

“school service that will accredit each unit”; “service to groups and organizations, to business firms and governmental agencies”; and “to become a factor in the economic life of the parish.”

MEASURING USE

Library aims are usually stated in broad general terms which may be interpreted, qualified, or defined to suit a local situation. It is therefore desirable for every library to expand its general aims into a series of statements giving the objectives of each type of service, or of each department of the library. These statements should be definite and specific, and should preferably be capable of some degree of measurement.

The statement adopted by the Council of the American Library Association² in October, 1933, says:

Many of the most important library services cannot be measured statistically. Examples of such services are the provision of reference and study facilities, encouragement of purposeful reading by adults, special services relating to the dominant local industries, organized co-operation with the public schools, study and discussion groups, and exhibitions.

Some phase of most of the foregoing types of services can be measured statistically. Data on the number of persons using the reference collection, the number and types of questions answered, and so on, are frequently compiled. Exhibitions can be measured in such terms as the number and type of special exhibits, the number of pieces displayed, and the number of visitors.

In fact, quantitative measurements can be found for practically all library services, provided the services are first accurately defined and limited. Book-lending services are measurable because an accurate definition is generally agreed upon—a unit of circulation. It should be pointed out, however, that circulation is not, by definition, an accurate description of the amount of material read. In the first place, methods of counting circulation differ. Circulation of supplementary texts by classroom teachers is counted as withdrawals in some systems, while others make no count of these figures. Some libraries include circulation of magazines, while others do not report this figure. Variations in regard to the number of books which may

² *Ibid.*, p. 514.

be withdrawn by a borrower at one time have already been pointed out in a previous chapter.

In the second place, a book does not represent a constant amount of reading material. A picture book adds the same weight to the total that *Anthony Adverse* does. Furthermore, withdrawal gives no indication of whether the book has been read by one or more people, or not at all.

In the third place, circulation figures give no indication in regard to the purposes for which books are used. *Fun in Bed* and a *Short History of the English People* give equal weight to the circulation figures. “The best reading”³ implies qualitative distinctions, but the work the library is doing as revealed in its book stock and circulation figures makes no distinction of quality.

Two fundamental problems are involved in the measurement of the use of library facilities. The first is that the units of measurement should be related to the functions of the library. The compilation of statistical data is not an end in itself, but a means of interpreting the work of the library. The interpretative instruments should therefore be devised in the light of the purposes which the library is attempting to serve. This implies that the general aims of the library should be further expressed in terms of specific activities and that, where possible, statistics should be compiled which will indicate the extent to which the library is achieving its specific objectives.

Another type of measurement is that which the librarian uses for guiding administrative action and the formulation of policy. The nature of the statistics to be compiled and the period of time which they will cover will therefore depend on the factors involved in the problem under consideration.

The second fundamental problem is not so much in the statistical measurement of the use of various types of library service as in interpreting the *effects of use*.⁴ Efforts have been made to study the

³ “The best reading for the largest number” is a part of the motto of the American Library Association.

⁴ Lord Bacon in his *Essay on Studies* remarked that, “Much reading maketh a full man,” but the nature of the influence which a person’s reading exerts has as yet not been determined scientifically and probably cannot be without great difficulty.

effects of some types of media for the communication of ideas,⁵ but the library profession has shown little interest in this type of study. It is a difficult sphere for research and will require the development of new techniques and possibly the combined research facilities of a number of the related fields of the social sciences.

TYPES OF SERVICE RENDERED

The three adjectives most descriptive of the scope of library service—"educational," "recreational," and "cultural"—may be interpreted to include a wide range of activities. The services rendered by public libraries vary from loans which are made from the most meager book collections to the rich and highly varied programs which include provision of formal adult education activities, musical and dramatic organizations, exhibits, art galleries, and the circulation of pictures, slides, music scores, and phonograph records.

Reasonably adequate library service has been defined as including "a main library with reading-room facilities; special provision for children; lending, reference, and periodical collections adequate to the needs of the community; a professional staff of high quality and adequate number; and such branches and other distributing agencies as the area and topography of the city may require."⁶ The variables in the definition must be interpreted by each service area in terms of its own objectives and available resources.

In each of the demonstration libraries the main library for reading, reference, and circulation is limited almost exclusively to the use of whites. Each county has a main Negro branch, however. The system of branches for both races has been described in a previous chapter. Specialized types of service offered by one or more libraries include circulation of music scores, pictures, and books for the blind; lectures; and collection and exhibition of museum pieces.

The Charleston Free Library has been able to render a special type of service because of its close connection with the Charleston Museum. In the first four years of its operation the library occupied quarters in the Museum building. The extension service of the Museum

⁵ Cf. Committee on Educational Research of the Payne Fund, W. W. Charters (chairman), "Motion Pictures and Youth" (New York: Macmillan, 1933-35).

⁶ *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, XXVII, No. 11 (November, 1933), 513.

includes special exhibits which are sent to the schools, and story hours given in the children's department of the Museum. The children's department of the Library co-operates closely with this work. One of the effective types of co-operation is the arrangement of joint exhibits. The children's story hours are made more effective by the use of costumes and exhibits from the Museum.

The Chattanooga Public Library sponsors a series of lectures by distinguished people on a variety of subjects. Admission is open to the general public, and a limited number of invitations is sent out. Bibliographies, frequently with annotations prepared by the speaker, are usually made up and mimeographed for distribution. While the bibliographies are usually selective, they include, in addition to titles held by the local library, other important titles on the subjects being discussed. This library system has also established a government-documents department, located in one of the county buildings. This service operates in close affiliation with the government-documents department of the University of Tennessee.

Pay collections, consisting largely of fiction, are used in several of the libraries in an effort to keep the stock of current fiction up to date in the face of limited funds for the purchase of books. The general practice is to transfer a book from the duplicate pay collection to the unrestricted shelves after the book has earned its purchase price.

BOOK STOCK

A complete evaluation of the books held by each of the demonstration libraries with respect to such factors as literary quality, suitability for various levels of reading ability, types of interest, and so on, is too large a problem for the scope of this report. A later section in this chapter will be devoted to an analysis of a special record of circulation, and chapter v will present material descriptive of types of fiction read. Statistical material presented in this section will be limited to that bearing on the size of the book stock, its distribution between adult and juvenile levels, and the rate of turnover of the stock for a single year. Consideration will frequently be given to the groups, white and Negro, urban and rural, since these are the groups to which the libraries propose to give equal service. Figures are omitted from the tables only when the data are not available.

The six counties served primarily through municipal libraries all rank above the five county libraries in the total number of books owned. Cossitt Library, in Shelby County, with more than 230,000 volumes, stands at the head of the list, while the Davidson County Library, with less than 15,000 books, has the smallest number. Two of the important factors which influence the size of the book stock are the age of the library and the number of the population to be

TABLE IX
NUMBER OF VOLUMES AT THE CLOSE OF THE FISCAL YEAR 1934,
AND NUMBER OF VOLUMES PER CAPITA

COUNTY	TOTAL NUMBER OF VOLUMES			NUMBER OF VOLUMES PER CAPITA		
	Total	White	Negro	Total	White	Negro
Walker.....	19,082*	17,078	2,004	0.32	0.33	0.27
Webster.....	21,924	15,702†	3,869†	0.74	0.96†	0.30†
Coahoma.....	57,735*	48,098	9,637	1.24	4.59	0.27
Davidson.....	13,697	.....	.....	0.29	.....	.....
Mecklenburg†.....	106,246	95,706	10,540	0.83	1.06	0.28
Charleston.....	34,375	26,088	8,287	0.34	0.56	0.15
Richland.....	47,108	44,480	2,628	0.54	0.90	0.07
Hamilton.....	148,701	138,471	10,230	0.93	1.12	0.28
Knox.....	135,874†	125,411	10,463	0.85	0.92	0.55
Shelby.....	232,360	.....	.....	0.76	.....	.....
Jefferson.....	108,651	103,446	5,205	0.81	1.03	0.16

* Supplementary texts are not included.

† Data are for 1933.

‡ Includes board of education and independent school libraries (32,174 volumes).

served. In general, the libraries in the larger cities are older and have therefore accumulated their book stocks over a longer period of years. The four youngest libraries have the smallest total collections.

The older and larger libraries tend to have not only a larger total number of volumes but also more books per capita. No one of the six counties having the largest number of books ranks below sixth from the highest in the number of books per capita. Coahoma County is the only one of the eleven having more than one book per person, although this figure is approximated by Hamilton County. In addition to Coahoma, three other counties have populations of less

than 75,000 people; each has small collections and relatively low per capita holdings.

Although the distribution of the book stock is not available in all counties by white and Negro, the data as presented in Table IX show interesting variations among the counties. Four of the nine counties have collections of approximately 10,000 volumes for Negroes. Knox is the only county which holds as many as one book for each three Negroes. While no county has a satisfactory collection for serving Negroes, significant progress has been made along this line.

Reference was made in chapter i to the wide disparity between the educational and other provisions for whites and Negroes in the South. Library service, unlike public education, is not compulsory, so that most Negroes in the South do not have general access to public library facilities. The provision of books for Negroes in the demonstration counties, while far from satisfactory, represents a distinct improvement over conditions prior to the period of co-operation with the Fund. The public library in the South has the inescapable responsibility for increasing library facilities for Negroes by the provision of generous quantities of materials suited to reading abilities and interests. The results being achieved by the counties in the demonstration group should go far toward demonstrating to other southern counties the desirability of extending library service to the literate Negro population. Shelby County, with more than 125,000 Negroes, has a particularly difficult problem. In Coahoma County, where Negroes outnumber whites by almost four to one, significant progress has been made in serving the urban group.

The second and third columns of Table X show the percentage division of the total book stock among whites and Negroes. This table should be interpreted with the aid of the total number of volumes shown in the previous table. For example, of Walker County's total of 19,082 volumes, 89 per cent are for serving whites and 11 per cent are for Negroes. The three counties which have more than 10,000 volumes for Negroes are among the four which devote less than 10 per cent of all their total book stock to Negro service.

Table X also shows the distribution of the book stock between juvenile and adult (fiction and non-fiction) for both whites and Ne-

groes. For most of the counties reporting, approximately one-third of the book collections for whites is composed of juvenile titles, although Walker County reports slightly more than one-half in this class. In the adult collections the distribution among fiction and non-fiction shows considerable range. The percentage of the collection for whites which is devoted to adult non-fiction is more than

TABLE X
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE BOOK STOCK FOR
SERVING WHITES AND NEGROES*

COUNTY	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BOOKS		PERCENTAGE OF WHITE BOOK STOCK			PERCENTAGE OF NEGRO BOOK STOCK		
	White	Negro	Adult		Juvenile	Adult		Juvenile
			Fiction	Non-fiction		Fiction	Non-fiction	
Walker.....	89	11	26	23	51	25	16	59
Webster†.....	80	20	29	37	34	7	35	58
Coahoma.....	83	17	35	26	39	9	18	73
Mecklenburg†...	90	10	33	20	47	9	5	86
Charleston.....	76	24	30	43	27	19	16	65
Richland.....	94	6	34	31	35	32	21	47
Hamilton.....	93	7			32			54
Knox†.....	91	9	29	42	29	26	29	45
Jefferson.....	95	5	22	42	36	13	8	79

* Davidson and Shelby counties are omitted because of insufficient data.

† Data for 1933.

‡ Board of education and independent school libraries are not included.

twice as high in Charleston, Knox, and Jefferson counties than in Mecklenburg County.

In each of the counties reporting, the percentage of book stock which is juvenile is considerably higher for Negroes than for whites. The book stock for Negroes ranges from 45 per cent juvenile in Knox County to 86 per cent in Mecklenburg County. The distribution among adult and juvenile is influenced by local conditions, such as proportion of urban and rural residents (illiteracy is highest among rural residents), the diversity of business and social interests, the relation of the library program to the schools, and so on. The Negro

book collection in Webster Parish illustrates an effort to adapt book selection to a definite program and what are felt to be local needs. The proportion of adult fiction is unusually small (7 per cent), and the percentage of adult non-fiction is the largest of the Negro collections reported in any of the counties. Much of the non-fiction has been selected in such fields as practical arts, health, agriculture, and home-making.

TABLE XI
AVERAGE CIRCULATION PER VOLUME, 1934†

COUNTY	WHITE AND NEGRO	WHITE			NEGRO		
		Adult and Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult and Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile
Walker.....	6.3	6.0	6.8	5.1	9.3	7.3	10.6
Webster*.....	9.9	10.3	8.5	13.9	8.3	5.4	10.4
Coahoma.....	3.2	3.2	4.1		2.7		
Davidson.....	12.6						
Mecklenburg*...	4.7	5.2	6.8	3.3	1.0	2.2	0.8
Charleston.....	8.0	9.1	8.8	9.6	4.6	4.1	4.9
Richland.....	9.5	9.7			5.7		
Hamilton.....	6.2	6.1	4.0	10.7	7.8	4.9	10.3
Knox.....	5.8	6.0			3.9		
Shelby.....	8.1						
Jefferson.....	9.9	9.8	8.7	11.9	11.1	6.0	12.5

* Data are for 1933.

† Circulation of magazines is not included.

The rate of turnover of the book stock for a single year is shown in Table XI. This figure, which represents the average number of times all books circulated during the year, is not strictly accurate, since the book stock is not a constant size during the year. The data used are the book stock at the end of the year and the circulation for the entire year. In general, the young libraries with small book collections are able to maintain a high average circulation per book. The five county libraries rank from seventh to eleventh in per capita book stock, but only one ranks below sixth in book turnover. Davidson County Library, with the smallest book stock, averaged 12.6 withdrawals per volume.

In the collections for whites, the average circulation per volume tends to be highest for fiction, next for juvenile books, and lowest for adult non-fiction. Although not shown in the table, the turnover of adult fiction ranges from about one and one-half to nine times as high as that for non-fiction. Juvenile books circulate more frequently than adult titles for both whites and Negroes. In three counties the average circulation per book is larger in the Negro than in the white collections.

TABLE XII
PERCENTAGE OF LIBRARY REGISTRATION TO TOTAL POPULATION*

COUNTY	TOTAL FOR COUNTY						WHITE		NEGRO		
	Total	White	Negro	Urban	Rural	Juvenile†	Adult‡	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Walker.....	9.14	8.08	10.19	69.38	.....	14.89	8.84	74.60	.....	49.29	.....
Webster.....	43.48	58.64	24.54	67.28	37.88	78.24	38.09	85.29	51.16	35.50	22.52
Coahoma.....	18.84	63.96	5.67	59.90	7.48	.....	.....	83.66	45.83	36.18	0.69
Davidson.....	34.89	35.69	28.35	68.69	11.16	.....	.....	73.03	12.03	46.30	.....
Mecklenburg.....	29.46	38.02	9.20	40.91	8.55	47.91	28.17	52.72	11.94	13.91	.....
Charleston.....	13.09	21.55	5.94	16.02	8.37	28.38	10.09	22.15	19.86	8.55	3.21
Richland.....	21.09	32.59	6.14	30.47	5.66	24.84	22.76	41.47	12.42	11.65	.....
Hamilton.....	32.77	38.55	13.05	29.59	42.38	83.95	22.56	36.53	43.29	11.54	30.64
Knox.....	28.51	30.66	13.21	28.07	29.44	64.09	22.40	30.61	30.73	14.84	.....
Shelby.....	21.02	33.62	3.30	23.38	9.84	26.08	22.19	35.93	17.62	3.04	4.13
Jefferson.....	41.37	52.07	7.04	43.99	29.91	80.16	36.77	56.84	36.19	7.92	1.37

* Based on the U.S. Census figures for 1930.

† Computed by dividing the juvenile registration by the total population from five through fourteen years of age.

‡ Computed by dividing the adult registration by the total population fifteen years of age and above.

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION REGISTERED

It was pointed out in chapter iii that variations among the counties with respect to requirements for registration are numerous. Interpretation of the data shown in Table XII should therefore be made with caution, particularly in comparisons between counties. Two facts stand out prominently, however: the percentage of the population having library registration is generally very much higher for whites than for Negroes, and for residents of urban districts than for rural residents. In Walker County the percentage of the population registered is slightly higher for Negroes than for whites, while in Hamilton and Knox counties the proportion of registrants is larger for rural than for urban residents. With these exceptions the two generalizations hold for all groups in each of the eleven counties.

Two figures not usually computed are shown in Table XII: the percentages of juveniles and adults registered. The first figure is the juvenile registration divided by the total population from five to fourteen years of age, inclusive, while the second figure is based on the adult registration divided by the population fifteen years of age and over. While these definitions are not strictly accurate, they do furnish some indication of the degree to which library membership is held by the two age groups. In spite of the fact that students usually are not required to register to use the school libraries and branches, the juvenile classification is the only one which shows more than 75 per cent of the population registered in as many as three counties.

Six of the eleven libraries register more than one-half of their white urban population. The effect of the high Negro population in rural Coahoma County is especially noticeable in the comparison of the percentage registration for urban and rural areas.

In several counties the membership roster of clubs was checked against the registration file of the library. The membership rolls of men's luncheon clubs, such as Kiwanis and Rotary, were most frequently used. In addition to checking personal membership in the library, registration on the part of either husband or wife was indicated. The membership of six luncheon clubs showed an average registration of 72 per cent. For the individual clubs the percentage ranges from 87 to 56 per cent. The roster of the Women's Study Club in Jasper, Alabama, showed 100 per cent membership in the library. A sampling of the membership of two chambers of commerce showed a membership in the library of 38 per cent.

The sample checking of lists of members of representative clubs was not carried far enough in each of the counties to make the figures comparable among the group. However, it suggests a procedure which, applied on a larger scale, might give valuable information for the study of the degree of penetration of the library among the various organized groups in a community.

CIRCULATION

Gross and per capita circulation figures are usually the chief evidence that is presented to show the use that is being made of li-

braries. These figures, however, are very rough measures; and they may obscure much more than they reveal. In seeking to improve service, the alert librarian should attempt to answer many questions, with circulation data: What groups are heavy readers, and which groups make little or no use of the library? What types of reading are of especial interest to various groups? On what subjects are the heaviest demands for books made?

TABLE XIII
TOTAL LIBRARY CIRCULATION, BY YEARS

County	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934
Walker.....		44,214	193,977	177,397*	120,525*
Webster.....	83,778	176,122	203,868	208,465	205,882
Coahoma.....	151,336	180,054	191,535	190,167	182,786
Davidson.....	180,308	231,455	181,482	181,048	172,106
Mecklenburg.....	730,207	982,546	524,127†	504,412	442,617
Charleston.....		84,127	232,164	279,881	286,475
Richland.....		204,871	306,665	426,700	449,855
Hamilton.....	720,576	935,010	1,017,862	985,162	972,939‡
Knox.....	655,014	912,184	1,045,568	848,777	788,545
Shelby.....		1,367,334	1,668,399	1,785,944	1,881,145
Jefferson.....	328,073	407,805	686,159	939,605	1,077,236
Total.....	2,849,292	5,585,722	6,251,806	6,527,558	6,580,011

* The library was closed three weeks in 1933 and four months in 1934.

† Circulation in city schools not included.

‡ Circulation of 361 government documents and 1,349 pictures is not included.

The total library circulation during each of the five years of the demonstration is presented in Table XIII. Absence of data for 1930 is due in three cases to the fact that the libraries were not then organized and open for circulation and in two cases to the fact that cooperation with the Fund had not yet begun. Increases in total circulation are shown for each succeeding year in four of the counties. The Charleston Free Library has the distinction of being the only library in the entire group which has had an adequate book fund for each year shown in the table. A significant part of the increase in the other three libraries which have had steady growth during the demonstration period is due to the expansion of the book stock and agencies for service outside of the urban centers.

Decreases in circulation are frequently due to the effects of reductions in the budget. Sharp reduction in the expenditures of a library usually has two immediate effects: first, a decrease in the number of new books purchased; and second, a reduction in the salaries or size of the staff. Later reductions usually lead to the elimination of certain agencies or to decreases in the number of hours the libraries are kept open. In Knox County book purchases were reduced, extension service in the city by means of a book truck was withdrawn, certain agencies were closed, and the main library and city branches were not open after six o'clock in the evening. The effect of these so-called "economies" is apparent in the declining circulation figures. Fortunately, the reductions in the budget for 1935 have been largely eliminated.

The library in Mecklenburg County illustrates the effect of a severe and sudden reduction in income. The expenditures for books, periodicals, and binding for the five fiscal years shown in Table XIII were approximately \$34,000, \$24,000, \$6,600, \$1,400, and \$2,400, respectively. The sharp drop in circulation beginning with 1932 was first due to decreases in service in the branches because of sharp reductions in the size of the staff, then to the cumulative effect of a book stock worn out in use much more rapidly than it was replenished by new purchases.

Total library circulation to Negroes for the five years of the demonstration period are shown in Table XIV. Only three counties show increases over each of the preceding years. Withdrawal of the Rosenwald Fund from participation in the programs in Davidson and Mecklenburg counties is seen to result in immediate and very large reductions in circulation for Negroes, beginning with 1932, while Coahoma County was able to maintain its service with less serious loss in circulation after withdrawal of support from the Fund.

A comparison of the percentage distribution of the library circulation and of the total population for each county, by color and residence, is shown in Figure 18. For each county the percentage distribution of the total circulation, urban and rural, white and Negro, is shown in comparison with similar figures for the population for 1930. The upper or shaded bar in each county group represents the library circulation; and the lower, or unshaded, bar shows population.

When an upper bar is longer than the adjacent lower bar, the circulation to the group is relatively larger in proportion to the population of the group. In Coahoma County, for example, urban whites who compose 10.83 per cent of the population were responsible for 59.4 per cent of the circulation. Similarly, rural Negroes, comprising 66.56 per cent of the population in that county, made 3.4 per cent of the withdrawals from the library.

TABLE XIV

TOTAL LIBRARY CIRCULATION TO NEGROES, BY YEARS

County	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934
Walker.....		4,853	17,245	15,741*	18,588*
Webster.....		29,803	34,181	35,722	50,442
Coahoma.....	9,412	27,356	24,648	19,725†	20,366
Davidson.....	32,498	40,822	16,627	8,289	7,343
Mecklenburg.....	42,626	87,687	16,011	10,688	.....
Charleston.....		7,829	32,202	30,182	38,471
Richland.....		6,220‡	12,427	15,504	15,545
Hamilton.....	41,505	65,680	92,367	87,925	82,348
Knox.....	42,241	51,126	54,546	47,445	41,021
Shelby.....		17,628	25,445	32,113	43,905
Jefferson.....	21,264	30,408	52,519	65,129	57,608
Total.....	189,546	369,412	378,218	368,463	381,637

* The library was closed three weeks in 1933 and four months in 1934.

† Figures are for the city branch only.

‡ Figures are for nine months.

Comparisons of the percentage distributions among counties reveal interesting variations. However, conclusions should not be hastily drawn from this figure without giving consideration to the underlying factors which produce the situation. Two factors stand out so sharply in this graph that they scarcely need mentioning: the high ratio of circulation to population for urban whites and correspondingly low ratio for rural Negroes. Hamilton County is unique in that circulation to both rural whites and Negroes is larger than their proportionate representation in the population. The available supply of books, combined with the staff and agencies for circulation to the rural area, seems superior to that shown in any of the other demonstration counties. Webster Parish Library shows the closest balance between circulation and population.

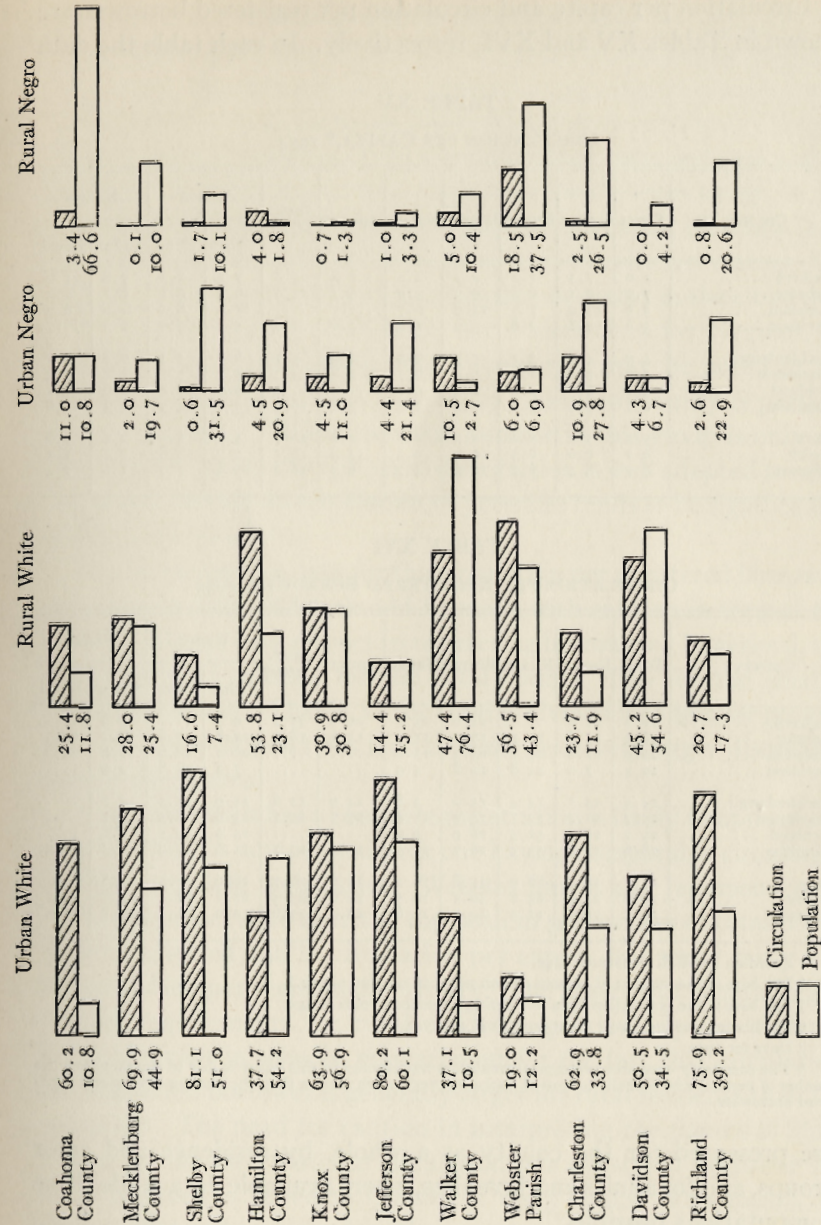


Fig. 18.—Percentage distribution of total library circulation for 1934 and total population for 1930, by residence and color

Circulation per capita and circulation per registered borrower are shown in Tables XV and XVI, respectively. In each table the data

TABLE XV
CIRCULATION PER CAPITA,* 1934

COUNTY	TOTAL	URBAN	RURAL	WHITE	NEGRO	ADULT†	JUVE- NILE‡	WHITE		NEGRO	
								Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
								Walker§	2.0	7.3	1.2	2.0	2.4	1.8	3.8	7.2	1.3	7.8	1.0
Webster	7.0	9.1	6.5	9.5	3.9	5.3	14.8	10.9	9.1	6.1	3.4
Coahoma	3.9	12.9	1.5	14.9	0.7	.....	.....	21.9	8.5	4.0	0.2
Davidson	3.6	4.8	2.8	3.9	1.4	2.6	7.6	5.3	3.0	2.3	.....
Mecklenburg||	3.9	4.4	3.1	5.5	0.3	4.0	5.7	6.1	4.3	0.4	0.1
Charleston	2.8	3.4	1.9	5.4	0.7	2.8	4.3	5.3	5.7	1.1	0.3
Richland	5.1	6.5	2.9	8.8	0.4	.....	.....	9.9	6.1	0.6	0.2
Hamilton	6.1	3.4	14.2	7.2	2.3	3.8	16.9	4.2	14.2	1.3	13.6
Knox	5.1	5.1	5.0	5.5	2.1	4.2	10.7	5.7	5.1	2.1	2.8
Shelby	6.1	6.0	6.5	10.3	0.3	4.4	16.5	9.7	13.8	0.1	1.1
Jefferson	8.1	8.4	6.7	10.2	1.7	6.2	18.9	10.8	7.6	1.6	2.4

TABLE XVI
CIRCULATION PER REGISTERED BORROWER, 1934

COUNTY	TOTAL	URBAN	RURAL	WHITE	NEGRO	ADULT†	JUVE- NILE‡	WHITE		NEGRO	
								Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
								Walker§	22.2	10.6
Webster	16.1	13.6	17.1	16.1	15.7	13.8	18.9	12.8	17.8	17.1	15.3
Coahoma	20.9	21.6	19.5	23.3	13.0	.....	.....	26.2	18.6	11.0	29.2
Davidson	10.3	7.0	24.8	10.8	4.9	.....	.....	7.2	24.8	4.9	.....
Mecklenburg||	14.1	13.7	15.4	15.0	3.8	14.9	12.6	14.9	15.3	3.7	.....
Charleston	21.7	21.2	23.1	24.9	11.8	27.7	15.1	23.8	28.5	13.1	8.3
Richland	21.2	21.3	51.5	26.9	6.6	.....	.....	23.9	49.5	5.0	.....
Hamilton	18.6	11.6	33.5	18.7	17.5	17.0	20.1	11.6	32.9	11.3	44.3
Knox	17.7	18.2	16.9	17.8	16.2	18.6	16.7	18.6	16.5	13.8	.....
Shelby	26.0	25.9	65.8	30.5	10.5	20.0	63.4	27.1	78.5	3.8	25.8
Jefferson	19.5	19.1	22.3	19.3	24.8	17.0	23.6	19.0	21.1	20.7	175.5¶

* Based on the U.S. Census of 1930.

† The base is the number of persons fifteen years of age and above.

‡ The base is the population from five through fourteen years of age.

§ The library was open only eight months in this year.

|| Data for 1933.

¶ The seemingly excessive per capita circulation represented in this figure is due to the fact that the number of persons who actually borrowed books was very much greater than the number of formerly registered borrowers.

are presented for the county as a whole, by residence and color groups, and for adults and juveniles, where available data made these computations possible.

Per capita circulation is more than twice as large in Jefferson

County as in Charleston County (data for Walker County are not comparable, since they represent circulation for only eight months). In general, the rank among the libraries in percentage of total population registered, as shown in Table XII, is very similar to the rank in per capita circulation. The counties which rank first and second (highest) in registration rank second and first, respectively, in per capita circulation, while the two which are tenth and eleventh (lowest) in registration hold identical ranks in per capita circulation. The number of per capita withdrawals tends to be higher in the cities than in the rural territory, and larger for whites than for Negroes, although a few exceptions to this general rule may be noted in the table. Circulation to rural Negroes in Hamilton County is particularly noteworthy. While the total number in this group is only approximately 3,000, the system of distribution is well adapted to serving them. Per capita circulation to juveniles tends to be significantly higher than to adults.

Interpretations of data for the circulation per registered borrower, as shown in Table XVI, should be made with caution in view of the wide variations with respect to registering borrowers. In general, the data are more reliable for the total county than for the smaller groups presented. That is, as the total is divided into smaller groups, the variations in practices tend to make relatively larger discrepancies in the figures.

A system which has a complete registration is likely to appear at a disadvantage in comparison with one having comparable circulation but less complete registration. Webster Parish and Jefferson County, for example, rank near the top both in percentage of total population registered and in circulation per capita, but stand fairly low in circulation per registered borrower. The absence of general registration requirements for rural residents, particularly for students using branches in schools, may account for the fact that circulation per registered borrower is generally larger for rural residents than for urbanites. The need for caution in interpreting the figures is illustrated by the fact that the circulation per registered borrower for rural Negroes in Jefferson County is 175.5 books. This means, of course, that only a very few Negroes were formally registered but that a much larger number actually borrowed books.

One phase of the circulation problem is illustrated in Figure 19, which shows for Webster Parish the total adult and juvenile circulation to whites, by months, for 1933. Decrease in circulation in the hot summer months is generally expected by libraries in the South. However, the decrease in the Webster Parish Library is particularly large in the months when the school vacations are general. This is



FIG. 19.—Total circulation of books to white people, juvenile and adults, by months, for 1933, Webster Parish Library.

commonly accounted as a weakness in the use of schools as locations for branches for the public library.

The real difficulty may be not so much that the schools are not in session as that the books are not accessible to the children, that is, pupils are brought to the schools, and therefore to the libraries, in motor trucks during the school year. If the library were located outside of the school during the school term, it would not only be less accessible to school pupils, who are the largest group of readers, but would also have little advantage in accessibility during the months

of the summer vacation. Sufficient data are not at hand to show conclusively what the real situation is concerning circulation to children or adults under these different conditions.

CLASSIFICATION OF LIBRARY USERS

In attempting to describe or evaluate the service rendered by libraries, one of the first questions that comes to mind is, "Who uses the general book collections?" The circulation figures generally compiled show the classes of books which are used but give no information regarding the persons who use the books. Registration data may reveal those who have permission to withdraw books, but do not separate users from non-users.

In an effort to supply information regarding the users of the libraries, nine of the systems kept special records for periods of from three to six days. A data card was filled out for each person withdrawing books. Information requested consisted of the name or registration number, sex, occupation, age and grade of students, number of fiction and non-fiction titles withdrawn, and the Dewey class numbers of all non-fiction titles. In nine counties 38,232 data cards were filled out during the spring of 1934. Two counties, Shelby and Coahoma, found it impracticable to keep this special record.

At least two studies based on similar types of data have been reported in recent library literature. In the city of Racine, Wisconsin, records of the use of the library were kept for a single day.⁷ During this day 1,826 persons visited the library and withdrew approximately 3,500 books. Students represented 53 per cent of the visitors. More than one-fourth (28 per cent) of the adult registrants were recorded as students. Of the thirty-five industrial groups listed in Racine by the 1930 census, all but three minor ones were represented among the occupations of users of the library during the day.

A study made in the Hinsdale, Illinois, Public Library during the winter of 1934 was confined to the use of the adult collection.⁸ Data were gathered during four successive weeks, during which time 4,178

⁷ M. Louise Hunt and others, "A Day's Work of the Racine, Wisconsin, Public Library," *Library Journal*, LIX, No. 3 (February 1, 1934), 106-10.

⁸ Leon Carnovsky, "Community Studies in Reading," *Library Quarterly*, V, No. 1 (January, 1935), 1-30.

loans were made by the library. Information recorded included the author and title of each book withdrawn from the adult collection. Carnovsky concluded that one week represented an accurate sample of the four-week period, since the greatest deviation from the average weekly circulation was 21.5 books, or 2 per cent.

In tabulating the data gathered in the nine demonstration counties, sex, residence, and color groups were kept separate; and the following further classifications were made: elementary school, junior high school, high school, and occupational groups for non-students. Non-fiction was divided into thirteen subject classifications, which will be introduced in the following section. Limitations of space make it impossible to present the data in the many classifications in which they were tabulated. Only a few of the facts which seem to be most significant will be indicated.

A preliminary tabulation of the data for Hamilton County was made in the office of the librarian. One hundred occupations were listed among the borrowers during the three-day period. The type-written report, including discussion of the data and tables for each individual branch, has been bound and is available for interlibrary loan.⁹

Almost two-thirds of the persons who withdrew books from the demonstration libraries during the experimental period are students, one-eighth are housewives, and approximately one-fifth are gainfully employed. Persons unemployed at the time the data were gathered could not be accurately distinguished. In some cases, where the information came from the registration file, the occupation at the time of registration was, of course, recorded. In most cases, however, the occupation was recorded at the time the book was withdrawn. In a few cases persons unemployed no doubt gave their last type of employment rather than say they were unemployed.

Table XVII shows for each county the total number of persons who withdrew books during the experimental period, divided into employed and others, and the percentage each group is of the grand

⁹ Bertie Wenning, "Reading Survey of the Chattanooga Public Library and Its School—Community Branches, April 9-10-11, 1934." Typewritten copies may be secured from the Chattanooga Public Library or from the Library of the University of Chicago.

total. Student classification includes a relatively small number of college students, as well as students enrolled in public, private, and parochial schools.

Occupations of non-students.—Excluding students, housewives are the largest users of the public library. Females outnumber males by more than two to one. Table XVIII shows the distribution of the number of employed persons withdrawing books, by color, sex, and industry group. Of the occupations identified, the professions lead

TABLE XVII
NUMBER OF PERSONS WITHDRAWING BOOKS FROM THE LIBRARY
DURING EXPERIMENTAL PERIOD

County	Students	Housewives	Employed and Others	Total
Walker.....	2,277	264	433	2,974
Webster.....	2,922	275	361	3,558
Davidson.....	1,474	142	316	1,932
Mecklenburg.....	3,643	712	1,159	5,514
Richland.....	2,487	484	800	3,771
Charleston.....	816	396	681	1,893
Hamilton.....	4,296	356	783	5,435
Knox.....	3,639	426	875	4,940
Jefferson.....	3,451	1,863	2,901	8,215
Total.....	25,005	4,918	8,309	38,232
Percentage of grand total...	65.4	12.9	21.7	100.00

all others. Professional women use the library in larger numbers than do professional men, for both whites and Negroes. Persons engaged in manufacturing and mechanical industries, and in clerical work, also rank high among the occupational groups withdrawing books from the library.

Data gathered by the United States Census and reported separately by counties show the number of persons ten years of age or over gainfully employed in various industries in each county. Computations based on the number of males per thousand reveal wide discrepancies among industrial and occupational groups in the number of persons withdrawing books from the library. Male whites engaged in professional occupations, for example, withdraw books from the

library with ten times the frequency of male whites engaged in the extraction of minerals, and with sixty times the frequency of Negroes engaged in the latter industry. Sixty out of 1,000 white professional men withdrew books from the library, while only 13 out of 1,000 engaged in agriculture made withdrawals during the same period. Twenty-one out of every 1,000 Negro professional men and 6 out of every 1,000 male farmers withdrew books during the limited period covered by the special study.

TABLE XVIII
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS IN EACH INDUSTRY
GROUP WITHDRAWING BOOKS FROM THE
LIBRARY, BY COLOR AND SEX

INDUSTRY	TOTAL		WHITE		NEGRO	
	Number	Percent- age	Male	Female	Male	Female
Professions.....	1,870	22.5	506	1,182	53	129
Manufacturing and me- chanical.....	1,243	15.0	946	205	73	19
Clerical.....	1,097	13.2	340	748	2	7
Trade.....	732	8.8	560	156	12	4
Agriculture.....	479	5.8	354	26	90	9
Domestic and personal serv- ice.....	320	3.9	66	159	22	73
Transportation and com- merce.....	282	3.4	214	57	11	.....
Public service.....	70	0.8	66	3	1	.....
Extraction of minerals.....	54	0.6	50	1	3	.....
Forestry and fishing.....	15	0.2	13	.....	.....	.....
None and not specified.....	2,147	25.8	862	1,221	21	43
Total.....	8,309	100.0	3,979	3,758	288	284

Data of this type seem to indicate that the democracy of the library is largely theoretical. If books of interest to all classes of people are available, then for some reason certain groups are making relatively little use of the facilities. The reasons for this condition probably vary considerably from county to county. The fact that any significantly large group in a community is failing to withdraw books from the library should be of considerable concern to the librarian and the board of trustees. This is particularly true if the general philosophy of the public library is based on the assumption of "books for everybody."

Interesting variations in the proportion of student users for whites and Negroes in the various counties are shown in Table XIX. Approximately 30 per cent of the urban whites withdrawing books are students in Charleston and in Jefferson counties, while the corresponding figures are about 70 per cent in Webster Parish, and Walk-

TABLE XIX
NUMBER OF PERSONS WITHDRAWING BOOKS, NUMBER OF BOOKS
WITHDRAWN, AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS;
WHITE AND NEGRO

COUNTY AND COLOR	TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONS	PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS			TOTAL NUMBER OF BOOKS	PERCENT- AGE OF BOOKS BY STUDENTS*
		Total	Urban	Rural		
<i>White:</i>						
Walker.....	2,556	76	69	78	4,257	74
Webster.....	2,743	83	73	86	3,176	80
Davidson.....	1,785	75	58	77	2,675	69
Mecklenburg.....	5,248	65	37	95	10,299	55
Charleston.....	1,531	36	30	52	3,355	32
Richland.....	3,610	65	35	71	7,746	58
Hamilton.....	4,786	81	68	90	7,752	77
Knox.....	4,759	74	70	80	7,820	58
Jefferson.....	7,501	37	28	72	14,473	37
<i>Negro:</i>						
Walker.....	418	81	77	85	1,010	83
Webster.....	815	79	82	78	861	80
Davidson.....	147	97	97	.....	176	98
Mecklenburg.....	266	84	84	.....	424	84
Charleston.....	362	70	70	.....	622	39
Richland.....	152	74	74	.....	257	70
Hamilton.....	640	66	76	63	1,260	64
Knox.....	181	74	74	.....	291	66
Jefferson.....	714	87	86	91	866	82

*The first group of percentages is based on the number of persons withdrawing books, while the last column is based on the number of books withdrawn.

er, Hamilton, and Knox counties. In general, the percentage of non-student users is lower for rural than for urban residents, and for Negroes than for whites.

ANALYSIS OF BOOK WITHDRAWALS

Of the 61,533 titles withdrawn by whites during the experimental period, 72 per cent are fiction. The data of Table XX show that the proportion of fiction tends to increase with age, as represented in the three groups—elementary school, students above elementary school,

and non-students. The proportions of fiction withdrawn in comparable groups tend to be fairly consistent among the nine counties. Davidson and Mecklenburg show the greatest deviations.

Of the 5,767 books withdrawn by Negroes, 63 per cent are fiction. Negro junior and senior high-school students read slightly larger proportions of fiction than elementary-school students do, but the percentage of fiction for non-students is between the two groups. It is interesting to note that for each county the total group of whites

TABLE XX
PERCENTAGE OF FICTION WITHDRAWN BY EACH GROUP*

COUNTY	WHITE				NEGRO			
	Total	Elem. School	Above Elem. School	Non-students	Total	Elem. School	Above Elem. School	Non-students
Walker.....	78	70	89	84	77	76	75	83
Webster.....	76	77	76	75	58	66	78	28
Davidson.....	86	83	94	87	74	79	52	75
Mecklenburg....	62	42	60	78	51	31	57	53
Charleston.....	78	66	83	76	68	55	86	88
Richland.....	77	67	79	84	66	53	74	82
Hamilton.....	65	66	58	68	54	47	70	60
Knox.....	71	66	69	75	60	63	65	52
Jefferson.....	75	72	77	76	66	69	69	56

* The percentage of fiction withdrawn in each county for the entire year ending in 1934 is as follows (the counties are listed in the same order as in Table XX): white, 76, 76, 88, 73, 77, 77, 59, 71, and 67; Negro, 63, 56, 84, 59, 63, 69, 41, 56, and 51. The correspondence between the data for the period of from three to six days and for an entire year is in most cases quite close.

withdrew larger proportions of fiction than did the corresponding Negro group in the same counties.

Because of the large mass of data tabulated, non-fiction subjects cannot be presented by individual counties. Literature, history, biography, myths, legends and fairy tales, geography and travel, and useful arts are the subjects which are most interesting to the total groups of whites and Negroes. The percentage distributions, shown in parallel columns in Table XXI, show relatively few significant differences in non-fiction interests, as indicated by withdrawals, of whites and Negroes. While white and Negro elementary-school stu-

dents read approximately the same proportions of myths and legends, withdrawals in this subject above the elementary-school level are considerably higher for Negroes than for whites.

TABLE XXI
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF NON-FICTION WITHDRAWALS
OF STUDENTS AND NON-STUDENTS IN NINE
COUNTIES COMBINED

NON-FICTION SUBJECTS (DEWEY CLASSES)	TOTAL		STUDENTS				NON-STUDENTS	
	White	Negro	Elem. School		Above Elem. School		White	Negro
			White	Negro	White	Negro		
Literature.....	14.5	12.3	8.6	9.1	23.3	19.5	16.0	12.3
Myths, legends, fairy tales.....	10.7	14.3	20.2	19.2	3.7	11.6	4.0	6.0
History.....	10.7	9.3	11.1	11.6	11.7	5.5	9.8	7.9
Biography.....	10.5	6.4	5.2	4.8	19.3	12.4	11.6	4.4
Geography and travel.....	9.9	7.2	10.3	8.5	7.9	3.8	10.6	7.5
Useful arts.....	8.8	10.2	6.8	7.4	10.3	7.1	10.1	19.3
Pure science.....	6.5	5.6	8.1	5.9	5.4	7.3	5.2	3.3
Philology.....	6.5	4.9	11.9	7.5	1.2	2.3	3.5	1.7
Social science....	4.8	7.0	3.4	4.0	5.0	13.9	6.1	7.5
Fine arts.....	4.8	3.0	3.4	2.8	3.0	2.9	7.4	3.5
Education.....	3.6	7.0	5.1	9.1	0.8	4.4	3.3	4.8
Amusements....	2.1	1.8	1.7	2.1	2.0	0.8	2.6	1.9
Religion.....	2.0	2.6	1.0	1.2	1.8	1.7	3.3	6.5
Philosophy.....	2.0	1.8	0.3	0.8	1.6	1.9	4.3	4.0
General works...	1.9	2.2	1.6	1.8	2.6	3.4	1.6	1.9
Bible and Bible stories.....	0.9	4.4	1.3	4.2	0.4	1.5	0.6	7.5
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of books	16,923	2,127	7,176*	1,131	3,684	476	6,063	520
Percentage of non- fiction.....	27.7	36.9	34.8	39.5	27.4	31.4	22.4	37.4

* One hundred and fifty non-fiction titles are omitted because the subjects were not given.

It is worthy of note that in the subjects of useful arts, education, and the social sciences the proportions of withdrawals are higher for Negroes than for whites. The higher proportion of adult Negroes

withdrawing Bible stories is also typical. In literature, geography and travel, biography, fine arts, and history the percentages are rather uniformly higher for whites than for Negroes.

SERVICE TO COMMUNITY GROUPS

The public library is a cosmopolitan institution. It attempts to supply the best reading for the greatest number of people. This emphasizes the function of circulation rather than preservation of books and reading materials. Since the staff of the library is relatively small in proportion to the number of people who are ultimately users, the sphere of the influence of the library should be extended in every way possible by means of contacts with various groups in the community.

One of the desirable evidences of the degree to which the influence of the library penetrates into the life of a community is the extent to which the library makes contacts with important groups. Since the library stands as the representation of one of the important educational and cultural aspects of the life of the community, it is generally expected that the training, interest, and activities of the librarian and members of the staff shall, to a considerable extent, reflect these interests. Many of the contacts through which the library may broaden its sphere of service will arise out of personal interests of members of the staff.

Two observations concerning the relation of the library to organized groups may be made here. The mere fact that such organizations exist gives evidence of special interest in some subject on the part of the individuals who form them. This interest may well be taken advantage of; and specialized service, such as is frequently given to teachers and schools, with regulations as to loans other than those to individual borrowers, may be provided. It is easily conceivable that organized special service of this character is productive of more significant results than the loan of single volumes to unorganized individuals. Again, in order for the library to know what clubs and organizations exist in the county, it is important that a careful check-list be developed so that the library will not overlook any of the interests which may appropriately be cultivated by it in this way. In the South generally, these organizations are compara-

tively limited in number, as contrasted with those in suburban and metropolitan areas in other sections; and the number in southern cities is greater than in southern counties, as is also the number for whites as contrasted with that for Negroes.

Since the majority of the adult users of the libraries are women, it is not surprising that most of the community groups served by the demonstration libraries are women's organizations, such as the American Association of University Women, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, Junior League, Daughters of the American Revolution, Daughters of the Confederacy, Garden Clubs, and the like. Other types of clubs to which the libraries have rendered specific service include a large number of missionary societies and church groups, the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A., parent-teacher associations, and study and reading clubs of many and varied types. The service consists in helping to plan club programs for the year, assigning subjects, preparing bibliographies, and ordering special titles where materials are not already available in the library.

A number of the libraries mention specific types of service rendered to local governmental authorities. These range all the way from information regarding parliamentary procedure to special or technical phases of governmental work. Although a majority of the demonstration counties are chiefly urban in population, farm and home demonstration agents are usually employed; and co-operation of the library with these agents is of special importance. In one county the first books circulated from the newly organized county library were to the homes of rural women, the books being distributed by the home demonstration agent before the official opening of the library.

The special types of service rendered to agricultural interests vary from the provision of a single book or a reading list to very close and continuing co-operation between the library and local community groups. The influence of the library in quickening the intellectual life and broadening the outlook of the rural population is of special importance and offers one of the hopeful signs of improvement in attractiveness of rural life.

Webster Parish Library has had an especially close relation with activities related to rural life. The library co-operates with the farm and home demonstration agents, and with the clubs of men and

women organized under these organizations. The library is also closely affiliated with the community organizations maintained in Webster Parish as a part of the general state program.¹⁰ One of the purposes of the community organizations is to make rural life more attractive by increasing opportunities for recreation and by making the farms more productive. Schoolhouses usually serve as centers for meetings. Since the community branches of the libraries are also located in the schoolhouses during the academic year, the possibilities of close co-operation are multiplied. The librarian is frequently asked to speak at the meetings.

The community groups in Webster Parish are organized for Negroes as well as for whites. At the time this county was visited, the programs of such community meetings dealt with agricultural objectives concerning the desirable distribution of acreage for crop diversification which had been adopted by the communities as a part of the state-wide program.

¹⁰ See Mary Mims, *The Awakening Community* (New York: Macmillan, 1932), for a full description of the work of the community organizations.

CHAPTER V

READING OF BOOKS FROM ALL SOURCES

THE previous chapter dealt with the availability and use of books in public libraries in the demonstration counties. This chapter will present material dealing with the reading of books from all sources, including the public library; the following chapter will present similar data regarding the reading of magazines and newspapers, and will attempt to show the place of the library as a public agency for the dissemination of books in the demonstration counties.

Books in homes.—Information regarding books available in homes of whites in Walker County, Alabama, was gathered in 1932.¹ Data gathered on visits to 420 rural homes showed that one-third had no books. Slightly more than one-half had less than 10 books, and no home had as many as 100. In visits to 80 urban homes in the same county, no books were reported for 11 per cent of the homes; 41 per cent had fewer than 10 books; and 15 per cent had 50 or more. The average number of books was 4.7 for rural homes and 23.6 for urban homes. Slightly less than one-half of the books were fiction titles, 15 per cent were on religious subjects, 14 per cent were in the field of literature, and 6 per cent were reference books, while biography, travel, history, and the fine arts combined accounted for only 5 per cent of the total. Slightly more than 10 per cent of the books were for children.

Early in 1934 a canvass of 490 homes of rural whites in Coahoma County, made as a part of a state-wide Civil Works Administration project, showed that 57 per cent of the homes had no books. Fiction titles were in 15 per cent, and reference books in 12 per cent, of the homes visited; no other type of book was found in as many as 10 per cent of the homes. In 13 homes private libraries of 100 or more volumes were reported, two of these consisting of 1,000 volumes

¹ Willie Fagan Calkins, "The Walker County Library" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Alabama, 1934).