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# Two hundred years of young adult library services: A chronology

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### Recommended Citation

Anthony Bernier, M. K. Chelton, C. A. Jenkins, and J. B. Pierce. "Two hundred years of young adult library services: A chronology" *Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA)* (2005): 106-111.

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# TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF YOUNG ADULT LIBRARY SERVICES HISTORY

## A CHRONOLOGY

*I would also have in every library a friend of the young, whom they can consult freely when in want of assistance, and who, in addition to the power of gaining their confidence, has knowledge and tact enough to render them real aid in making selections.*

—SAMUEL S. GREEN.

(from *Sensational Fiction in Public Libraries*, *Library Journal* 4, no. 9 (1879): 345-355, 352.)

COMPILED BY ANTHONY BERNIER, MARY K. CHELTON,  
CHRISTINE A. JENKINS, AND JENNIFER BUREK PIERCE

### WHY WE COMPILED THIS CHRONOLOGY

**T**housands of librarians' efforts to comply with Green's wishes [as expressed above in 1879] and to provide young readers, particularly adolescents, with friendly support in libraries can be found in myriad sources, but few of these sources are widely known.—JBP.

Several years ago I wrote a literature review of youth services librarianship historiography for the journal *Libraries & Culture*, and noted that this history was wide-open for study. There has been some

progress since then, but basically the history of youth services librarianship as a field of study is still as wide-open as ever. As with many other activities involving women and children, youth services librarianship has been simultaneously revered and ignored, and the origins and history of library service to youth are only beginning to be seriously examined by library historians.

According to Jesse Hauk Shera's canonical history of early American libraries, *Foundations of the Public Library* (University of Chicago Press, 1949), the 1803 founding of the Bingham Library for Youth in Salisbury, Connecticut, was "the first instance in which a municipal governing body contributed active financial assistance to public library service" (160). Thus a library created specifically for young people was the first public library as the term is currently understood. Thirty-one years later in 1834, the Peterborough Town Library in New Hampshire was founded and became a far more well-known claimant to the "earliest public library" designation. Although the Peterborough library was for residents of all ages, it is interesting to note that more than half of its inaugural collection—approximately 200 books out of 370—was described as "the Juvenile Library." From the very earliest years, children and adolescents clearly have been a significant constituent group of library users.

The early scholars of women's history knew that women were a significant presence throughout the past—the task was not so much to ferret out an obscure history but to make the invisible visible. The same holds true for library scholars who strive to place young people—and the women (and some men) who worked with them—in the mainstream rather than the margins.

Historically children have been viewed as peripheral to history, and those who work with them have often been dismissed as inconsequential. But the library record tells a different story. Throughout the history of American public libraries, photos of young people using libraries have adorned annual reports from coast to coast. We know they were there. Now it is time to find them.—CAJ.

Interest in compiling this chronology grew out of frustration with several recently published books on YA services that, although otherwise commendable, seem either badly researched or ignorant of YA services history. It also emerged from the need to have a tool to use in teaching so that our students can get a better idea of where YA services came from, and to enhance the poor documentation for the few historical accounts that exist. We hope that such a chronology will inspire state-level counterparts that might be added to the national record. In terms of scope, the chronology attempts to consolidate the history of the two teen-serving divisions of the American Library Association (ALA): the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) and the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) with several other accounts of library history. This chronology is in no way comprehensive in terms of either all possible existing documented sources or in terms of parallel world, national, or local events affecting youth and their library services. Ideally it should be that comprehensive, and our hope is that future authors and scholars will fill in relevant gaps.—MKC.

Given what I feel is a culture ever hardening to its young people, the untold story of the struggle to legitimize our work with them remains a damaging omission in librarians' professional legacy. On the other hand, this first substantial step toward documenting that legacy offers us the opportunity to take back some of what is truly ours, as well as to advance what we contribute to our institutions and to our society. It will also help us to call forward tomorrow's leaders, strengthened by learning about the works of yesterday's leaders. We did not create the values that our professional world exhibits toward service to young adults. But we can choose how to thrive in this world if we recognize it for what it is—and we can't do that without knowing its history. I also hope we do not wait too long for writers and scholars in the future to pursue the many questions still only incubating in this time line.—AB.

*[Editor's Note: This chronology has been edited for length in this print edition. The complete chronology, with entries for every year from 1920 onward, appears on VOYA's Web site at <http://www.voya.com>. It is a work in progress. Submissions are welcome from anyone in the library profession who wishes to suggest additional items to round out this first attempt to integrate the history of young adult library services in one place. The chronology will be updated annually on the Web site. It will also be accessible through a link on the Young Adult Library Services Association's (YALSA) site at <http://www.ala.org/yalsa>. Compiler Anthony Bernier will manage additions and updates. If you wish to contribute, please word your submission briefly in the format of this chronology. Include a complete citation of your source as well as your own contact information with street address, phone, and e-mail. Send your submission by e-mail to [voya@voya.com](mailto:voya@voya.com), with "Chronology Submission" in the subject line.]*

# THE CHRONOLOGY

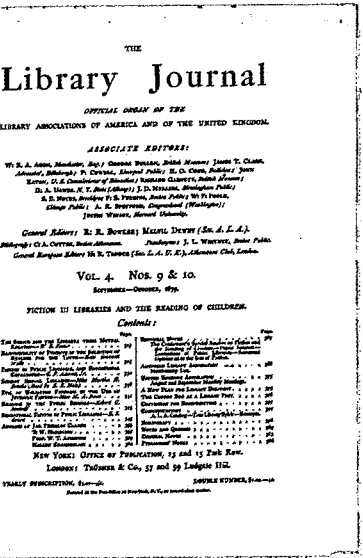
- 1803 Caleb Bingham donates 150 books for the use of children 9 to 16 years of age in Salisbury, Connecticut (Stone, 140).
- 1823 Brooklyn Youth Library opens in Brooklyn, New York (Stone, 143).
- 1835 New York is first state to pass legislation permitting voters in any school district to levy a tax for libraries (Department of the Interior, 39).
- 1852 First compulsory school attendance laws passed in Massachusetts—established by all states by 1918 (Alexander and Jordan, 10).

- 1905 G. Stanley Hall presents "What Children Read and What They Ought to Read" to the NEA (Pierce). Hall's *Adolescence* published by Appleton in New York (Pierce).
- 1912 High School Department established under jurisdiction of Smaller Branches and High School Libraries Department in Cleveland Public Library (Braverman, 177). Herbert Cowig reports study by a teacher in New Haven High School in Connecticut that results in 22 letters from young adults to the public library, requesting a separate service (Johnson, 2).
- 1914 "Blowing Out a Boy's Brains" by Franklin K. Mathiews, chief librarian of the Boy Scouts of America, is published—leading the call for good books for boys that culminates in the founding of Children's Book Week in 1918 (Mathiews). ALA School Libraries Section is approved (Pond, 736-37). Mary Ely presents "Our Present Problem" at ALA Annual Conference (Pierce).

1876 Samuel S. Green's address at American Library Association (ALA) conference, "Personal Relations Between Librarian and Readers," includes directions for assisting youth patrons (Cannons, 137).

1879 ALA Annual Conference in Boston emphasizes fiction and reading for the young (McDowell, Pierce).

1892 Landmark model legislation for development of school libraries passed in New York (Ramsey).



1896 ALA appoints Committee on Cooperation with the National Education Association (NEA), and NEA appoints NEA Library Department (Pond, 110-113). [These appointments occurred simultaneously—this initial push was from ALA president John Cotton Dana, with some assistance from Melvil Dewey (Jenkins)].

- 1915 School Libraries Section of ALA holds first meeting at ALA Annual Conference. Mary E. Hall elected as the section's first president (AASL History). Alice G. Whitbeck's *Reading of Older Boys and Girls* published in *ALA Bulletin* (Pierce).
- 1920 Mabel Williams is appointed Superintendent of Work with Schools at New York Public Library (Braverman, 114). School Department in New York Public Library is formed under Annie Spencer Cutter, administering classroom libraries in all levels and kinds of schools (Braverman, 177-78). *Standard Library Organization and Equipment for Secondary Schools of Different Sizes* issued as a Report of the Committee on Library Organization and Equipment of the National Education Association and of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (Ramsey).
- 1921 Kansas City Public Library in Missouri sets up separate service for young people (Johnson, 5).

1924 **The Horn Book** begins publication in Boston (Ramsey).

Albany Public Library sets up separate service for young people (Johnson, 5).

1929 First edition of **Books for Young People**, subsequently to become **Books for the Teenage**, is published in New York Public Library (Campbell, 17).

Public libraries in Brooklyn, New York; East Cleveland, Ohio; Newark, New Jersey; South Bend, Indiana; and Springfield, Illinois, set up separate service for young people (Johnson, 5).

Mary Ware Dennett arrested for distributing her book, **The Sex Side of Life: An Explanation for Young People**—decision overturned 1930 (Jenkins, 137).

1930 Formation of Young People's Reading Roundtable (YPRRT) as part of ALA's Children's Library Association—"young people" referring to those later called "young adults" (Jenkins).

First youth services textbook, Effie L. Power's **Library Work with Children**, includes a chapter on "library service to adolescents" (Jenkins, 84).

First school and reference assistant is appointed in a New York Public Library branch, Chatham Square (Braverman, 114).

**The Library in the School** by Lucile Fargo is published (Ramsey). Evanston Public Library in Illinois sets up separate service for young people (Johnson, 5).

1937 Margaret Edwards appointed full-time young people's librarian at Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore (Braverman, 240).

Publication of first YA professional book, **The Public Library and the Adolescent** by E. Leyland (Jenkins).

Public libraries in Lakewood, Ohio, and San Diego, California, set up separate service for young people (Johnson, 5).

1941 Dedication of Nathan Strauss Branch for Children and Young People in New York Public Library (Braverman, 114).

Office for Service to Youth is established under Jean C. Roos in Cleveland Public Library (Braverman, 178).

Division of Library Service to Children and Young People (DLCYP) formed within ALA, comprised of a School Libraries Section and a Public Libraries Section, which in turn is comprised of a Children's Library Association (CLA) and a Young People's Reading Round Table (YPRRT) (Jenkins, 128-129).

1942 **Top of the News** debuts in October as DLCYP's journal.

1943 Margaret Edwards takes horse-drawn book wagon service to youth in poor neighborhoods in Baltimore (Kelly, 68-9).

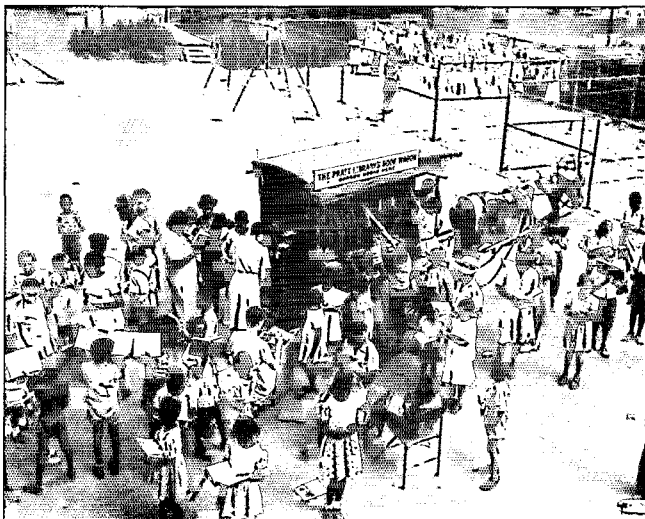


PHOTO CREDIT: SUSSMAN-DONCH, ENOCH PRATT FREE LIBRARY

◀ YOUNG PEOPLE CROWD AROUND MARGARET EDWARDS AND PRATT LIBRARY'S BOOK WAGON IN BALTIMORE BACKYARDS, CIRCA 1945.

MARGARET EDWARDS ▶ PERCHES ON THE PRATT LIBRARY BOOK WAGON TO HELP A MOTHER AND BABY IN BALTIMORE, CIRCA 1945.

1944 Office of Work with Young People at Pratt becomes separate department headed by Margaret Edwards (Braverman, 240).

Margaret Scoggin first uses term "young adult" in title of bibliographies published in **Library Journal** (Campbell, 21-22).

American Association of School Librarians (AASL) name used for the first time (AASL History).

1947 YPRRT granted separate section status within DLCYP at ALA's annual conference (Jenkins).

YPRRT and General Federation of Women's Clubs join publicity and fund-raising for project, "A Youth Library in Every Community" (Jenkins, 288-289).

Mabel Williams's department is named Office of Work with Schools and Young People in the New York Public Library (Braverman, 114).

**Youth, Communication, and Libraries** presented before the Library Institute at the University of Chicago (Bernier).

1948 **Public Library Plans for the Teenage** published (Hannigan, 855).

DLCYP/YPRRT sponsors preconference, "Youth and Libraries" (Jenkins, 288-289).

YPRRT program, "Youth and Their Interests," attracts 1,500 attendees (twice the number at Newbery-Caldecott Banquet) to hear *Tops with Teens* columnist Sheila John Daly and marketing consultant Eugene Gilbert (Jenkins, 308).

**Booklist** carries first annotated list of "Adult Books for Young Adults" (Jenkins, 313-318).

Margaret Scoggin's *Outlook Tower* column on books of interest to teens starts in **The Horn Book**, running until 1987 shortly before her death (Jenkins, 318).

1950 Fiftieth anniversary of organization of youth services librarians (Jenkins, 395).

Last meeting of DLCYP as united group of both school and public youth librarians (Jenkins, 395).

Margaret Edwards is appointed Coordinator of Work with Young People with an assistant coordinator and a head of the Central Y Collection in Baltimore (Braverman, 240).

**An Ample Field** by Amelia Munson published (Campbell, 20).

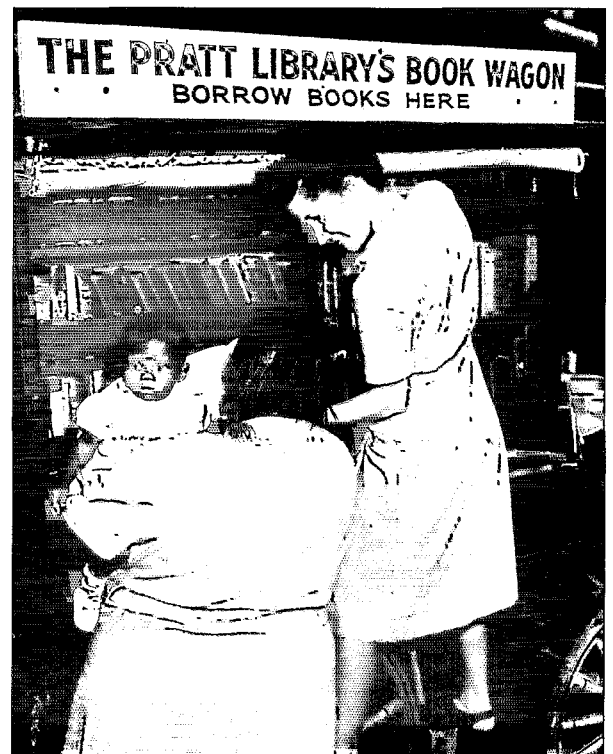


PHOTO CREDIT: MARGARET ALEXANDER EDWARDS TRUST

1951 AASL becomes separate ALA division (Jenkins, 662).

1957 Young Adult Services Division (YASD) established as a separate division within ALA, splitting from Children's Library Association (CLA); Mildred Batchelder is first Executive Secretary serving both divisions (Starr).

**Bookbait: Detailed Notes on Adult Books Popular with Young People**, edited by Elinor Walker, is published by ALA (Chelton).

Margaret Edwards wins Grolier Award—established 1954 to honor librarians for "unusual contribution to the stimulation and guidance of reading by children and young people" (ALA Web site).

1960 **Young Adult Services in the Public Library** published by ALA's Committee on Standards for Work with Young Adults (Jones et al.).

YASD sends delegates to White House Conference on Youth with their publication, "Youth in a Changing World" (Starr).

Thirteen African American high school students enter segregated main library in Danville, Virginia, refusing to leave (Graham, 71).

**Standards for School Library Programs** published by AASL in cooperation with the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (Ramsey).

1967 The first edition of **Books and the Teen-age Reader** by G. Robert Carlsen is published by Harper & Row (Chelton).

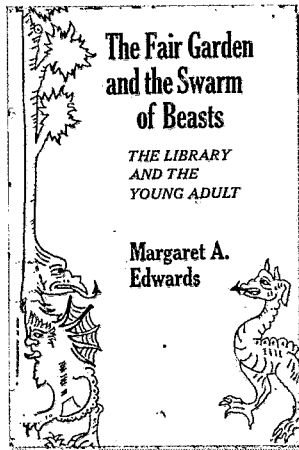
"Age" is added to the **Library Bill of Rights** (Krug).

YASD cosponsors "Intellectual Freedom and the Teenager" preconference with ALA's Intellectual Freedom Committee at ALA Annual Conference (Starr).

1969 **The Fair Garden and the Swarm of Beasts: The Library and the Young Adult** by Margaret A. Edwards published by Hawthorn Books (Jones et al).

**Library Trends** publishes theme issue, "Young Adult Service in the Public Library" (Jones et al).

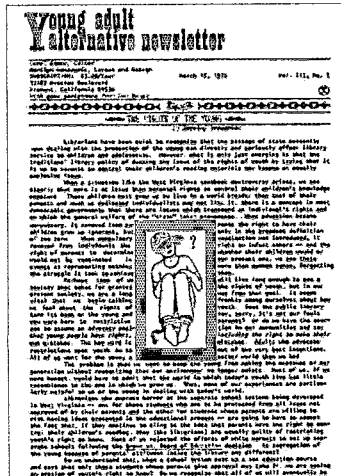
**The School Library: A Force for Educational Excellence** by Ruth Ann Davies published by Bowker (Ramsey).



1972 "Free Access to Minors, An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights" adopted June 30 (ALA Web site).

1973 **Young Adult Alternative Newsletter** begun by Carol Starr (Starr, Nov. 2).

1975 At YASD's "Book You" preconference at ALA Annual Conference, fifteen years of Best Books for Young Adults (BBYA) selections are analyzed to produce "Best of the Best: Still Alive in '75," the first of many such exercises (Starr).



1976 YASD establishes their own office and part-time staff as well as their own division's Intellectual Freedom Committee (Fine, YALSA Web site).

1977 YASD produces **Directions for Library Service to Young Adults** (Starr).

Evelyn Shaevel becomes YASD's first full-time Executive Secretary (Fine).

1978 **Voice of Youth Advocates (VOYA)** begins publication (Chelton).

**Emergency Librarian** newsletter, founded in 1973, changes focus to school librarianship (**Teacher Librarian** Web site).

*The Young Adult Perplex* column by Patty Campbell begins in **Wilson Library Bulletin** (Campbell, 32).

"Dispelling the Hi-Lo Blues" preconference, cosponsored with Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), presented by YASD at ALA Annual Conference (Fine).

1980 First edition of Kenneth L. Donelson's and Alleen Pace Nilsen's textbook, **Literature for Today's Young Adults**, published (Lenz & Mahood, vii).

**Young Adult Alternative Newsletter** ceases publication (Starr, Nov. 2).

**Young Adult Literature: Background and Criticism** published by ALA (Chelton).

Mabel Williams wins Grolier Award (ALA Web site).

YASD Executive Secretary Evelyn Shaevel's title is changed to Executive Director (Starr).

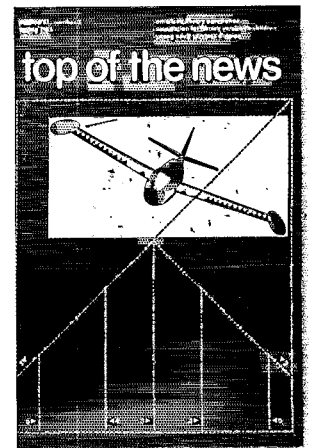
D. Philip Baker is AASL president and AASL holds its first national conference in Louisville, Kentucky, with the theme "'80s and Beyond" (AASL History).

1985 First Frances Henne/YASD/VOYA Research Grant awarded to fund research in the areas of young adult services and/or materials (Fine).

Mary K. Chelton wins Grolier Award (ALA Web site).

1987 **Top of the News** renamed **Journal of Youth Services in Libraries (JOYS)** (Fine).

YASD preconference, "Courtly Love in the Shopping Mall: Library Programming for Young Adults with a Humanities Focus," supports the 1985 NEH grant at ALA Annual Conference (Fine).



1988 First National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) national survey of YA services in public libraries published (Fine).

**Library Trends** publishes theme issue, "Library Services to Youth: Preparing for the Future" (Jones et al).

SLJ/YASD YA Author Achievement Award begins biannually, funded by **School Library Journal** (Fine).

**Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs** published by AASL and AECT (AASL History).

1989 Evelyn Shaevel leaves YASD as Executive Director; YASD and AASL then share Executive Director Ann Carlson Weeks, with Susan Horiuchi as YASD Deputy Director.

- "Access for Children and Young Adults to Nonprint Materials, An Interpretation of the **Library Bill of Rights**" adopted (ALA Web site).
- Patty Campbell wins Grolier Award (ALA Web site).
- Kids Need Libraries: School and Public Libraries Preparing the Youth of Today for the World of Tomorrow and Youth Participation in Libraries: A Training Manual** published by YASD (Fine).
- 1991 SLJ/YASD Author Achievement Award becomes annual Margaret A. Edwards Award (Fine).
- "Genrecon" is YASD preconference at ALA Annual Conference.
- Susan Horiuchi resigns and Linda Waddle is hired as Deputy Director of YASD (Fine).
- Dorothy M. Broderick wins Grolier Award (ALA Web site).
- 1992 YASD changes name to Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) (Gottschalk).
- First edition of **Connecting Young Adults and Libraries** by Patrick Jones published by Neal-Schuman (Jones et al).
- YALSA wins ALA-World Book Goal Award for seminars on "Serving the Underserved: Customer Services for Young Adults in Public Libraries" (Gottschalk).
- 1993 **Impact of School Library Media Centers on Academic Achievement** by Keith Curry Lance, Lynda Welborn, and Christien Hamilton Pennell published (Ramsey).
- Revised edition of **Directions for Library Service to Young Adults** published by YALSA (Gottschalk).
- Bare Bones: Young Adult Services Tips for Public Library Generalists** published by the Public Library Association (PLA) and YALSA (Chelton).
- Excellence in Library Services to Young Adults project to recognize outstanding YA library programs is begun by ALA President Hardy Franklin (Chelton).
- Mike Printz wins Grolier Award (ALA Web site).
- 1994 Los Angeles Public Library opens TeenS'cape, the first public library space incorporating teen-specific design features (Bernier).
- 1995 YALSA publishes **Youth Participation in Schools and Public Libraries: It Works** (Bernier).
- YALSA co-publishes **Output Measures and More: Planning and Evaluating Young Adult Services** by Virginia Walter with PLA and presents related "Implementing Output Measures for Library Service to Young Adults" preconference at ALA Annual Conference (Gottschalk).
- 1998 YALSA establishes Alex Awards for adult books for teens, and also Teen Read Week every October (Jones et al, 50).
- YALSA revises 1981 "Young Adults Deserve the Best: Competencies for Librarians Serving Young Adults" (YALSA Web site).
- Patty Campbell's **Two Pioneers of Young Adult Library Services**, profiling Mabel Williams and Margaret Edwards, published by Scarecrow Press in VOYA Occasional Papers series.
- Emergency Librarian** changes name to **Teacher Librarian** (Teacher Librarian Web site).
- 1999 DeWitt Wallace Reader's Digest Fund supports Public Libraries as Partners in Youth Development (Bernier).
- YALSA establishes Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature (YALSA Web site).
- 2001 Los Angeles Public Library reinstates YA Coordinator position and converts most part-time YA librarians to full-time (Bernier).
- YALSA's quarterly electronic newsletter **YAttitudes** begins with Fall 2001 issue.
- 2002 First Lady Laura Bush hosts White House Conference on school libraries (Ramsey).
- YALSA's and ALSC's **Journal of Youth Services** ceases publication with Summer issue and YALSA's own **Young Adult Library Services (YALS)** begins publication (Murphy).
- YALSA's "Getting Graphic @ Your Library" preconference about graphic novels draws a crowd at ALA Annual Conference (VOYA April 2002).
- Linda Waddle retires as YALSA Deputy Director and Cindy Welch takes her place (YALSA Web site).
- 2003 YALSA's first annual list of Teens' Top Ten Books is chosen by teens online during Teen Read Week (VOYA December 2003).

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*Anthony Bernier is Director of Teen Services at Oakland Public Library in California. He served for ten years as Young Adult Specialist Librarian for the Los Angeles Public Library and received a Ph. D. in History from the University of California in 2002. In Fall 2005, he begins the journey toward tenure as Assistant Professor of Youth Services at San Jose State University's School of Library and Information Science.*

*Mary K. Chelton, a co-founder of VOYA, is a professor in the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, Queens College, City University of New York. Her 1997 dissertation on YA services is **Adult-Adolescent Service Encounters: The Library Context.** She is the editor of three editions of **Excellence in Library Services for Young Adults** for the Young Adult Library Services Association of ALA. Among her many articles is **The Problem Patron that Public Libraries Created: The Normal Adolescent.** *The Reference Librarian*, nos. 75/76, June, 2002, 23-33.*

*Christine A. Jenkins, an associate professor in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, received her Ph. D. at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, with her dissertation, **Strength of the Inconspicuous: Youth Services Librarians, the American Library Association, and Intellectual Freedom for the Young, 1939-1955.** Her research focuses on the history of school and public library service to children and young adults; youth services librarians as canon-shapers and intellectual freedom advocates; U.S. librarians and Cold War censorship; and gay/lesbian content in young adult literature.*

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*The Editor wishes to thank Joseph Eagan, Teresa Edmonds, and Richard Olozia of Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore; and Julian Lapidus of the Margaret Alexander Edwards Trust; for entrusting VOYA with irreplaceable historical documents as illustrations for this article. Carol Starr's generosity in donating original copies of her **Young Adult Alternative Newsletter** (beloved by this editor as a fledgling YA librarian) is also greatly appreciated.*



Y E A R S

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TITLE: Two Hundred Years of Young Adult Library Services  
History: The Chronology

SOURCE: Voice Youth Advocates 28 no2 Je 2005

WN: 0515200176006

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