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Autore	Wiegand Wayne A. <1946->
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Nota di contenuto	Machine generated contents note: -- Introduction -- 1. 'Improv'd the General Conversation of Americans': Social Libraries Before 1854 -- 2. For 'Plain People': The American Public Library, 1854-1876 -- 3. 'The Best Reading for the Greatest Number at the least Cost': 1876-1893 -- 4. 'The Liberty to Read What They Will and When': 1893-1917 -- 5. 'Habitations on a Literary Map': 1917-1929 -- 6. 'One Island of Refuge': 1929-1945 -- 7. 'Winning the Battles of Daily Life': 1945-1964 -- 8. 'An Individual Meaning to Each User': 1964-1980 -- 9. 'Library Paste is a Precious Part of Social Glue': 1980-2000 -- Epilogue. 2000-Present.
Sommario/riassunto	"Despite dire predictions in the late twentieth century that public

libraries would not survive the turn of the millennium, their numbers have only increased. Two of three Americans frequent a public library at least once a year, and nearly that many are registered borrowers. Although library authorities have argued that the public library functions primarily as a civic institution necessary for maintaining democracy, generations of library patrons tell a different story. In *Part of Our Lives*, Wayne A. Wiegand delves into the heart of why Americans love their libraries. The book traces the history of the public library, featuring records and testimonies from as early as 1850. Rather than analyzing the words of library founders and managers, Wiegand listens to the voices of everyday patrons who cherished libraries. Drawing on newspaper articles, memoirs, and biographies, *Part of Our Lives* paints a clear and engaging picture of Americans who value libraries not only as civic institutions, but also as social spaces for promoting and maintaining community. Whether as a public space, a place for accessing information, or a home for reading material that helps patrons make sense of the world around them, the public library has a rich history of meaning for millions of Americans. From colonial times through the recent technological revolution, libraries have continuously adapted to better serve the needs of their communities. Wiegand goes on to demonstrate that, although cultural authorities (including some librarians) have often disparaged reading books considered not "serious" the commonplace reading materials users obtained from public libraries have had a transformative effect for many, including people like Ronald Reagan, Sonia Sotomayor, and Oprah Winfrey. A bold challenge to conventional thinking about the American public library, *Part of Our Lives* is an insightful look into one of America's most beloved cultural institutions"--
