THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO STUDIES IN LIBRARY SCIENCE

COUNTY LIBRARY SERVICE IN THE SOUTH

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COUNTY LIBRARY SERVICE IN THE SOUTH

A STUDY OF
THE ROSENWALD COUNTY LIBRARY
DEMONSTRATION

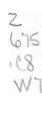
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PREFACE

brarians of the southeastern states sketched in bold outline a program for the development of library service for the various publics which were to be found in the South. This program contemplated: (1) the strengthening of state library extension agencies; (2) the extension of library service to rural areas through the development of county libraries; (3) the employment of school library supervisors by state departments of education; (4) the setting-up of new standards for libraries of secondary schools and colleges having membership in the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools; (5) the appointment of library field agents or representatives for the South who would serve as advisers to librarians and foundations interested in library development within the region; and (6) the establishment of additional library schools for the training of librarians in the southern field.

In 1929 the officers of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, long interested in the educational development of the South, decided to undertake the stimulation of library service in the South on a county-wide basis to all residents, urban and rural, white and black, in school and out. At the same time, they decided to attempt to stimulate interest in libraries in states without library extension agencies by providing personnel and other aid essential to the inauguration of general state-wide library advisory service.

In carrying this plan into effect, the Fund selected in 1929 and 1930 eleven counties in seven southern states, and appropriated approximately \$500,000 for the aid of libraries which would provide county-wide service to all the elements of their population. The counties selected and the amounts appropriated for them were: Mecklenburg, \$80,000, and Davidson, \$20,000, in North Carolina; Richland, \$75,000, and Charleston, \$80,000, in South Carolina;

¹ Cf. "objectives" and papers in *Proceedings of Southeastern Library Association*, Fourth Biennial Conference, Signal Mountain, Chattanooga, Tennessee, April 22–24, 1926, pp. 55–57.

Knox, \$20,000, Hamilton, \$80,000, and Shelby, \$71,000, in Tennessee; Walker, \$46,666, in Alabama; Coahoma, \$17,500, in Mississippi; Webster Parish, \$40,000, in Louisiana; and Jefferson County, \$12,500, in Texas.

The general financial plan was for the Fund to match local appropriations dollar for dollar the first two years; one dollar for two the second two years; and one dollar for four the fifth and final year. The demonstrations were to run for five years, the money used in matching the funds supplied by the Fund being "new" money or amounts in addition to that included by the counties in their budgets in the year previous to their co-operation with the Fund; and service was to be provided on a county-wide basis to all residents, irrespective of color, place of residence in the county, or educational status.

The five-year period of demonstration ended in 1934 and 1935, though in a number of instances it has been extended on account of conditions arising during the period which made the modification of the original plans desirable. Some of the demonstrations did not start until 1930, and the demonstration in Shelby County did not start until 1931.

In order to determine the value of the experiment, the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago was asked, at the beginning of 1934, to review the activities of the libraries, evaluate their achievements, and offer suggestions which, in the light of the experience gained, might prove of value in plans for future library development in the area. The School assumed responsibility for the study; its representatives visited all of the libraries, consulted with state library extension and educational agencies, county departments of education, public health, and agricultural extension, and many individuals, and then visited similar county libraries in California, New Jersey, and the Middle West, for the sake of comparison. The results of the study are set forth in the accompanying report.

In making the report available to the public, acknowledgment is gratefully made to the many organizations and individuals who have given generously of their time in furnishing information and assistance. Special acknowledgment is made to Dr. E. W. Knight, of the University of North Carolina, Dr. Benson Y. Landis, of the Country Life Association of America, Miss Julia Wright Merrill, of

the Library Extension Board of the American Library Association, and Miss Tommie Dora Barker, regional field agent for the South, of the American Library Association, who helped outline the study; to the officers of the Fund, particularly Dr. S. L. Smith, southern director, who made all their reports bearing upon the experiment available; to the librarians of the various libraries visited and their assistants; to the directors of library extension agencies and officers in various states who, through their experience and suggestions, enlarged the scope of the investigation; and to other local and state departments which were directly or indirectly concerned with library service. Acknowledgment is also made to the staff of the American Library Association Booklist for assistance in the handling of data on reading, to Mr. G. F. Purdy, research assistant in the Graduate Library School, for aid in the preparation of maps and graphs, and to Dr. H. W. Odum, director of the University of North Carolina Institute for Research in Social Science, for much of the information supplied concerning the social and economic background of the South.

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS September 1, 1935

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