later the Adult Education Board) with ongoing reports in the ALA Bulletin. "Reading with a Purpose" pamphlets begin publication and are issued through 1931. \textsuperscript{a-3}

1934. The Adult Education Board issues an annual report emphasizing liaison with other agencies such as the American Association for Adult Education. John M. Chancellor hired by the American Library Association as an assistant in adult education.


1946. Adult Education Section established within the Public Library Division.

1948. "Great Issues" program adult discussion group launched at ALA.
1951. Fund for Adult Education of the Ford Foundation awards ALA $150,000 for the American Heritage Project directed by Grace T. Stevenson, secretary of the Adult Education Board.

1952. Additional Ford Foundation funding used for ALA to create an Office of Adult Education.


Library-Community Project at ALA, directed by Ruth Warncke, continues to 1960. Support from the Fund for Adult Education.


1957. Adult Services Division (ASD) established as a separate Division within the American Library Association with Eleanor Phinney as Executive Secretary.

1958. Charles H. Hewitt, *Grant Evaluation Study* (Fund for Adult Education, ALA, Office for Adult Education); (Chicago, ALA).


*Adult Services Division Newsletter* launched.


Robert Ellis Lee, *Continuing Education for Adults through the American Public Library 1833-1966* (Chicago: ALA).

1970 “Library Rights of Adults” A Call for Action” adopted and endorsed by ASD and the Reference Services Division (RSD).

1972. ASD and RSD merge with Andrew Hansen as executive secretary. *RQ, RSD* quarterly journal, absorbs *ASD Newsletter* and expands coverage of adult services.


Alternative Education Programs Section (AEPS) established in the Public Library Association "to promote public library programs and services relating to literacy, adult basic education, continuing education, independent and other learning modes; to stimulate continued professional growth in these special areas; to provide a broad forum for the exchange of current research, strategies, techniques, and activities; and to create an environment role of the library in learning services."


The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress (Public Law 95-129) established to stimulate public interest in books, reading, and libraries and to encourage the study of books and print culture. The Center for the Book works closely with other organizations to foster understanding of the vital role of books, reading, libraries and literacy in society.
1979. White House Conference on Library and Information Services includes life-long learning as a theme. Resolution on literacy calls for the expansion of literacy programs at the community level, identification of effective adult literacy programs, coordination of library programs with other adult education programs, cooperation among public educational agencies and joint planning.

1981. National Coalition for Literacy founded by ALA. Executive Director, Robert Wedgeworth and Peggy Barber work with the Ad Council, and with the American Association of Advertising Agencies, to launch the National Coalition for Literacy with Jean E. Coleman, Director of the Office for Library Outreach Services.

Lynn E. Birge, *Serving Adult Learners: A Public Library Tradition* (Chicago: ALA).

1983-1990. *Adult Services in the Eighties: Project of the RASD Services to Adults Committee.*

1986-1995. Library Literacy Program, Title VI, LSCA, over $65 million in grants for literacy programs made to public libraries.


1989. ALA Literacy Assembly convenes.

National Partners for Library and Literacy continues work of National Library Week partners working with ALA Public Information Office, coordinated by Peggy Barber.

Bell-Atlantic Family Literacy Project in with ALA Office for Library Outreach Services.

Debra Wilcox Johnson, *Libraries as Partners in Adult Literacy* (U.S.G.P.O.)
PLA Adult Lifelong Learning Section is new name for Alternative Education Programs Section of PLA. Adds the purpose "to advocate the use of library based self-directed study as well as more traditional learning modes."


*Adult Services: A Bibliography and Index*. Kathleen de la Peña McCook (Heim) and Harry D. Nuttall.


The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) is created by the National Literacy Act of 1991, when a bipartisan Congressional coalition acted on the literacy field's request for a federal office focused solely on literacy. Senator Paul Simon (Illinois) and Representative Tom Sawyer (Ohio) are co-sponsors.

Early nineties. Family Literacy programs grow in ALA with grants from Bell Atlantic, Viburnum Foundation, Cargill, Inc. Association for Library Service to Children receives Prudential Foundation grant for "Born to Read."

1995. ALA Office for Literacy and Outreach Services –OLOS- (formerly Office for Library Outreach Services) changes name to reflect expanded focus on literacy.

"Literacy in Libraries Across America" funded within ALA by the Lila-Wallace Reader's Digest Fund. Includes funds for a Literacy Officer in OLOS.
Literacy Volunteers of America honor ALA with a Leadership Award for “its profound influence over and enduring support of the literacy movement.”


1998. ALA adopts Literacy as one of five key action areas.

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) restructures programs previously authorized by the Adult Education Act.

1999. Public Policy Institute, directed by former Illinois Senator, Paul Simon, at Southern Illinois University develops national literacy agenda with focus on the role of libraries.

ALA funds full-time Literacy Officer in OLOS.

2000. ALA staff Peggy Barber and Dale Lipschultz participate in the National Literacy Summit sponsored by the National Institute for Literacy.

Leigh S. Estabrook and Edward Lakner, *Literacy Programs in Public Libraries*, Library Research Center, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois.
2001. ALA Standing Committee on Literacy is established. Peggy Barber is designated as first Chair.


The BuildLiteracy.org site is established to answer questions about adult literacy, libraries, and coalitions. Site features tips on coalition building, profiles of existing literacy coalitions, and a menu of literacy coalition activities.

The following works listed alphabetically by author provided information for the above chronology of national milestones documenting the relationship of libraries and adult education and adult literacy. All are recommend reading for essential background in the history of libraries, adult lifelong learning and adult literacy. Additional notes to specific items cited in the chronology follow the alphabetical list of basic resources and are keyed to the chronology.

**Basic Background**


Kathleen de la Peña McCook (as Kathleen M. Heim), *Adult Services in the Eighties: Final
Report Submitted to the RASD Adult Services Committee, March 1990. ERIC ED 316 264.

Kathleen de la Peña McCook (as Kathleen M. Heim), “An Overview of the Adult Services in the Eighties Project,” (pp.1-10) and “Adult Services: An Enduring Focus” (pp.11-26) in Adult Services ed. By Heim and Wallace (1990).


Carole Talan, Founding and Funding Family Literacy Programs (New York: Neal-Schuman, 1999).


Specific Sources


a-3 For additional background on the Adult Education Board meetings and minutes through its history see archives of the American Library Association under Reference and User Services Association. 30/0/0. Accessed October 17, 2001.

http://www.library.uiuc.edu/ahx/ala/alacard.asp?RG=30&SG=0&RS=0


The Library Literacy Program (LSCA Title VI) was funded from 1986-1995. For 1986 the report is titled, *Library Literacy Program: Abstracts of Funded Projects, 1986*. For 1987-1993 the report is called *Library Literacy Program: Analysis of Funded Projects*. These reports were issued as serials the year after the cover date by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. From 1989-1993 Barbara A. Humes and Carol Cameron Lyons are authors. For 1994 and 1995 reports were not published as separate titles but included in the *Bowker Annual* due to the reauthorization of LSCA as LSTA. For 1994 see *The Bowker Annual, 1995*, pp. 312-326; for 1995 see *The Bowker Annual, 1996*, pp. 317-331. (ack. Ellen Sweet, Government Documents Librarian, National Library of Education, tracked the chronology of these reports, June 29, 2001 after much help from government documents librarians at the University of Florida, Mary Gay Anderson and Paige Harper).


Barber, p. 157.


a-14 Estabrook and Lakner.

a-15 DeCandido.


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Chronology of Milestones for Libraries and Adult Lifelong Learning and Literacy

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