

anticipated income over the demonstration period. In several cases new agreements were made in order to continue the demonstration for longer periods, usually two additional years. The amount originally appropriated to each library has been stated in the Preface.

Each library agreed to use money contributed by the Fund for books and services, no part of the appropriation being available for buildings or grounds. Acceptance of the terms offered by the Fund was usually indicated by the adoption of a formal resolution by each of the bodies participating in the agreement. In addition to the library boards in each county, city and county boards of education and county governing authorities were in a few cases included in the formal agreements. These written agreements were considered as pledging the local authorities to a continuation of the program, both during and after the end of the demonstration period. These agreements have not been considered legally binding; they were abrogated by the local authorities in several cases.

#### INCOME OF THE LIBRARIES

Annual financial statements are made by the libraries on a uniform blank prepared for the Fund. The receipts reported are treated in this chapter as current income by the elimination of such items as unexpended balance from previous years, balance in the petty cash accounts, and receipts from accounts in closed banks. The current income per capita for each of the five years from 1930 to 1934 and the total current income for the latter year are shown in Table XLII. Although a majority of the libraries reached the figure of 50 cents per capita, which was accepted as an adequate minimum budget, during the first or second years of the demonstration, three libraries failed to reach this figure.<sup>1</sup> Two of these three counties, Walker and Davidson, rank low in total population and high in rural population; and each suffered sharp reductions in income after the first or second year of the demonstration period. The general trend has been toward reduction of income in the years following 1931. Charleston County has had the most stable annual income.

<sup>1</sup> The figures for the census for 1920 were used as a basis for determining the minimum budgets, since the 1930 figures were not available at the time the demonstrations were projected.

In addition to the per capita income, consideration must be given to the total income available for any given year. For 1934 this figure is shown in the last column of Table XLII. In five of the eleven libraries the current income for 1934 is below \$20,000. Four of these counties are rural, and the tax bases are relatively low. Mecklenburg, the fifth county, ranks high among the counties in North Carolina in taxable wealth. The sharp reduction in income

TABLE XLII  
CURRENT INCOME\* PER CAPITA† BY YEARS, AND TOTAL  
CURRENT INCOME FOR 1934

County	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1934 Current Income
Walker .....		\$0.43	\$0.37	\$0.14	\$0.24	\$14,266.90
Webster .....		.52	.39	.44	.46	13,618.84
Coahoma .....	\$0.31	.54	.27	.30	.33	15,145.39
Davidson .....		.42	.24	.23	.18	7,869.74
Mecklenburg .....	.52	.52	.19	.13	.13	16,378.38
Charleston .....		.40	.41	.36	.36	36,747.40
Richland .....		.56	.51	.42	.30	26,641.04
Hamilton .....	.59	.62	.46	.32	.32	51,627.99‡
Knox .....	.54	.79	.59	.46	.43	66,238.13
Shelby .....		.50	.50	.59	.48	147,155.44
Jefferson .....	0.43	0.53	0.47	0.39	0.35	46,957.92

\* Income from liquidation of accounts in closed banks, petty cash accounts, non-resident deposits, and unexpended balances from previous years is not included.

† Population figures of 1930.

‡ Additional income secured from other sources than the regular library budget brought the total income up to \$70,144.92.

for this library reflects one of the effects of the unusually severe depression in the county and the resulting general economy programs of both the city and county governments. Davidson County, in the same state, shows a similar trend, although some of the reductions in the appropriation to the library were restored in 1934.

Many factors must be considered in determining the minimum budget of a given library. No figure can be arbitrarily set which will have meaning for all library situations. Library service, like other forms of governmental service, must prove its worth to the people and deserves to be supported in proportion to the financial ability

of the community and the value which it places on the service rendered by the library. In this respect library service stands in the same relation as fire protection, police service, health service, educational service, and other public services. The library must present its case for support not solely in terms of arbitrary standards fixed by a professional body but in terms of services that represent values accepted by the local constituency.



SUB-BRANCH LIBRARY BUILDING, JEFFERSON COUNTY,  
ERECTED BY A LOCAL LIONS CLUB

It should be pointed out, however, that efficient library service requires an investment in physical plant and equipment, a trained technical staff, and annual additions of reading matter sufficient to replace worn-out stock and to keep abreast of current general and technical literature. A minimum budget, below which fairly complete service cannot be maintained, has not been determined on the basis of cost studies of typical situations. Joeckel<sup>2</sup> has indicated the essential elements in efficient library service. On the basis of estimates of the cost of providing these essential services he has concluded that they are not obtainable on an annual budget of less than \$25,000. He further points out that the support above this

<sup>2</sup> C. B. Joeckel, *The Government of the American Public Library*, pp. 316-17.

point should be determined by the need and the population to be served.<sup>3</sup>

Further expression in regard to the minimum units and budgets for service has been given for an area having many of the problems common to the South. The director of the Fraser Valley Demonstration Library has estimated that, for conditions under which service is provided in that area, approximately \$20,000 represents a minimum budget for fairly satisfactory service of the types being provided.<sup>4</sup>

The difficulty in applying these suggested minimum budgets to library work in the South is that in no two systems will identical situations be found. Of the 127 counties making appropriations for county library service in the South in 1934, only 52 provided more than \$1,000.<sup>5</sup> The responsibility for library service is vested in the local government. Consequently, the local government determines the type of service it wishes, and fixes the amount of appropriation accordingly. Desirable standards of service should not be determined, however, upon the basis of such meager provision as is possible from the small appropriations now typical in the South.

As an indication of the inadequacy of a small budget, the situation in Webster Parish may be cited. The population of the parish is approximately 30,000, preponderantly rural, and with whites exceeding Negroes by about 3,000. The area is 609 square miles. A budget of approximately \$14,000 provides for a headquarters staff of three (a head librarian, a technical assistant, and a Negro worker), a full-time custodian and a part-time assistant in the main library in Minden, and part-time custodians for most of the twenty-five school and community branches. The librarian, in addition to general administration and supervision of the system, maintenance of community contacts, and so forth, finds it necessary to assist in both technical and clerical work in order to keep these activities up to date. The important point involved here is that a small budget makes it impossible to utilize the trained staff and book resources to their maximum efficiency.

The total current income of each library for the demonstration

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 327.

<sup>4</sup> See chap. ix for additional information about the Fraser Valley Library.

<sup>5</sup> Data from the Library Extension Board, American Library Association.

period (either four or five years) and the percentage of the total which is derived from each source are indicated in Table XLIII. Study of the table reveals wide differences among counties in the proportions of income from similar sources. The group organized as county libraries—Walker, Webster, Davidson, Charleston, and Richland—tend to rank considerably above the others in the percentage of income derived from the county, and also from the Rosenwald Fund. The latter situation is due chiefly to the fact that mini-

TABLE XLIII

TOTAL CURRENT INCOME FOR THE DEMONSTRATION PERIOD, AND PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL DERIVED FROM EACH INDICATED SOURCE

COUNTY	TOTAL CURRENT INCOME FOR PERIOD*	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INCOME DERIVED FROM EACH SOURCE									
		Governmental					Rosenwald Fund	Fines	Duplicate Pay Collections	Gifts	Other and Miscellaneous
		Total	State	County	City	Boards of Education					
Walker.....	\$ 70,261.75†	52.6	15.4	31.5	.....	5.7	44.9	0.1	.....	0.1	2.3
Webster.....	53,552.70†	54.8	.....	18.7	15.5	20.6	37.0	1.6	.....	6.4	0.2
Coahoma.....	92,071.20	86.4	.....	25.2	58.8	2.4	9.0	3.2	.....	.....	1.4
Davidson.....	50,128.23	62.4	.....	52.2	10.2	.....	26.6	3.8	.....	7.1	0.1
Mecklenburg...	189,017.46	68.8	.....	25.4	37.6	5.8	21.3	4.1	3.8	.....	2.0
Charleston.....	155,003.06†	40.8	.....	40.8	.....	40.8	3.8	.....	.....	13.6	1.0
Richland.....	156,880.15†	50.6	.....	48.4	2.2	.....	40.7	.....	4.8	.....	3.9
Hamilton.....	369,026.41	74.2	.....	29.5	38.5	6.2	18.1	3.4	1.0	0.9	2.4
Knox.....	431,832.07	93.3	.....	8.0	63.8	21.5	5.1	.....	.....	1.6	.....
Shelby.....	635,591.00†	85.6	.....	8.3	70.0	7.3	7.0	4.2	0.5	0.6	2.1
Jefferson.....	290,315.44	87.5	.....	15.1	71.4	1.0	4.2	4.9	0.9	1.0	1.5

\* Data are for five years unless otherwise indicated.

† Data are for four years.

mum budgets were not set for three of the group, so that the Fund matched all of the amounts raised locally. The three libraries which received no funds from boards of education are also in the group of county libraries, while the two receiving no funds from cities also belong to this group. It should be pointed out that by the end of the demonstration period the percentage of funds received from the Rosenwald Fund will be considerably lower than that shown in the table, owing to the decreasing ratio provided by the Fund in the final years of the demonstration.

Walker is the only county which reports income from the state. Alabama legislation provides a matching fund for schools for the

purchase of books, and this money may be turned over to the county library for expenditure for the schools. In the first or second year of the demonstration in Walker County, \$10 raised by a local school was matched both by the county and state boards of education; the total of \$30 was matched by a like amount from the Fund. Ten dollars from the local school, therefore, produced \$60 for the book fund of the county library.

Full advantage was not taken by most of the counties of the possibilities of raising funds through individual schools to contribute to the amount to be matched. Some of the counties included in their budgets the salaries paid to school librarians and also the funds expended for books for school libraries. Funds included in the county budget were matched by the Rosenwald Fund, so that the financial advantages of the co-operative arrangement between the school and public library were pronounced.

The libraries in the demonstration counties do not have sufficiently large incomes to carry the expenses of complete school library service. Furthermore, the schools have, in general, made entirely inadequate appropriations for library service, although some schools, under the compulsion of state or regional accrediting bodies, have made more liberal provisions. Since the schools have been able to secure relatively generous, even though inadequate, support for buildings and general instructional programs, and since changes in educational methods have placed additional emphasis on the necessity of library facilities, it seems reasonable to expect increased contributions from school boards to the support of the library program. The fact that funds for library support are relatively small in amount makes it more imperative that intelligent co-operation be worked out between the school and the public library in order that the available funds may be used most efficiently.

## EXPENDITURES

The data presented on expenditures exclude payment for new buildings or sites, retirement of bonds, large additions to buildings, loss of funds in closed banks, and a few minor items such as refund of non-resident deposits, petty cash accounts, and so on. The expenditures reported are therefore primarily those of administration,

operation, and maintenance. Expenditures for books, furniture, and equipment, which in some accounting systems are classed as capital outlay, are not segregated from current operating expenses.

The total annual expenses as described in the preceding paragraph are presented in Figure 20, for ten of the libraries. Data for Shelby County, which are not included, were available for only three years. The chart shows for each of the four or five years of the demonstration period the total annual expenditure and this total segregated for the three objects: (1) salaries and wages; (2) books, periodicals, and binding; and (3) all other expenses. The approximate percentage of the annual expense for each of the three items mentioned may be computed from the data of the chart.

The sharp reductions in annual expenditures are strikingly exhibited. In seven of the ten libraries, however, the expenditures for 1934 show slight increases over those of the previous year. Additional increase in funds available for expenditure will no doubt be shown in 1935. In Knox County, for example, the city has approved an increase in the appropriation over that for 1934, which restores much of the previous reduction.

Comparisons between the expenditures for different systems should be made with caution because conditions are not identical in any two counties. In Knox County, for example, salaries of several high-school librarians are included in the public library budget. In the co-operative program of the school and the public library, the schools furnish library equipment in Knox County; while in Hamilton County, the expenditures for 1930 and 1931 include considerable outlay for permanent equipment which was placed in community branches in schools. The graph for Mecklenburg County shows a precipitate drop in income from 1931 to 1932. In the latter year, aid from the Fund was discontinued because the income of the library dropped below the minimum budget agreed upon.

One of the most significant effects of decreases in expenditures is graphically shown in the proportion of the total expenditure for books, periodicals, and binding. The appropriations for these items are more flexible than those for salaries and other expenses, so that reductions in income usually result in significant decreases in the expenditures for reading materials. The library in Charleston

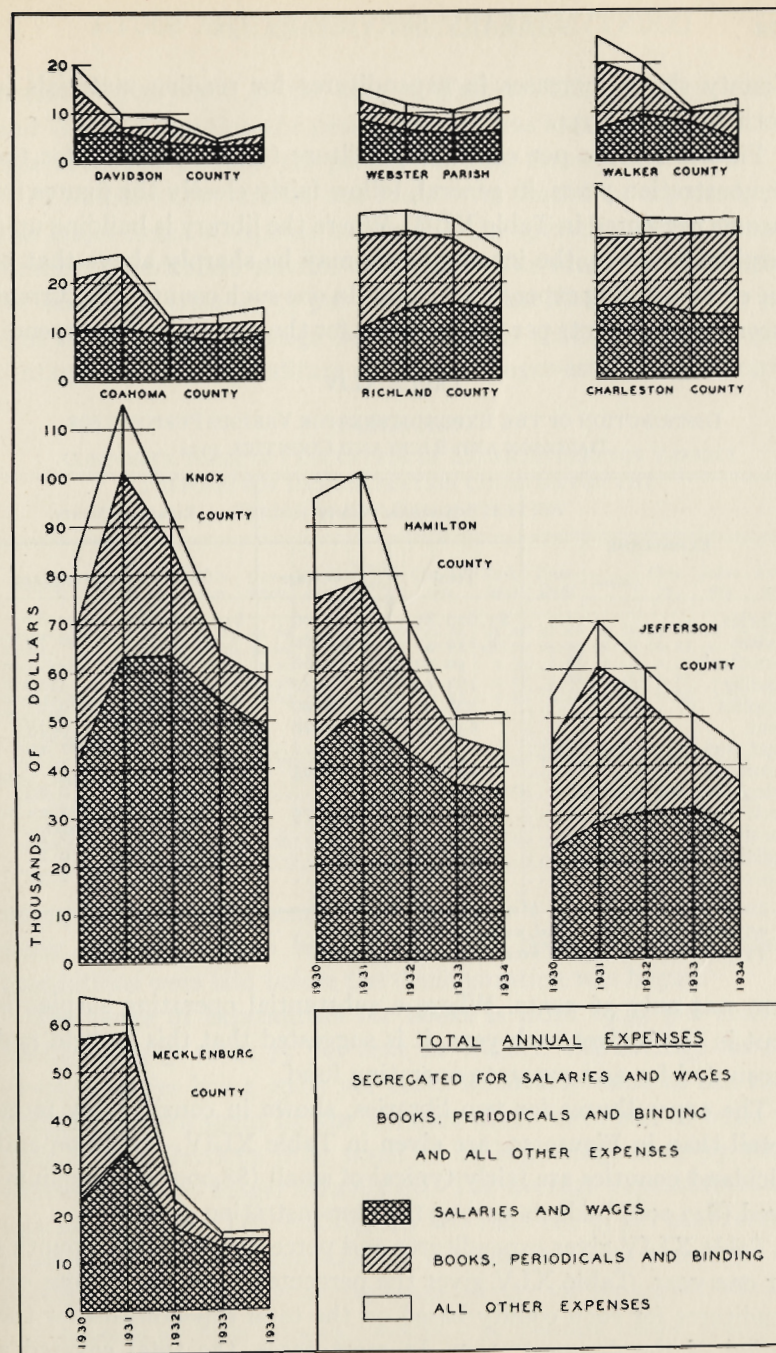


FIG. 20

County shows increases in expenditures for reading materials in both 1933 and 1934.

Figures for the per capita expenditure for each library for the demonstration years, in general, follow fairly closely the figures for income presented in Table XLII. Where the library is building up a surplus, however, the income figure may be sharply above that of the corresponding expenditure item. In one such county, the current income was 59 cents per capita, while for the same year the expendi-

TABLE XLIV

DISTRIBUTION OF THE EXPENDITURES FOR VARIOUS PURPOSES FOR DAVIDSON AND RICHLAND COUNTIES, 1934

EXPENDITURE	DAVIDSON COUNTY		RICHLAND COUNTY	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Salaries.....	\$3,620.85	47.06	\$14,420.68	52.87
Books.....	2,154.37	28.00	7,827.70	28.70
Periodicals.....	50.50	0.66	†	.....
Binding.....	163.14	2.12	1,398.47	5.13
Supplies.....	708.01	9.20	165.94	0.61
Rent.....	637.54*	8.28	1,841.58	6.75
Heat, fuel, water, and light.....	†	.....	406.14	1.49
Insurance.....	148.85	1.93	†	.....
Telephone and freight.....	†	.....	181.15	0.66
Book truck, operation of.....	211.99	2.75	309.34	1.13
Furniture.....	.....	.....	51.75	0.19
Building repairs.....	.....	.....	35.35	0.13
Miscellaneous.....	.....	.....	638.90	2.34

\* This includes rent, heat, fuel, water, and light.  
 † Expenditures for this item were not reported separately.

ture was only 36 cents. Where a substantial operating surplus is kept in the budget each year, it is suggested that this be held and accounted for as a separate operating fund.

The expenditures for two libraries, shown in considerably more detail than in Figure 20, are given in Table XLIV. Davidson and Richland counties are fairly typical of small (\$8,000) and medium-sized (\$27,000) budgets among the demonstration group.

Table XLIV gives expenditures and percentages for two counties for one year. Table XLV gives the percentages for the various expenditures for each county based on the total expenditures for the period of the demonstration. In most cases, the total covered a

period of five years. In the case of Walker, Richland, Charleston, and Webster counties, the period covered was four years; and in the case of Shelby County, the period was only three years.

*Expenditures for salaries and books.*—As should be expected, the two major items of expense incurred in the operation of the demonstration libraries are salaries and books. The range in expenditure for salaries is from 40.55 per cent in Walker County to 63.52 per cent in Knox, the average being 50.82 per cent. The higher percentages for this expenditure are in the longer-established libraries

TABLE XLV

COMPOSITE TABLE OF PERCENTAGE OF EXPENDITURES FOR VARIOUS PURPOSES FOR DEMONSTRATION COUNTIES FOR THE PERIOD OF THE DEMONSTRATION

Expenditures	Walker	Webster	Coahoma	Davidson	Mecklenburg	Charleston	Richland	Hamilton	Knox	Shelby	Jefferson	Average
Salaries.....	40.55	54.89	53.65	45.32	52.75	40.60	44.38	57.46	63.52	56.66	49.19	50.82
Books.....	41.75	21.56	31.04	31.62	32.34	40.73	38.70	19.70	21.58	19.33	30.86	29.93
Periodicals.....	1.01	2.16	1.24	0.65	0.88	1.23	0.33	1.86	1.44	1.59	1.15	1.23
Binding.....	0.18	3.64	1.90	3.35	2.96	2.23	4.21	3.88	2.48	5.07	4.91	3.17
Book truck.....	2.61	5.18	1.65	1.73	1.65	1.24	1.53	0.33	0.95	0.25	1.30	1.67
Supplies, telephone, furniture, building repairs.....	8.75	5.66	9.71	5.51	6.06	9.89	3.47	11.97	4.75	4.29	6.41	6.95
Rent, heat, and light.....	2.26	6.48	.....	8.12	1.60	2.47	5.69	2.85	2.67	4.13	3.92	3.65
Miscellaneous (including insurance).....	2.89	0.43	0.81	3.70	1.76	1.61	1.69	1.95	3.61	8.68	2.26	2.58

whose service and personnel have been built up over a number of years and which have been able to use book collections whose foundations were laid before the demonstration was begun.

The range of expenditure for books is from 19.33 per cent in Shelby County to 41.75 per cent in Walker, the average for the eleven libraries being 29.93 per cent. Relatively more of the total budget has been spent by the libraries which have had to build up their book collections from small or no beginnings than by those which have been longer established. The average expenditures for salaries—50.82 per cent—is slightly less than the 55 per cent recommended by the American Library Association in its standards for public libraries;<sup>6</sup> and the average expenditure for books, periodicals,

<sup>6</sup> "Standards for Public Libraries," *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, XXVII, No. 11 (November, 1933), 513-14.

and binding combined—34.33 per cent—is considerably higher than the 25 per cent suggested by the same authority.

Obviously, in the establishment of new libraries, the expense of building up collections is heavier during the first five years than later, and the budget should be set up accordingly. However, it must be kept in mind that the expense of binding, rebinding, and replacing worn-out books is less in the earlier years than after the fifth year, as the life of books in constant circulation is ordinarily not more than five years. Reference books, which necessarily have to be secured in the first few years, are more expensive than ordinary fiction and non-fiction, but do not wear out or require replacement nearly so quickly.

The fact that the cost of the basic book collection is relatively greater than that of maintenance after it is built up to a given level constitutes one of the strongest arguments in favor of state aid through the state library agency or through a state matching fund. The initial expense for books is high, and counties will be greatly stimulated to establish libraries if assistance of this kind could be provided. The effectiveness of the service of the library in Webster Parish at the very beginning was made possible very largely through the extensive gift of books which were purchased, cataloged, and made ready for immediate use by the Louisiana Library Commission. A great deal of the success of the development of the New Jersey county library system is also due to assistance of book deposits through the New Jersey Free Library Commission.

*Expenditure for bookmobile.*—Two other items of expense which may be of special interest to southern librarians are those for the purchase of bookmobiles and the cost of their maintenance and operation. In two budgets in which the information concerning the purchase of bookmobiles is included, the cost is indicated as being \$1,058 and \$1,105. In Davidson County, which has one of the smallest budgets, the range in annual expenditure for the maintenance of the book truck is from \$116 to \$211.

*Expenditure per volume circulated.*—Wide variations in practices among the different counties in reporting circulation have already been noted (chap. iv). These, together with the lack of uniformity in the items which are included in the expenditure budget, indicate

that comparisons of the figures on expenditure per volume circulated must be made with caution. These figures are presented for each county for the four or five years of the demonstration period in Table XLVI.

The range in expenditure per volume circulated over the five years for the eleven systems is from 57.7 cents to 2.7 cents. These wide differences are more illustrative of different phases, or stages of development, in the library programs than they are of differences in

TABLE XLVI  
EXPENDITURE PER VOLUME CIRCULATED

COUNTY	EXPENDITURE PER VOLUME CIRCULATED				
	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934
Walker .....		\$0.577	\$0.103	\$0.065	\$0.104
Webster .....		.085	.059	.052	.062
Coahoma .....	\$0.164	.147	.066	.073	.083
Davidson .....	.106	.044	.053	.027	.045
Mecklenburg .....	.090	.065	.051	.032	.037
Charleston .....		.469	.142	.117	.115
Richland .....		.169	.115	.077	.061
Hamilton .....	.133	.108	.068	.052	.053
Knox .....	.127	.127	.092	.083	.083
Shelby .....		.104	.073	.063	.....
Jefferson .....	0.166	0.149	0.087	0.054	0.041

efficiency of the two systems involved. The higher figure represents the first year of circulation in the Walker County Library. The chart on page 173 shows that a large part of the expenditure went into the purchase of books during that year, while the data of Table XIII show that the circulation in this year was relatively small. On the other hand, the figure for Davidson County of 2.7 cents for 1933 represents a total budget of less than \$5,000 and less than \$800 expended for books and other reading materials. The figure of 3.2 cents for Mecklenburg County in the same year represents a somewhat similar situation. In both cases the libraries were using up resources of books which had been accumulated in previous years, largely in 1930 and 1931.

Figures based on the expenditure per volume circulated take no account of the quality or cost of other types of service rendered, such as reference, pictures, lectures, readers' advisory service, and in many cases the use in classrooms and in libraries of books which are not withdrawn for home use.

Data on expenditure for salary and wages per volume circulated are presented in Table XLVII. These figures show somewhat less variation among different libraries than do the figures for total expenditure per volume circulated. The highest figure shown in the

TABLE XLVII  
EXPENDITURE FOR SALARY AND WAGES PER VOLUME CIRCULATED

County	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934
Walker .....		\$0.146	\$0.048	\$0.043	\$0.039
Webster .....		.047	.033	.031	.031
Coahoma .....	\$0.068	.063	.050	.045	.054
Davidson .....	.035	.028	.023	.016	.030
Mecklenburg .....	.032	.034	.033	.026	.028
Charleston .....		.175	.067	.047	.045
Richland .....		.058	.049	.037	.032
Hamilton .....	.061	.058	.043	.037	.037
Knox .....	.063	.060	.063	.064	.061
Shelby .....		.054	.047	.040	.....
Jefferson .....	0.060	0.060	0.044	0.033	0.023

table, 17.5 cents, occurs in one of the libraries in the first year of its organization, Charleston County, in 1931; the lowest figure is 1.6 cents for salary per volume circulated.

A disconcerting phase in the consideration of the expenditure per volume circulated is that no consistent trend is discernible in the figures for counties of the same general type or of the same population group. It cannot be said, for example, that unit expenditures are smaller in the densely populated counties, such as the last four shown in the table, than in rural counties, such as the first four. The only generalization possible on the basis of the data is the obvious and unsatisfactory one that the unit expenditure varies with the amount, type, and quality of service, the level of salaries, and the financial and accounting practices in use. Other highly variable fac-

tors, such as the size of the service area and the number, density, and homogeneity of the population, are assumed to affect the unit costs.

The records available are entirely inadequate to throw light on such problems as the cost of various types and qualities of service to schools of different levels, the relative expense of equivalent service by book truck and by community or school stations, the relation of the costs to the size of the area and the density of the population, and such other important factors. Answers to these and related questions assume increasing significance in the light of the growing interest in the extension of library facilities to school pupils and to the general public. In fact, the direction which such types of library extension will take should undoubtedly be influenced by the results of careful studies on the cost and efficiency of various types of services and facilities.

#### THE COUNTY AS A UNIT OF LIBRARY SERVICE

The unsettled economic conditions typical of most of the years over which the library demonstration has progressed and the stimulating influence of the matching provisions make it difficult to predict the effect of the withdrawal of the Fund on the financial programs of the libraries. The Fund has practically completed its co-operative program with Knox County. Retrenchment of service was necessary in that county in 1933 because of reduced governmental appropriations. Some of these losses are being regained, and the major accomplishments of the demonstration period have all been conserved. It therefore seems reasonable to expect that in Knox County the library program will continue to develop along the lines indicated in the co-operative program.

Most of the other library systems have come through the depression years and seem to be soundly established. Four counties—Mecklenburg, Davidson, Coahoma, and, for a short time, Walker—dropped out of the co-operative program because of financial difficulties. Mecklenburg is the only county which did not receive aid from the Fund in 1934. In several of the counties, however, the present financial plans have considerable evidence of insecurity, as well as of parsimony. It does not seem likely that any of the projects will fail, but their establishment on a more secure and generous financial basis is eminently desirable.

From the eleven demonstration counties, we now turn to the several hundred counties in the demonstration states which are without public library service. It was pointed out in chapter i that in practically all measures of economic ability the South as a section is low in comparison with the remainder of the United States. The demonstration counties as a group, however, are in many respects not typical of general conditions in the South. In particular, they rank much above the average southern county in total population, in the percentage of urban population, and in most measures of economic and financial resources.

Since the public library looks to public support, the general property tax furnishes the most reliable available index of the amount of money which a given tax rate will raise for library purposes. In ten of the eleven counties being considered, the general property tax furnished more than one-half of all the combined revenue receipts of the county governments in 1931, including the state and federal grants for such purposes as schools and hard-surfaced roads.<sup>7</sup> The percentage of the total revenue receipts from the general property tax ranges as high as 90.7 for one county.

In basing this discussion on assessed valuation subject to the general property tax, it should be emphasized that the present writers hold no brief for the use of this tax, as generally administered, as the major source of support of public services. It is generally recognized by economists as inequitable. Seligman has said of it:

Practically, the general property tax as actually administered is beyond all doubt one of the worst taxes known in the civilized world. Because of its attempt to tax intangible as well as tangible things, it sins against the cardinal rules of uniformity, of equality and of universality of taxation. It puts a premium on dishonesty and debauches the public conscience; it reduces deception to a system, and makes a science of knavery; it presses hardest on those least able to pay; it imposes double taxation on one man and grants entire immunity to the next. In short, the general property tax is so flagrantly inequitable, that its retention can be explained only through ignorance or inertia. It is the cause of such crying injustice that its alteration or its abolition must become the battle cry of every statesman and reformer.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Based on data for the respective states from *Financial Statistics of State and Local Governments* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Printing Office, 1934).

<sup>8</sup> Edwin R. A. Seligman, *Essays in Taxation* (10th rev. ed.; New York: Macmillan Co., 1925), p. 62.

Counties are typically numerous in the southern states—and consequently, small in size and population and low in assessed valuation. In the seven states being given special consideration, 127 counties have populations of less than 10,000, and almost half have fewer than 20,000 people. The average size of Texas counties is slightly more than 1,000 square miles. This is the only state in the group

TABLE XLVIII

NUMBER OF COUNTIES IN SEVEN DEMONSTRATION STATES, AND PERCENTAGE HAVING LESS THAN 20,000 POPULATION, LESS THAN \$10,000,000 ASSESSED VALUATION, AND LESS THAN \$500 PER CAPITA ASSESSED VALUATION\*

STATE	NUMBER OF COUNTIES	PERCENTAGE OF ALL COUNTIES HAVING LESS THAN—		
		20,000 Population	\$10,000,000 Total Assessed Valuation	\$500 per Capita Assessed Valuation
Alabama.....	67	12	55	88
Louisiana.....	64	44	48	50
Mississippi.....	82	44	76	90
North Carolina.....	100	38	30	10
South Carolina.....	46	8	78	100
Tennessee.....	95	52	67	77
Texas.....	254	66	57	20
Total.....	708	.....	.....	.....
Average.....	.....	47	57	49

\* Based on data from *Financial Statistics of State and Local Government*, reports of the individual states.

which has counties as large as 2,000 square miles in area, while the average size of the county in California is more than 2,000 square miles. Table XLVIII summarizes these facts by showing the percentage of all counties in each of the seven states having demonstration libraries which have less than 20,000 in population, less than \$10,000,000 in assessed valuation subject to the general property tax, and less than \$500 per capita of assessed valuation.

Recent studies concerning land utilization also bear pertinently upon this point. Careful factual studies have shown that certain types of farm land are not sufficiently productive to maintain satis-



factory standards of living. Furthermore, the rate of tax delinquency is excessively high on submarginal lands, and the income from taxation is frequently not enough to support at reasonable standards such public services as schools, roads, and supervision of health. To maintain these services at satisfactory standards in some districts, the state must contribute within a few years more money than the entire assessed valuation of the districts. A similar situation in certain counties in West Virginia led to a recommendation that "where there are only four or five farm families per school it would be advisable for the school districts, the county, and the state to purchase these farms in order to close the schools and eliminate the expense of their maintenance."<sup>9</sup>

Among the findings and recommendations of a recent study in New York State the following are significant:

Careful field studies show that there is now a total of 5,800,000 acres of idle or submarginal land. . . . Even with comparatively high taxes on the full value of the farms these submarginal areas cannot carry their share of the expenses for schools, roads and other public services. . . . A large portion of these submarginal lands, at least 4.5 million acres, should be gradually acquired by the State and used for timber production, for game and wild life protection, for water-shed protection and for public recreation. . . . Altogether an enlarged public domain of some 9 million acres should eventually be created. This will be three times the present State holdings and more than one-fourth of the total area of the State."<sup>10</sup>

Similar conditions are found in many sections of the South, particularly in the mountainous, piedmont, and coastal sections, and affect adversely the possibilities of developing reasonably adequate public services. Some of these areas, consequently, should probably never be included in plans for the extension of state-wide library service; or, if the lands are not taken over by the state, service will necessarily have to be of the most limited type.

Data of the foregoing types lead to the conclusion that in the seven demonstration states from one-half to two-thirds of the counties cannot provide, out of purely local income, sufficient support for

<sup>9</sup> Millar Peck, Bernard Frank, and Paul A. Eke, "Economic Utilization of Marginal Lands in Nicholas and Webster Counties, W.Va." U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Technical Bulletin*, No. 303 (May, 1932).

<sup>10</sup> New York State Planning Board, *State Planning for New York* (Albany: J. B. Lyon Co., 1935), p. 11.

adequate library service, and to that extent must be considered ineffective units for library development. All of the demonstration counties have over 20,000 population and property assessed at more than \$10,000,000, although four fall within the group having less than \$500 per capita of assessed valuation. In two of the four, the figure is above \$400; while in the other two, the averages are considerably above those of the states in which they are situated.

In other southern states, conditions are somewhat similar to the seven in which demonstration libraries are located. In Georgia, for example, 60 counties have less than 10,000 population and 118 have fewer than 20,000 residents. Only one of the 118 counties with less than 20,000 population had, in 1931, an assessed valuation of as much as \$10,000,000.

Application of similar measures to the two states which lead in the development of county libraries, New Jersey and California, shows that no New Jersey county has fewer than 25,000 in population or less than \$30,000,000 in assessed valuation. In California, 24 counties have fewer than 20,000 population and 10 have less than \$10,000,000 in assessed valuation. However, of the 12 California counties without county library service, 9 fall in the group having less than 20,000 population.

A recent study<sup>11</sup> in New York State furnishes substantial support of the conclusions, particularly as they apply to the smaller counties. The study investigated the relation of community areas to town government in farming and marginal-farming areas. Fire protection and public library service were used as measures of the ability of the town government<sup>12</sup> to support public services. The data compiled show conclusively that the towns having both fire protection and public library service are those in the higher brackets in size of population and in average value per acre of all land and buildings.

<sup>11</sup> C. B. Wasson and Dwight Sanderson, "Relation of Community Areas to Town Government in the State of New York," *Bulletin*, No. 555 (April, 1933), Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, Ithaca.

<sup>12</sup> The New York town is a subdivision of the county comparable to the township in North Carolina or the militia district in Georgia. It is not an incorporated place, but may contain incorporated villages or cities. The chief functions of the town are: "the building of highways, the administration of justice and of poor relief, protection of public health, supervision of elections, assessment of property and the collection of taxes."

In the 208 towns having public library service, more than one-half contained trading centers used by the majority of the residents; whereas in the 187 towns without public library service, 64 per cent of the residents traded at centers located outside of the town limits. Provision of library service is shown to be positively related to population and to the value of real property and improvements, and to bear a definite relation to the community area as indicated by trading centers.

Thoughtful consideration of data of the foregoing types does not hold out bright prospects for the early development by the county governments of a system of public libraries which will effectively serve most of the population of the South. The situation seems to call for action along three lines: first, consolidation of areas small in size and in population to form larger units for service; second, joint financial support by the local unit, by the state, and possibly by the federal government; and third, general co-operation among libraries of every sort within a state. A state-wide system, with regional areas determined on the basis of careful studies of state resources, seems to be the logical development toward which progress should be made. The southern states are particularly favorable areas for such a plan, since the present lack of development would offer few obstacles to the creation of a unified, state-wide system.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See Joeckel, *op. cit.*, chap. x, "The Regional Problem: Suggestions for Its Solution."

## CHAPTER IX

### REGIONAL AND STATE DEVELOPMENTS

THE term "region" has been used with varying meanings, both in the library profession and in other fields. As frequently used in library literature, a "region" implies an area which is considered as a unit in providing the essential elements of general library service, such as an administrative head, a trained professional staff, a large central collection of books covering a broad range of subject matter, specialists and resources of printed materials sufficient to provide a high quality of general and technical reference service, readers' advisory service and specialized services to schools and various other groups in the community, and financial support sufficient to provide continuous maintenance and development at reasonable levels of efficiency.

A large city such as Chicago has a regional library to serve a group of outlying branches of the city system. The Los Angeles County Public Library has provided at Lancaster, 75 miles from Los Angeles, a regional branch to serve its agencies in the Antelope Valley.<sup>1</sup> The Louisiana Library Commission from its central collection at Baton Rouge offers service to all libraries and citizens in that state. Similarly, a national library would give service of certain types to a region circumscribed only by the national boundaries.

These illustrations make it clear that a library region can be most accurately defined in terms of function. In fact, efforts to define the optimum size of a region on any basis that does not consider functions to be served will probably lead ultimately to more harm than good for the cause of library extension. This does not imply that the boundaries of a region should not be accurately and sharply defined. As a matter of fact, exact definition in many cases will be absolutely necessary for legal reasons. The actual boundaries of a library region will be determined, in many cases, by the area contributing to its financial support.

<sup>1</sup> Helen E. Vogelsson, "A Regional Branch Library," *Library Journal*, LX, No. 10 (May 15, 1935), 429-30.