

ALA
World Encyclopedia
of Library and
Information
Services

ALA World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Chicago 1980

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Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Main entry under title

ALA world encyclopedia of library and information
services

Editor R. Wedgeworth

Includes index

I. Library science—Dictionaries. 2. Information
science—Dictionaries. I. Wedgeworth, Robert.
II. American Library Association. III. Title. World
encyclopedia of library and information services.
Z1006 A18 (020).3 80-10912
ISBN 0-8389-0305-3

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Printed in the United States of America
Second printing, March 1981

Editor's Preface

The idea of an *ALA World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services* stems directly from the responsibility of a professional field to inform and educate its students, its practitioners, and the public about the interests and activities of the field. Efforts to fulfill this responsibility in the latter half of the 20th century have been severely hampered by the extraordinary growth and development of all fields of knowledge. Since understanding the significance of rapid, and sometimes dramatic, change requires periodic review and synthesis, the emergence of the idea upon which this work is based was inevitable.

The need for current information about the field of library and information services was addressed earlier by Donald E. Stewart, Managing Editor, and by the Editor when we created *The ALA Yearbook*, first published in 1976. This annual review of information about library events, activities, and personalities reached its fourth volume in 1979. When the initial discussions of an *ALA Encyclopedia* began in 1976, there was a clear realization that the *Yearbook* alone could not provide a proper historical context for many of the topics it covers. Background information essential for the comprehension of current issues and problems could not be provided in the *Yearbook* and usually did not appear in the literature that it summarized.

From its inception the editors of the *Yearbook* sought an international perspective, but defining the breadth and scope of such coverage demands knowledge of the history as well as the present status and condition of libraries, archives, and other information services in many countries. For these basic reasons, an *ALA Encyclopedia* was conceived to provide an ordered synthesis of library and information services as they have developed throughout the world but with emphasis on North America. An editorial plan for the *Encyclopedia* was proposed to the ALA Publishing Committee and to a selected group of advisers for review in late 1977. Their comments resulted in a revised plan that guided the development of this work.

Several previously published works were helpful in planning this volume. Fritz Milkau's *Handbuch der Bibliothekswissenschaft* is one of the most comprehensive and scholarly encyclopedias of libraries ever published. Although much of its information about the history of libraries in ancient times is without equal, its topical arrangement and the lack of an English language translation render it less than accessible to many readers.

The *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science*, edited by Kent, Lancour, and Daily, now in its 27th volume, is the most comprehensive current encyclopedia in the field. It is a work of very broad scope, covering technical, historical, and philosophical topics. Nevertheless, it has been affected by the dramatic growth and development of the field since its inception, resulting in some lack of comparability between information in earlier and later volumes. The *Dictionary of American Library Biography*, which consists of scholarly biographies of significant figures in the U.S. library world who are no longer living, set a high standard for the selection and presentation of biographical data quite useful in developing biographies for the *ALA Encyclopedia*.

An important distinction of the *ALA Encyclopedia* as it takes its place among earlier works is that, although initially conceived as a basic companion to the *ALA Yearbook*, the *ALA Encyclopedia* is an entirely new work. It is comparable in style but much broader in scope than the *Yearbook*. In one convenient volume, the *ALA Encyclopedia* seeks to explain fundamental ideas, record historical events and activities, and portray those personalities, living and dead, who have shaped the field.

The editorial plan for the *ALA Encyclopedia* consists of six basic categories of articles:

- (1) There are structured articles about the status and condition of libraries with accompanying statistics provided by the contributor for 162 countries in the world. In addition other articles cover the history and role of libraries from ancient times to the present.
- (2) Nine articles cover the major types of institutions that deliver library and information services. These articles were directed by a principal contributor, in most cases with a team of contributors who wrote comprehensive articles exploring the purpose, characteristic services, clientele, and patterns of governance, finance, and administration of the institutions. They represent an editorial approach to comparative librarianship, in an attempt to discern commonalities and differences in these institutions and their practices as they exist in many countries.
- (3) Twenty-five articles explore the principles and practices of librarianship and information management, explaining and analyzing the fundamental processes and basic types of services to the many different client groups.

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- (4) Ten articles cover the field of education and research from early apprenticeship to formal library education.
- (5) Twenty-eight articles describe the activities of significant international organizations, agencies, and associations not covered under individual countries.
- (6) One hundred seventy-two biographical subjects from different places of the world and from different times were selected for inclusion from nominations made by the international advisory group. Among the editors' criteria for inclusion are: foundation of an important library, or a primary role in a major library's growth, development, and influence; author of seminal writings of great impact and lasting influence; leadership in the profession, including activity in professional associations; significant activity as a library educator; contribution to the theory of librarianship in any of the field's components; exemplary role as a practitioner, within any part of the profession; publisher of related books and periodicals; and leadership in important national and international bibliographic enterprises.

The articles, which are alphabetically arranged, vary in length from several hundred to more than a thousand words, providing enough space to treat significant aspects of each topic. One hundred forty-four statistical tables and 300 illustrations enliven and enrich the text.

Two editorial features merit special mention. Before determining the list of articles that would comprise this work, a complete outline of the fields of knowledge was constructed to guide the editors and advisers in initial planning. This approach made it possible to determine the breadth and scope of coverage for each historical topic and technical issue and ensured even geographic representation. It also provided a map that set the scope and limits of each article and that proved useful when provided to contributors. The editors believe the result is a work that achieves a maximum of coherence with a minimum of duplication. The *Outline* is presented in the following pages not only as a table of contents but also as a contribution toward a better understanding of the organization of knowledge in library and information services. The editors are aware that this is only one possible ordering of the topics covered, but it may have special significance for the reader seeking a systematic overview or the student pursuing a course of study.

The articles are complemented by an innovative *Parallel Index* that runs in the margins parallel to the

articles in the text. It expands access to the full resources of the 700,000-word volume, while supplementing the articles with additional information. Published in conventional format as the last element of the *ALA Encyclopedia*, it would occupy about 32 pages; it conserves paper and printing, therefore, while bringing together all related index citations and text articles.

The appearance of these references alongside the text may also stimulate interest in articles not initially sought by the reader but likely to provide relevant additional information on the topic of immediate interest. The *Parallel Index* arrangement, as far as the editors are aware, is the first of its kind in comparable reference works. Readers' comments are welcome.

No work of this kind could be accomplished without the collaboration of many colleagues around the world. Thirty-three editorial advisers participated, and 363 authors from about 145 countries contributed articles. The editors acknowledge with appreciation the difficulties many contributors had to overcome in order to meet the relatively tight publishing schedule. In several cases manuscripts were hand delivered for all or a part of the journey in order to obviate the problems of international mail. To obtain information which was otherwise unavailable, one contributor even ventured into an area where local hostilities were in progress. Selected for their knowledge, experience, and professional or scholarly achievements, they lend impressive authority to the *ALA Encyclopedia*.

This work represents a milestone in the collaborative work of the Editor and Managing Editor, who received invaluable assistance from Associate Editor, Joel M. Lee; Assistant Editor, Marilyn Litvin; Indexer, Carol Kelm; and many others.

If, as the editors believe, the *ALA World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services* offers timely, accurate, comprehensive, and authoritative information in its field, that is more than adequate reason to commend it to librarians, students, public officials, and other readers interested in library and information services. If it, further, proves to be a successful instrument of education, the dedicated efforts of advisers, contributing editors, staff, and contributors will be appropriately rewarded.

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Outline of Contents

This *Outline* is organized under five principal divisions.

Part One, on Libraries in Society, covers the history and role of libraries from ancient times to the present. In addition to nine major articles on historical periods, 162 articles cover libraries and librarianship in the countries of the world. All *Part One* articles are organized according to the following outline: national libraries, academic libraries, public libraries, school libraries and media centers, special and other libraries, and library associations. The articles appear in alphabetical order in the text. Most articles include comprehensive statistical tables prepared by authorities expressly for this work. Biographies appear in the *Outline* under major headings according to period and place.

Part Two, on The Library as an Institution, comprises nine major articles on the principal types of libraries and archives; most have been coordinated by a Principal Con-

tributor. Articles emphasize North America but examples and generalizations are also drawn from various systems in other sections of the world.

Part Three, on Theory and Practice of Librarianship, deals with the heart of librarianship. Twenty-five articles bring together under broad titles the principles and practices of librarianship and information management.

Part Four, on Education and Research, in ten major articles covers librarianship, information science, and archival administration. The articles treat the fundamentals of curriculum content and issues in research and education.

Part Five, on International Library, Information, and Bibliographical Organizations, comprises 28 articles that describe the growth and development of international information systems and enumerate the key organizations on the international level.

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