

## CHAPTER VI

### WPA LIBRARY ASSISTANCE IN SOUTH CAROLINA: A STATE-WIDE PROGRAM OF PUBLIC AND SCHOOL LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

The first five chapters of this study have dealt with the evolution of federal assistance to libraries and the development, organization, and achievement of the entire WPA library assistance program. Chapters vi and vii present two case studies of individual state-wide WPA library projects to show by contrasting examples how this program has been adapted at the state level to two strikingly different sets of local conditions. Both projects are treated as of the spring of 1941. The first state treated, South Carolina, illustrates the opportunistic utilization of federal aid, by distributing its benefits as widely as possible in a short time in order to give every section of the state a share in the program from the outset. In the second case presented, that of Minnesota, the available federal assistance was concentrated in a limited number of demonstrations for a selected group of counties, according to a planned program of library development for the state.

In South Carolina, where (with three exceptions) county-wide library service was previously virtually non-existent, project operation was planned by the WPA itself, with a view toward providing every county in the state with at least some measure of area-wide service. In Minnesota, on the other hand, the project was planned and controlled by the state's authorized library agency, which preferred to limit area-wide demonstrations to selected unserved counties best suited to the establishment of permanent, tax-supported library systems. In the one instance, therefore, the program was developed to produce as extensive immediate benefits as possible; in the other the governing consideration was the achievement of gains that could be readily maintained by local and county library taxes.

South Carolina was chosen as representative of the South-

east region, although in many respects Louisiana, Georgia, or Mississippi might have served as well. Like the rest of the region, South Carolina is relatively high in its proportion of children and Negroes, in farm tenancy, in illiteracy and rural population, and in the proportion of its population without library service; and it is low in economic ability to support public services. Yet the situation in any of these characteristics is not so extreme as to distort its value as an example. It holds special interest for this study because of the wide spatial coverage of its WPA library program and because, lacking an active state agency, most of its library development in recent years has resulted directly from WPA project assistance.

### The Setting for Library Development

Like the entire social and economic development of a region, library progress in a given state is conditioned, directly or indirectly, by the characteristics of its climate, topography, and natural resources, by its actual and potential wealth, and by the composition and distribution of its population. Thus, any realistic study of an individual state's library problem must begin with a consideration of its geographic setting, its social and economic structure, and its existing library facilities. Accordingly, these factors are summarized briefly to depict the background against which WPA library assistance developed in South Carolina.

Geography.<sup>1</sup>--South Carolina, the smallest of the states in the Southeast region, occupies a triangular area of some 30,000 square miles. One side of the triangle lies along the Atlantic ocean. The other two sides meet in the northwest corner of the state in what is known as its "Alpine" section, a hilly region where the elevation ranges from 1,000 to 3,000 feet. The climate of the state is warm, and very humid near the sea. Cotton, tobacco, and corn are the principal crops, which are produced largely by tenant farmers. The weaving of cotton textiles is the state's most important single industry. Thus its manufacturing centers, largely located in the northwestern part of the state,

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<sup>1</sup>Based on data from the WPA Writers' Program publication, South Carolina, a Guide to the Palmetto State (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941).

are essentially factory towns, with separate "mill villages" for the workers in the spinning mills.

The 46 counties of the state range in size from 389 to 1,214 square miles. The commercial life of the state focuses in 11 regional trading centers, each of which serves from one to six counties. Several counties in the southern part of the state are in the trade areas of Augusta and Savannah, Georgia.

Geographically, economically, and even culturally South Carolina is divided into distinct sections. Parallelling the seaboard is the coastal plain, with its swamps and its agricultural inland. In the center of the state is the upper pine belt and the sand hill region, which includes the state capital, Columbia. From this section the land rises to the Piedmont Plateau and the hill country in the northwest, which constitutes the third basic region within the state.

Population.<sup>2</sup>--In 1940 South Carolina had a total population of 1,899,804, an increase of almost 10 per cent over 1930. The most striking characteristics of the population are its high proportion of Negroes and children, its low educational level, and its low degree of urbanization. More than 42 per cent of the inhabitants of South Carolina are Negroes. Approximately half of its population is under twenty years of age. The state has a reproduction rate of 125, as against 96 for the nation as a whole. In 1930, when the percentage of illiteracy (among persons ten years of age and over) for the United States was 4.3 per cent, South Carolina, with 14.9 per cent of its population (over ten) illiterate, ranked higher than any other state in this regard. In 1940 less than 15 per cent of its inhabitants over twenty-five years of age had completed 8 years of schooling, and almost 35 per cent had not completed even 5 years.

South Carolina is overwhelmingly a rural state, since less than 25 per cent of its inhabitants live in cities or towns of 2,500 or more persons. Only four of its 46 counties have cities of over 20,000, and only six others have towns with as many as 10,000 inhabitants. Twenty-two, or almost half of its counties, have no communities with as many as 5,000 inhabitants; and

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<sup>2</sup>This section is based on U.S. Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, and Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940 (Washington: Government Printing Office).

ll do not even contain villages of 2,500 persons. The total population of individual counties ranges from 10,000 to 136,000 inhabitants. However, as can be seen from Figure 13, only 10, or less than one-fourth, have as many as 50,000 persons living within their borders.

Economic ability.---In any index of economic or financial ability South Carolina ranks near the bottom in comparison with the other 47 states. For example, in 1940, when the average per capita income of the nation was \$573, it was \$281 in South Carolina, which was 45th in order of rank among all the states.<sup>3</sup> In assessed valuation of units upon which library service depends for support South Carolina is also relatively poor. Thus less than 20 per cent of its counties have as much as \$10,000,000 in assessed valuation (the amount needed to raise \$10,000 by a 1-mill library tax levy) whereas 70 per cent of the counties in North Carolina and more than half of those in Louisiana have valuations of \$10,000,000 or more. Moreover, it is the only state in the Southeast in which no single county has a valuation as high as \$500 per capita.<sup>4</sup>

The county as a unit for library service.---Under modern conditions of transportation a single area-wide library system can provide adequate service throughout a territory of 5,000 square miles from a centrally located headquarters collection. Yet in South Carolina no county has an area in excess of 1,300 square miles, and 41 of its 46 counties contain less than 1,000 square miles.

The minimum population standard recommended as a basis for an efficient unit for area-wide county or regional library service is from 40,000 to 50,000 inhabitants.<sup>5</sup> Preferably such a unit will be located in the natural trade area of a central library containing at least 20,000 volumes. Figure 13 shows that almost one-third of the counties in South Carolina do not have populations of even 25,000. In fact, less than one-fourth of

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<sup>3</sup>U.S. Department of Commerce, Survey of Current Business, August, 1941, "Income Payments by States," p. 14.

<sup>4</sup>Tommie Dora Barker, Libraries of the South (Chicago: American Library Association, 1936), p. 38.

<sup>5</sup>Louis R. Wilson and Edward A. Wight, County Library Service in the South (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), p. 196.

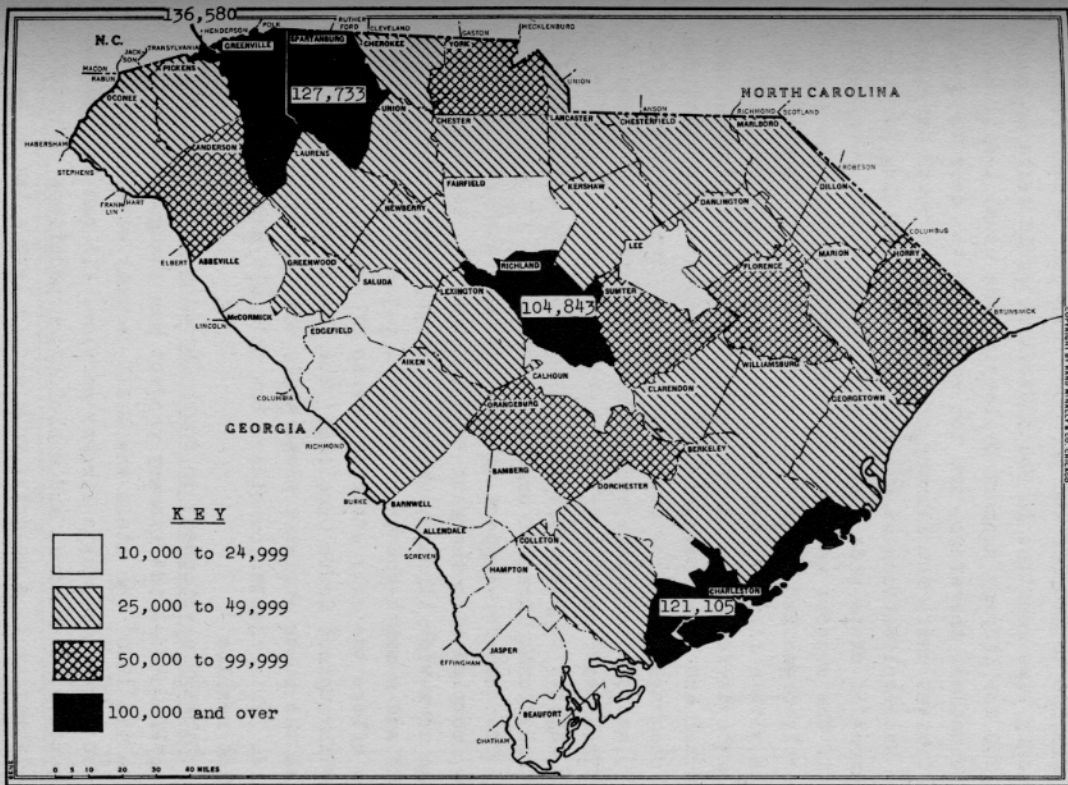


Fig. 13.--Population of South Carolina, by Counties, 1940\*

\*Source: Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940.

them have cities of 10,000 or more, which could serve as headquarters for a county library system.

The minimum amount of support required to maintain adequately a county or regional library system has been variously set at \$15,000 to \$20,000 and \$25,000.<sup>6</sup> As can be seen from Figure 14 only five counties in South Carolina could raise as much as \$15,000 for library support by levying the usual 1-mill tax. Single counties, therefore, are too small and too poor to constitute efficient units for library organization in South Carolina.

The implications of the South Carolina setting for the development of state-wide library service are clear. Geographically, if the support were equitably distributed and the service efficiently organized, this state should be able to provide all counties with a library program of at least minimum adequacy. The climate is favorable for year-round bookmobile service, and the natural and human resources of the state are sufficient for such a program. However, the joint evils of depleted land, farm tenancy, and a single cash crop economy, together with absentee ownership of many manufacturing enterprises, seriously limits the state's ability to support strong, independent county libraries along traditional lines of organization.

The need for supporting entirely separate facilities for Negroes, coupled with the fact that few counties could support even one area-wide library, makes it evident that state and federal aid and a multi-county or regional pattern of library organization offers the only efficient means of developing permanent service throughout South Carolina. The WPA library program has provided the state at least temporarily with the stimulus of federal aid. This chapter considers how this aid has been used and with what results.

Library development in South Carolina before the WPA.--- When the WPA state-wide library project was inaugurated in South Carolina (in 1935) the state was still largely without free tax-supported area-wide public library service. It had laws permitting counties, townships, and municipal corporations to establish public libraries by a majority vote and to levy a tax up to two mills for their support. In 1934 these laws were extended to per-

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<sup>6</sup>Louis R. Wilson, The Geography of Reading (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), p. 83.

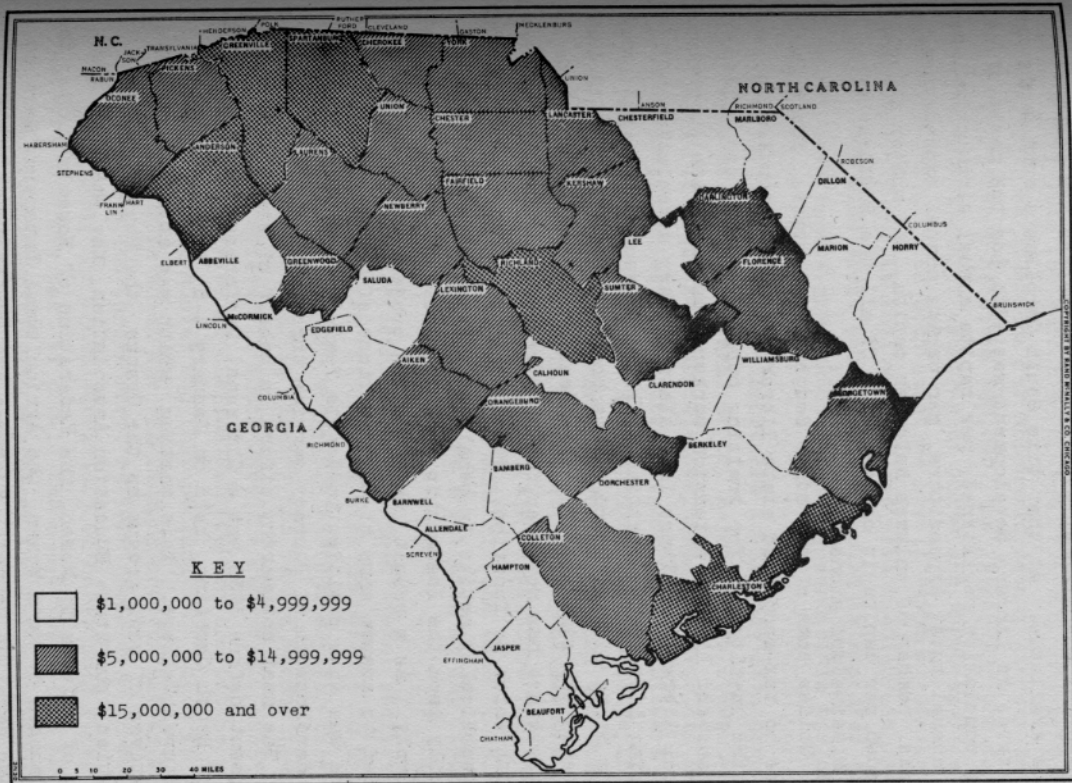


Fig. 14.--Assessed valuation in counties in South Carolina in 1939\*

\*Source: 1939 Report of the Comptroller General of the State of South Carolina

mit the establishment of regional library systems. However, library development, left entirely to local initiative, had been limited to the larger urban centers for the most part; and service to Negroes was virtually non-existent before WPA assistance was made available. At that time South Carolina's rank among the other states in library development was 46th (on the basis of per cent of population registered, per capita annual circulation, per capita annual total expenditure, per capita annual expenditure for books, number of volumes held per capita, and number of volumes added per capita in one year).<sup>7</sup> Of all the Southeastern states Mississippi alone ranked lower.

Unlike some of the other Southeastern states, South Carolina has no tax-supported state library agency or commission, no accredited institution for training public, school, and college librarians and library extension workers, and no state supervisor of school libraries. There is a state library association of practising librarians, a citizens' library association, and, nominally, a State Library Board. This board was established in 1929 to serve as the state's official extension agency; but to date the legislature has not seen fit to give it a regular appropriation with which to function. Thus, while each of the above groups are spasmodically active in behalf of library development, they apparently lack the leadership needed to co-ordinate their efforts effectively. As a result, when the WPA project came into being, it tended to assume some of the functions of a state agency, since it alone was in a position to devote funds and personnel to the actual development of library service throughout the state.

The most noteworthy effort in behalf of state-wide library development before 1935 was a Citizens' Conference on the Library Needs of South Carolina, held on January 4-5, 1934, at Clemson Agricultural College. This meeting, which was attended by "representatives of such groups as the Grange, the Parent-Teachers Association, the State Education Association, the American Association of University Women, the Federation of Women's Clubs, the State Council of Farm Women, the Agricultural Extension Service, the South Carolina Council, Business and Professional Women's Clubs,"<sup>8</sup> discussed the present status of South Carolina's libra-

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>8</sup> Barker, op. cit., p. 10.



ries, adopted a program for library development,<sup>9</sup> and appointed a follow-up committee.

Another important event in South Carolina's pre-WPA library history was the selection of two of its counties, Charleston and Richland, as locations for Rosenwald county library demonstrations. The former received \$80,000, the latter \$75,000 for five-year demonstrations of county-wide white and Negro service in 1930. However, since both counties are so atypical of the state as a whole (in population, wealth, and urbanization) it is questionable how much these demonstrations could be expected to affect the development of area-wide library service in the state as a whole.

A third episode of importance to library development in this state was the employment of Dr. Helen Gordon Stewart as a field agent to organize a legislative campaign for state aid and support for an active state library agency. Miss Stewart was engaged in 1939 with a special fund obtained by the State Library Board. For several months she traveled throughout the state, organizing citizen interest in behalf of library development with state aid. Unfortunately, however, the legislature failed to pass the library assistance bill, and her work came to an end. In 1942 the State Library Board was still without any financial support.

Since no state agency has published annual statistics on South Carolina libraries, it is well-nigh impossible to trace their development from year to year. Fortunately for this study, however, data on "the public library and public school library situation as it existed in South Carolina January 1, 1932" was compiled and published at Clemson College for the Citizens' Conference referred to above; and this publication<sup>10</sup> clearly reveals the conditions with which the WPA library project had to deal.

According to this survey, in 1932 there were 56 so-called "public libraries" in South Carolina. Of these only 30 were supported wholly or in part by public funds (15 wholly and 15 in part). The remaining 26 were dependent for their continued opera-

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<sup>9</sup>The text of this "program" appears in ibid., pp. 174-75.

<sup>10</sup>Mary E. Frayser, The Libraries of South Carolina (South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station of Clemson Agricultural College, Bulletin 292), October, 1933.

tion upon subscriptions, rentals, and donations. Some were apparently without any regular support. Some were semi-private. Some did not permit their books to circulate. Only 6 of the entire 56 libraries had as much as \$5,000 annual income. The total library support for the state was \$168,832, or 10 cents per capita (compared to 37 cents per capita for the United States as a whole).

The total collections of these libraries amounted to 304,756 volumes, or .12 volumes per capita for the state (compared with .82 per capita for the nation). Their total circulation was 1,097,439 volumes per year, or .63 volumes per capita (compared with 3.67 per capita for the United States). Of the thirty libraries receiving "some public support" only five had collections of 10,000 volumes or more. Less than one-fourth of the entire 56 libraries were known to be cataloged. Less than one-half were reported as being "open daily except Sunday," even for a few hours. All told, according to this study, not a single library in the state was up to the American Library Association standard in either book provision or income.<sup>11</sup>

In terms of area-wide coverage South Carolina's lack of library service is perhaps even more striking. As shown in Figure 15, there were in 1932 only three counties giving systematic county-wide service (including the two counties then operated as Rosenwald demonstrations). This map also locates the 18 local libraries with incomes of at least \$1,000 and the 12 others receiving at least "some" support from public funds. The 30 "publicly-supported" libraries are situated in only 25 of the state's 46 counties. Thus, by simple subtraction it becomes evident that before federal assistance was made available for library development 21 counties (with an aggregate population of 535,450) were without a single tax-supported library within their borders.

The differences in availability of library service to white and Negro populations and to urban and rural inhabitants also characterize the fundamental inequalities in the state's pattern of library distribution. In 1932 more than 60 per cent of the state's entire population was without any public library service. In rural areas (which then included almost 80 per cent of the population) more than 75 per cent of the people were with-

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

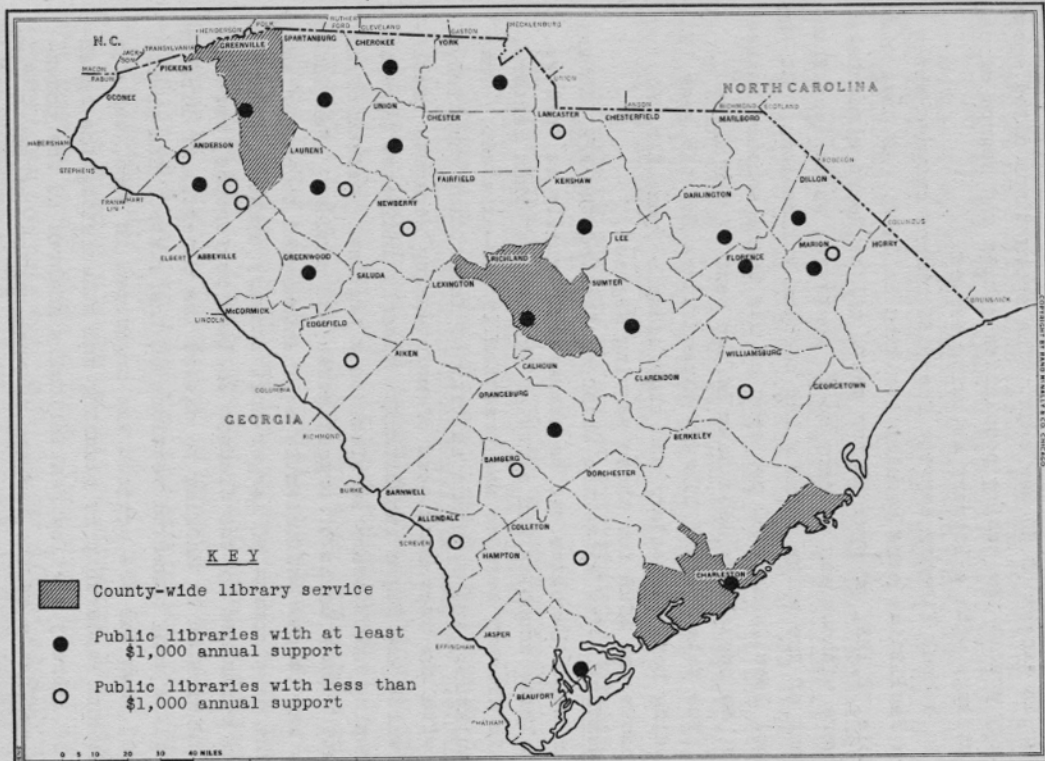


Fig. 15.--Library service in South Carolina in 1932\*

\*Source: Mary E. Frayser, *The Libraries of South Carolina* (Bulletin No. 292, South Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, Clemson Agricultural College), October, 1933.

out service. Almost 94 per cent of the urban population, on the other hand, had at least some type of library service at that time. Since only 3 counties were giving any regular service to Negroes, the total per cent of population without service was actually far in excess of 60 per cent. The proportions cited above erroneously credit the entire population (white and Negro) of each town or village with a library as being served.

In school library service the differences between white and Negro facilities were equally striking in 1932. At that time, for example, 2,123, or over 90 per cent, of the Negro elementary schools were without any library books whatever, while less than 40 per cent of the white schools had no book collections. At the high school level almost 80 per cent of the Negro schools lacked libraries, as opposed to less than 14 per cent of the white schools. The total school library expenditures for the year 1931-32 (including both elementary and high schools) were \$15,581 for white schools and \$728 for those serving Negroes.<sup>12</sup>

Summary.--The situation which confronted the WPA library project in South Carolina can be summarized briefly as follows. Except in three counties and a few of the larger urban centers, free public library service was practically non-existent. The size, population, and economic ability of individual counties, together with the increased cost of maintaining separate facilities for white and Negro inhabitants, clearly indicated a need for developing new library services on a regional instead of an independent county basis of organization and support. Few local libraries had become sufficiently well entrenched to hamper seriously the development of larger-unit library systems. Citizen groups, as evidenced by the Clemson College conference, were apparently interested in working to extend the benefits of library service to the many unserved sections of the state. The great need, then, when the WPA project was organized in 1935, was for assistance and leadership in planning and stimulating the establishment of library service realistically adapted to the potentialities and needs of the varying natural regions of South Carolina.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 26-31.

### The State-wide WPA Library Project

The WPA library project in South Carolina was established in 1935, when all former, locally-sponsored FERA projects were reorganized on a state-wide basis for WPA operation. This section briefly describes the project's objectives and organization, traces the scope of its activity through June, 1941, and discusses such aspects of its administration and service as may be worthy of special mention.

Objectives and organization.---From the beginning the basic objective of the South Carolina state-wide WPA library project has been to extend library service to all parts of the state formerly without it in the hope that such service would be perpetuated locally with support from public funds after a reasonable period of demonstration. This objective was expected to be achieved by engaging directly in the following types of activity:

1. Providing workers to assist established libraries in expanding their services.
2. Establishing local libraries or reading rooms in communities previously without a local library.
3. Extending library service to entire counties by bookmobile and deposit service from county depository headquarters.

As the State Supervisor has described the function of the project in a recent annual report: "It is serving somewhat in the capacity of a state library agency, in that it has been able to initiate library service, co-ordinate services, set up standards, stimulate development of services by assisting in the purchase of bookmobiles and by loaning project-owned books, supplementing the services of existing libraries, offering a cataloging and book selection service, and supplying the supervision of a professionally trained staff."<sup>13</sup>

In keeping with the policy of spreading the benefits of the program to all areas without library service, the project undertook at the outset to make its facilities equally available to all counties alike. Thus it early developed an administrative

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<sup>13</sup>Federal Works Agency, Work Projects Administration, State of South Carolina, "Statewide Library Project Annual Report, July 1, 1939-June 30, 1940," Introduction. (Mimeographed.)

organization large enough to provide adequate direct supervision over operating units in all parts of the state. The personnel of the state-wide project, therefore, consists of a State Supervisor and her staff, four district supervisors, each with at least three assistants and several area supervisors, and numerous unit supervisors or project foremen in immediate charge of groups of individual certified workers. (See Fig. 17, p. 156, for a map of the project's administrative district and area subdivisions.) Following the plan of dual supervision described in chapter v (pp. 98-140), the district supervisors are "administratively responsible" to their respective district managers and "technically responsible" to the State Library Project Supervisor. In practice the latter officer actually directs most aspects of project planning and operation.

The specific details of this state-wide project organization appear in Figure 16. Under this arrangement the State Supervisor, administratively and technically responsible for the entire project, is guided and assisted in planning project development by the Library Project Advisory Board and the State Board of Education which (owing to the lack of an active state library agency) is the project's official sponsor. Immediately responsible to the State Supervisor are her assistant supervisor and the librarian in charge of the project's central book selection and processing unit.

In each of the state's four administrative districts the district supervisor is responsible for project operation throughout the district; and her three assistant supervisors, respectively, are in charge of the training of workers in public relations and general library methods, library extension techniques, and book repair. The various area supervisors, also responsible to the district supervisors, are each in charge of actual project operation in a given area, usually comprising from one to five counties (as shown in Fig. 17). Under their direction the foremen or supervisors of individual units oversee the daily activities of the certified library aides.

Advisory assistance and co-operation at the county level is available to the area supervisors through each county's citizen's library committee and a county co-sponsor (usually the county board of education or a county library board). Finally, where workers are placed in established libraries the local li-

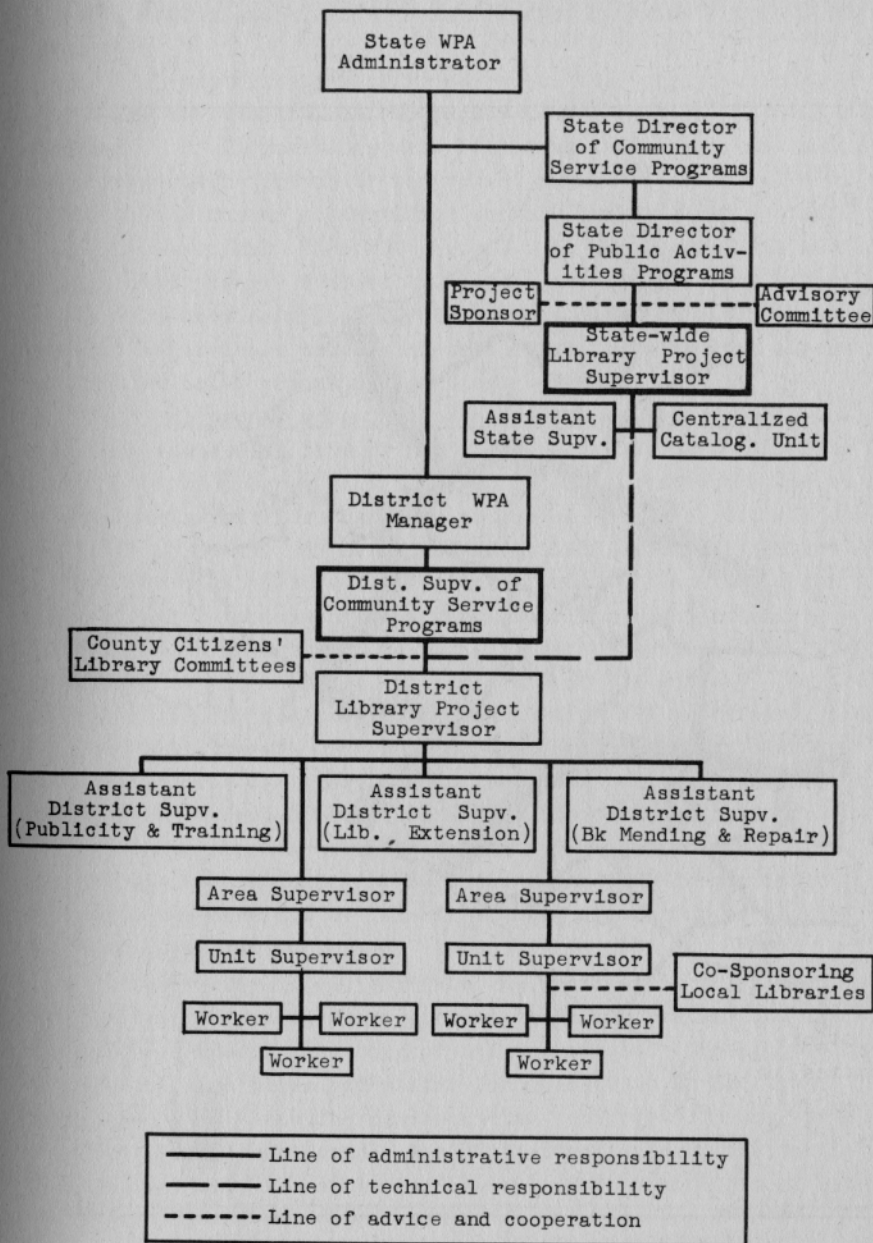


Fig. 16.--Organization of the South Carolina State-wide WPA Library Project in 1941.

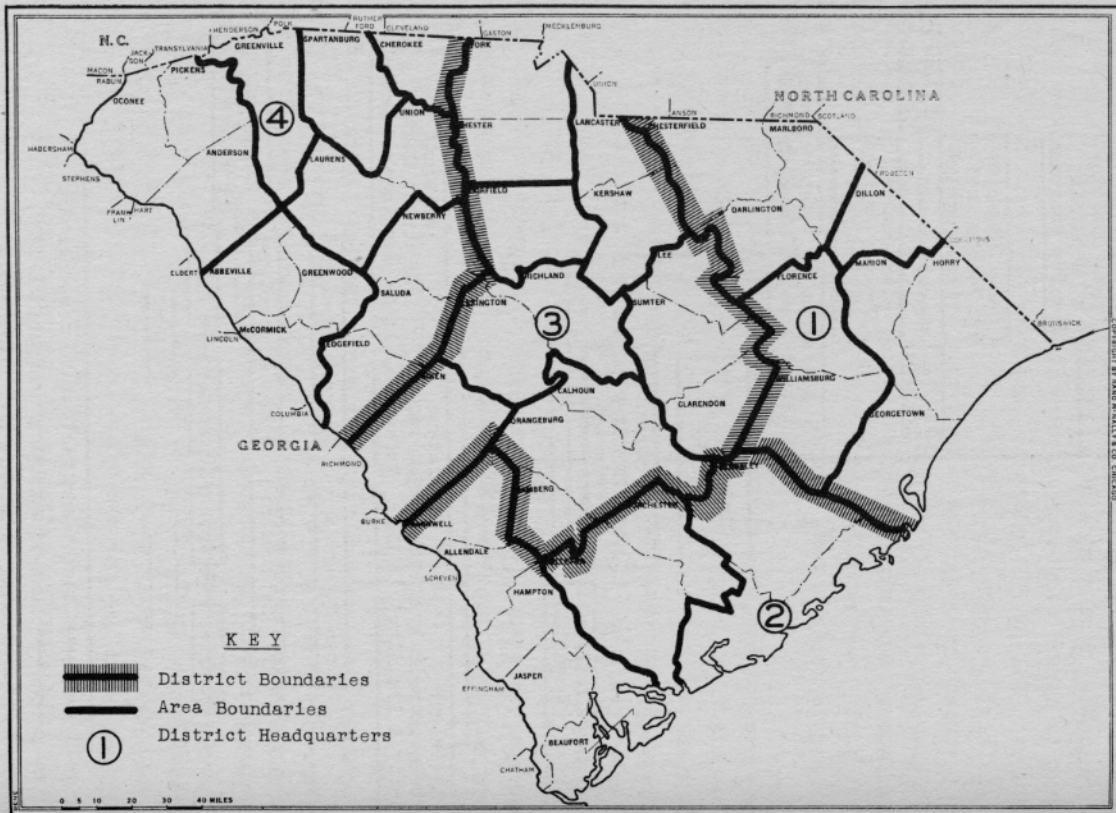


Fig. 17.--South Carolina State-wide WPA Library Project district and area supervisory boundaries.



brarian usually exercises some supervision over their day-to-day activity.

The supervisory staff required by this organizational plan would include at least 40 persons (down through the area supervisors) if all positions were filled as indicated. Actually, since permissible quotas of non-relief personnel are related directly to the number of certified workers employed, this staff usually numbers only 25 or 30 persons. In March, 1941, it had 28 members, including 9 trained librarians and 19 with some experience and in-service training. Thus, many district and assistant district supervisors serve also part of the time as area supervisors for selected groups of counties.

Development, scope, and achievement by June, 1941.--Unlike some state-wide library projects, it cannot be said of the South Carolina program that it began in a limited sphere and expanded slowly until its benefits ultimately reached into all sections of the state. As early as March, 1936, the State Supervisor reported that \$182,000 of federal funds were available for library relief employment, and that traveling book exchanges or extension work in schools and local libraries were already being carried on in all counties, with a staff of 734 women.<sup>14</sup> By the middle of 1937, 23 bookmobiles, obtained with WPA assistance, had been put into operation to provide county-wide library service in as many formerly unserved counties. All told, the project obtained 33 different bookmobiles and at its peak employed more than 1,000 persons throughout the state. Thus, from the beginning it has been a policy of South Carolina's WPA organization to spread the benefits of federal library aid as far as possible while the opportunity lasted.

Since July, 1941, owing to the increase in private employment, the library assistance program, like the rest of the WPA, has greatly reduced the scope of its operations. Throughout the nation many weak units and entire demonstrations in counties least likely to establish permanent tax-supported library service have been discontinued. The statistical data on the South Carolina project, therefore, are presented for the month of March,

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<sup>14</sup>Ida Belle Entrekin, "WPA Library Projects in South Carolina" (Mimeographed statement prepared by the State Supervisor for release to the press, radio, and the American Library Association, March 1, 1936).

1941, a period during which project activity was by no means at its peak, but while units were still operating in every county in the state. These basic statistics on project operation appear in Table 16.

TABLE 16  
SOUTH CAROLINA STATE-WIDE WPA LIBRARY PROJECT:  
BASIC STATISTICS<sup>a</sup>

Item	White	Negro	Total
Number of units <sup>b</sup> operated.....	392	25	417
Personnel:			
Certified workers.....	624	28	652
Supervisors.....	36	0	36
Total.....	660	28	688
Number of counties assisted...	46	12	46
WPA-operated county bookmo- biles.....	29	0	29
Bookstock:			
Purchased by WPA.....	19,826	477	20,303
Owned by counties.....	396,618	35,027	431,645
Total.....	416,444	35,504	451,948
Adult.....	230,265	24,727	254,992
Juvenile.....	186,179	10,777	196,956
Registration:			
Adult.....	72,314	3,339	75,653
Juvenile.....	79,639	6,763	86,402
Total.....	151,953	10,102	162,055
Circulation:			
Adult.....	105,357	6,666	112,023
Juvenile.....	199,791	8,838	208,629
Total.....	305,148	15,504	320,652
Total circulation 7/1/38- 6/30/39.....	3,729,967	157,110	3,887,077
Estimated population served.	573,403	46,920	620,323

<sup>a</sup>Based on official project reports. Unless otherwise noted, the data refer to project operation as of March, 1941.

<sup>b</sup>A "unit" refers to a library, school, bookmending workshop, reading room, deposit station, or bookmobile in which a library project worker or group of workers is employed.

According to this factual summary, the WPA had at that time 688 employees (including supervisory personnel) engaged in library service activities in 46 counties. Among the certified

(relief) workers represented in this figure 246 were staffing various school library services, 174 were employed in 25 regional book repair units, 104 were public library aides or attendants, and 50 were operating area-wide bookmobile service in 29 different counties. Twenty-eight were Negroes, engaged in providing various library services to members of their own race in 12 counties.

The data on book stock, circulation, and expenditures involved in the operation of library services operated by WPA workers give a clear indication of the extent of this program. (Statistics on the cost of the project are presented in Table 17.)

TABLE 17

SOUTH CAROLINA STATE-WIDE WPA LIBRARY PROJECT  
OPERATING EXPENDITURES, AS OF JUNE 30, 1941<sup>a</sup>

Date	WPA Expenditures	Sponsors' Contribution	Total
July, 1940-June, 1941	\$ 478,118	\$285,586 <sup>b</sup>	\$ 763,704
July, 1935-June, 1941	2,632,966	936,576 <sup>b</sup>	3,569,542

<sup>a</sup>Source: WPA Division of Statistics, Washington, D.C.

<sup>b</sup>Includes amounts credited for space, heat, light, equipment, and the use of books belonging to various co-sponsors.

Moreover, the relative importance of WPA assistance to libraries in South Carolina becomes evident when these figures are studied in relation to those on library service in the state in 1932. For example, in 1932 South Carolina's public libraries had a book stock of 304,756 volumes and an annual circulation of less than 1,100,000, whereas in 1941 WPA-operated library systems had a stock of 450,000 volumes (including 20,000 bought with federal funds) and a book circulation of approximately 3,500,000. Similarly, in contrast with the \$168,831 spent for library service throughout the state in 1932, the WPA alone spent \$478,118 as its share in the cost of library project operation during the fiscal year 1940-41.

Unfortunately the statistics on library conditions in 1932 and in 1941 are not actually comparable. The former data

include only public libraries, while the latter refer to a program which includes both public and school library service in many counties. Nevertheless, if these limitations are borne in mind, these comparisons clearly suggest the importance with which WPA library assistance is regarded in this state. All told, from 1935 to 1941 the federal government spent over \$2,500,000 on South Carolina's library work relief program, or more than twice what the state itself would normally spend for public libraries in the same period of time (at the rate of expenditure cited in 1932).

In terms of library coverage equally striking contrasts appear when area-wide service before WPA is compared with that available in 1941. Whereas in 1932 there were only 3 counties with rural library service (see Fig. 15), in 1941, 36 of the state's 46 counties were receiving county-wide service by bookmobile, either from established libraries or from WPA-operated library service demonstrations (see Fig. 18).

In 8 of the 10 counties still without area-wide service in 1941, county-wide demonstrations had been attempted and abandoned. Most of these counties were simply too small or too poor to be able to support an independent, permanent library system. In all 10 of them, however, the WPA is still making some service available to individual towns and schools. In March, 1941, it had 84 workers in these underprivileged counties, operating or assisting in maintaining 9 county depository centers, 6 community libraries or reading rooms, and 44 school library collections.

Summary.--The scope of library project assistance in South Carolina can be summarized by pointing out that as a result of its state-wide policy of organization and operation the WPA has made some form of library service--however thinly distributed and however temporary it may be--available to every county in the state. It has also stimulated the expenditure of approximately \$50,000 annually by counties participating in the program, as cash contributions of "new money" for library service. Finally, it has brought thousands of dollars worth of additional effort to bear upon library development (in terms of space, heat, light, equipment, supplies, book collections, and citizen effort). Unfortunately the amount of money contributed by individual counties is rarely enough to support a library system alone. The real permanence of the program's benefits, therefore, can not be measured until WPA aid is completely withdrawn and county-wide

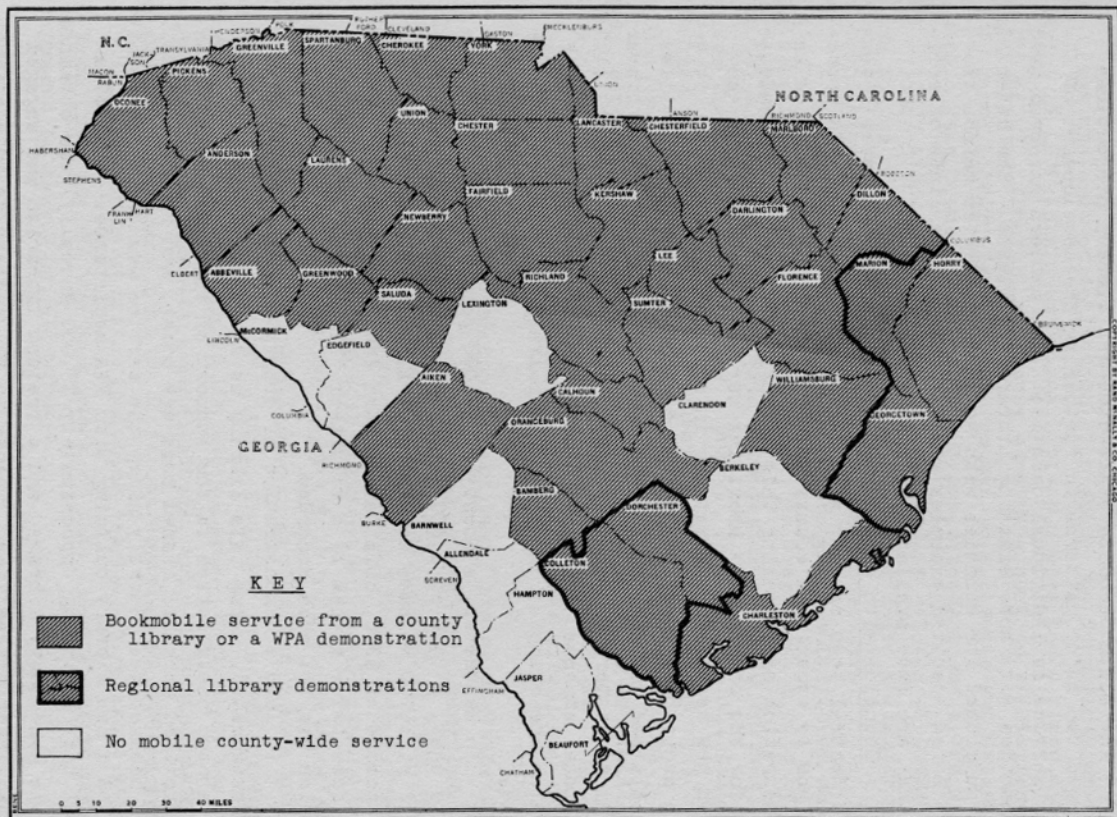


Fig. 18.--County-wide library service in South Carolina in March, 1941

services are either supported from county funds or discontinued.

### Two Patterns of WPA Library Assistance

The South Carolina state-wide WPA library project has followed two major patterns in furthering the development of library service in individual counties. One pattern has been used in counties with some existing library facilities. The other has been developed for counties with no library service before the WPA. A few specific examples will illustrate the kinds of service that are made available in each instance.

Counties with existing local libraries.---Wherever a county had a central town or city with a library of its own, WPA procedure was to organize a county-wide system of library service on a demonstration basis, using this library as a nucleus or headquarters for the county. By providing workers, limited funds, selected new books, and assistance in securing a bookmobile, it secured contributions of funds from county and school authorities, and obtained the full co-operation of the original public library, which, as center of a county system, stood to gain much at little additional expense to itself. Lancaster, Greenwood, and Sumter counties are examples in which this pattern was carried out with success.

In Lancaster, a county of 27,000 population in 1930, the county seat, a town of 3,500 inhabitants, had a small "public library" of 1,700 volumes before the WPA. This library had an annual income of \$300, obtained in part from public funds. It was kept open twice a week by a volunteer "librarian." Its book circulation was not even recorded.<sup>15</sup>

In 1936 a demonstration of county-wide library service was inaugurated, using this library as a nucleus. The county made a cash contribution to the support of the undertaking. The WPA provided workers, loaned some new books, and rented a chassis for a bookmobile. Shortly after the service was begun the county erected a new library building with PWA assistance. In 1937 a 1-mill tax (providing approximately \$7,000 annually) was obtained for the new county library, and a trained librarian was engaged to administer the service. Thanks to WPA assistance in staffing

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<sup>15</sup>All data on libraries in South Carolina before the WPA are taken from Frayser, op. cit.

the program during its first years, this library was able to apply a relatively high proportion of its new funds to the systematic strengthening of its book collection. Thus, by 1941 it had increased its own book stock to over 20,000 volumes, or more than ten times the size of collection with which the demonstration was begun. In 1939 this county-wide library system had a circulation of 274,420.<sup>16</sup> Today it regularly devotes a portion of its funds to a branch library for Negroes, housed in a local Negro training school. This branch has a regular Negro attendant and a WPA Negro library aide. Its collection, consisting largely of books given to the community by Harvey D. Kelsey, a Negro philanthropist of Washington, D.C., includes more than 8,000 volumes.

The pattern of development in Greenwood county took much the same form as it did in Lancaster. In Greenwood, a city of 11,000, a Carnegie library, with a bookstock of 7,500 volumes, became the nucleus of a county library. In 1937 a 1-mill tax was obtained for its support, and separate cataloging and county departments were created to handle the increase in staff work. As a municipal library in 1932 it had had a circulation of 40,000. As a county library in 1939 its circulation was 106,922. By 1941 it had a staff of 3 trained librarians and 4 WPA aides, and an income close to \$10,000.

Although Sumter county did not begin its county-wide demonstration until 1938, it also followed the pattern described above with success. A city of approximately 12,000 in 1930, it had a Carnegie library with an income of \$1,750 and a bookstock of 5,500 volumes. During 1939 it obtained a 1/2-mill county tax, which early in 1941 was increased to a full mill (to produce an income of between \$8,000 and \$10,000). In 1932 the Sumter public library had a circulation of 33,000. In 1939, as a full-fledged county library it circulated 166,998 volumes. By 1941 it was serving a Negro community, a Negro school, and (by bookmobile and deposit service) more than 35 different schools and lending centers throughout the county. Including nearly 500 selected titles on loan from the WPA the book stock of this library system had increased to almost 25,000 volumes.

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<sup>16</sup>"Recent Library Development in South Carolina" (a mimeographed pamphlet, compiled in 1939 and issued in 1940, without imprint, by the WPA state-wide library project).

Aiken, Darlington, Orangeburg, Cherokee, Chester, and Newberry are other counties where the above pattern has been followed with more or less success. Some of these counties now have a regular 1-mill library tax and a librarian paid by the county. Others have been continued on a demonstration basis with annual appropriations from their county delegations.

Counties with no public libraries.--WPA assistance to counties formerly without any library facilities has followed quite a different pattern. In some of these counties the WPA did attempt for a time to develop demonstrations of area-wide service, but abandoned the effort when it became evident that the resources of such counties were simply inadequate to support permanent, independent library systems. By 1941, therefore, its pattern of aid to these counties consisted merely in helping to staff and service local reading rooms in communities willing and able to make token contributions to their support.

Barnwell, Hampton, Jasper, and McCormick are examples of this group of counties. All four of these counties lie along the Georgia border, in the poorest section of the state. They are all small in area, completely rural, extremely poor, high in illiteracy, and have populations consisting largely of tenant Negroes. Thus they are entirely lacking in conditions favorable for county library development.

Barnwell, with a population of 14,000 Negroes and only 7,000 white persons (in 1930) had no library whatever before the WPA period. In 1937 the state-wide project started a reading room in the county seat, a village of 1,800 persons. From this center a few deposits were sent out to other communities; and in 1939 another reading room was established in Williston, a town of 1,000. In 1939 these two reading rooms had a combined book stock of 585 volumes. They had 417 borrowers and a circulation of 3,660 for the year. By 1941 the WPA was operating 7 units (including 5 schools) in this county. In March of that year it reported a total book stock of 4,570 for the county, including 372 volumes on loan from the WPA. Admittedly this can still hardly be called a library; but it may perhaps serve to strengthen the resources of a regional library system if this county ever becomes part of such a multi-county unit. With an assessed valuation of less than \$3,500,000, it can never develop a sound county-wide library program without substantial outside aid.



Hampton county, with a population of 10,000 Negroes and 7,000 white persons in 1930 had no libraries whatever until 1936, when the WPA opened a community reading room at the county seat, a village of 900 inhabitants. By the end of 1939 this "library" had 1,900 volumes, 778 registered borrowers, and an annual circulation of 4,279. In 1941 the WPA was providing token service in 4 schools and 2 reading rooms in various parts of the county.

Jasper, a county with barely 10,000 inhabitants (of whom two-thirds were Negroes) in 1930, has only a small WPA reading room operated in co-operation with the Home Demonstration Clubs and two school WPA deposit libraries. In 1939 this reading room had 45 books, 98 borrowers, and a circulation of 966. By March, 1941, the total bookstock in the county was 1,600 volumes, including 250 loaned by the WPA. With an assessed valuation of less than \$3,000,000, Jasper can scarcely hope to establish permanent county-wide service except by pooling its resources with several adjoining counties on a regional basis.

McCormick, the fourth example in this group, is equally unable to support an adequate library system of its own. It is a county of barely 400 square miles, and had in 1940 a population of 10,367 (representing a loss of 1,104 since 1930). Here also the Negroes outnumber white persons 2 to 1. In 1939 its assessed valuation was less than \$1,500,000. Library service in 1941 consisted of 3 community reading rooms operated by the WPA in McCormick, a village of 1,456 inhabitants, Parksville (168 residents) and Plum Branch (142 residents). The WPA also staffs 3 school library units and maintains a mending unit at the county seat to serve several adjoining counties.

In some instances other poor counties, such as Bamberg, Calhoun, and Saluda, have endeavored to maintain county-wide service, begun by the WPA, on a "shoe-string" appropriation. Without real ability to support such a system, however, such efforts can at best produce but feeble results. Unfortunately the likelihood of obtaining state aid for assisting counties in the poor section of the state is rather remote. Since their inhabitants are largely tenant Negroes, they contribute little to state revenues, and many of them naturally tend to patronize the more convenient trade centers in Georgia in preference to smaller or more distant cities in their own state.

The only way in which counties unable to support inde-

pendent county-wide library systems can hope to obtain the benefits of such service is by joining with several adjacent counties to form a regional unit that is capable of maintaining a sound and substantial, completely integrated library program.

As a final comment on WPA patterns of assistance in South Carolina it should be noted that the two patterns described above evolved gradually and were not consciously formulated and adopted as project policy. In the beginning a single pattern was applied to all counties. The second pattern emerged when it became evident that the first could not be universally applied with success.

### Regional Library Demonstrations

It has been pointed out that with very few exceptions the counties of South Carolina do not have sufficient taxable resources to support strong, independent, area-wide libraries. It has also been noted that with library service so largely undeveloped throughout the state in 1935 the WPA project had an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the advantages of developing regional units for library organization and support. When the project started, however, there was no active state agency for libraries in South Carolina, and hence no plan or tentative blue-print upon which such a program might be based. Lacking any such pattern to guide them, the WPA authorities, acting under pressure to extend project benefits to all counties alike as quickly as possible, allowed independent county library demonstrations to develop almost at random. Thus, with little understanding of the requirements of an area-wide library system, many counties wholly unable to support a permanent library service program formed "county libraries" almost overnight by making the necessary initial cash contribution to obtain a WPA demonstration and a shiny new bookmobile.

With such a beginning it is not surprising that little has been accomplished in the development of regional library units. Several different combinations of counties have been considered as potential locations for regional experiments (e.g., Allendale-Barnwell-Hampton, Greenwood-Laurens-Newberry-Union, and Berkeley-Williamsburg). However, by March, 1941, only two "regional demonstrations" had actually been organized. These two experiments, treated below, are the Colleton-Dorchester Bi-County

Library and the Tri-County Regional Library serving Georgetown, Marion, and Horry counties.

The Colleton-Dorchester Bi-County Library.---The first attempt to develop a regional unit for library service in South Carolina began in March, 1937, when a bi-county demonstration was started in Colleton and Dorchester counties.

Colleton is a county of 1,048 square miles. It has a population of 26,268, including 14,019 (or 53 per cent) Negroes. Its county seat, Walterboro, which lies at the junction of two principal interstate highways, is a town of 3,300 persons. Since it is located near the center of both counties, Walterboro serves as the headquarters for the bi-county regional library.

Dorchester, adjoining Colleton on its northeast border, contains only 569 square miles; and its population is 19,928, including 11,439 (or 59 per cent) Negroes. Its principal retail center is Summerville, a town of 3,023 inhabitants. Unlike Colleton, Dorchester has no centrally located community. Summerville, only 25 miles from Charleston, lies barely within the county's border, near its southeast end. St. George, a town of 1,900, lies at the other end of the county.

Both counties are situated in the poor, southeastern section of the state. They are predominantly agricultural, rural, and undeveloped. Together they have an area of 1,617 square miles, a population of 46,000 (including over 25,000 Negroes), and (in 1939) an assessed valuation of \$7,500,000.

Before the WPA there were three small, local "libraries" in these two counties. In Colleton County there was the Walterboro Library Society with a collection of 3,000 volumes and \$200 annual support. In Dorchester Summerville had the "Timrod Library," a semi-private subscription circulating library with 5,600 volumes and an income of \$1,000 a year. St. George also had a "public library" with 1,200 volumes and \$100 annual income. Summerville alone had a paid "librarian."

From the beginning the bi-county demonstration led something of a "hand-to-mouth" existence. Begun early in 1937, it drifted along for months without a mobile distributing unit, and without strong support from the counties themselves. During its first year the project obtained a cash contribution of \$770 from schools and interested organizations representing both counties. The following year Colleton contributed only \$69, although Dor-

chester raised \$443, largely from the County Board of Education. During 1939-40 each county board gave less than \$250 as a token contribution to the service.

Because of various delays it was April, 1938 (or more than a year after its inauguration), before the demonstration was able to start county-wide service with a "confiscated" WPA truck. Moreover, it was not until December, 1939 (after almost three years of make-shift operation), that a regular bookmobile was obtained.

Although co-operating committees of citizens had worked with the project since 1937 an official Bi-County Library Board was not organized until late in 1940. Since then the area supervisor in charge of the demonstration has evidently tried to get this group to accept increasing responsibility in planning the bi-county program and in making the residents of the area acquainted with the aims and functions of the project. In March, 1941, however, the results were not very encouraging. At that time neither the Walterboro nor the Summerville libraries were yet wholeheartedly "sold" on the idea of pooling their resources.

According to 1941 reports, there were 27 WPA workers regularly employed on this bi-county demonstration. It had a total book stock of almost 15,000 volumes, including 1,500 on loan from the WPA. From time to time deposits of 150 volumes were being exchanged between the two counties.

Bookmobile service to schools, homes, and deposit stations throughout the bi-county area was being provided. Twice a month the traveling unit stopped at 60 different lending stops on 7 scheduled routes, covering a circuit of over 2,000 miles. Two-thirds of its regular stops were at schools. Through the courtesy of the NYA each stop is clearly marked with a sturdy wooden sign (see Fig. 19); and each deposit station displays a notice announcing the date and time of the bookmobile's next scheduled visit.

Negro library service is rendered largely through the Negro schools by means of deposited collections selected from a stock of books donated by Harvey D. Kelsey, a Negro philanthropist of Washington, D.C.

On the whole, this regional library demonstration cannot be considered an entirely successful experiment. It appears to have been undertaken without sufficient planning and equipment, and without an assurance of whole-hearted community co-operation.

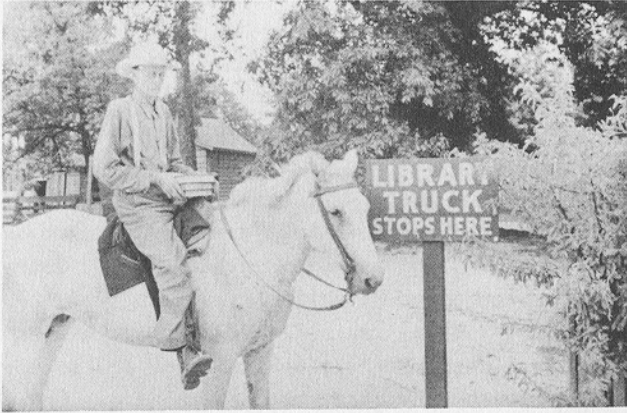


Fig. 19.--Waiting for the bookmobile--"somewhere in Colletin's back woods."

From the beginning it seems that the WPA had had to take the initiative to keep the demonstration going. The pre-existing local libraries nominally were co-operating in the program, but not without reservations. Finally, the financial support contributed by the two counties was far too small to constitute a satisfactory basis for a strong and permanent area-wide library program. From the evidence available it appears to be at least open to question whether the authorities and tax-payers of these two counties ever seriously intended to support a permanent self-sufficient regional library system.

The Tri-County Regional Library.---The only other regional library demonstration undertaken by the South Carolina WPA project is the Tri-County experiment embracing Georgetown, Marion, and Horry<sup>17</sup> counties. This demonstration, begun in the fall of 1940, represents a marked improvement over the Colleton-Dorchester project, since the tri-county area was somewhat more favorably suited to the development of an area-wide program, and since the entire undertaking was more systematically planned from the beginning.

The three counties comprising the tri-county region occupy

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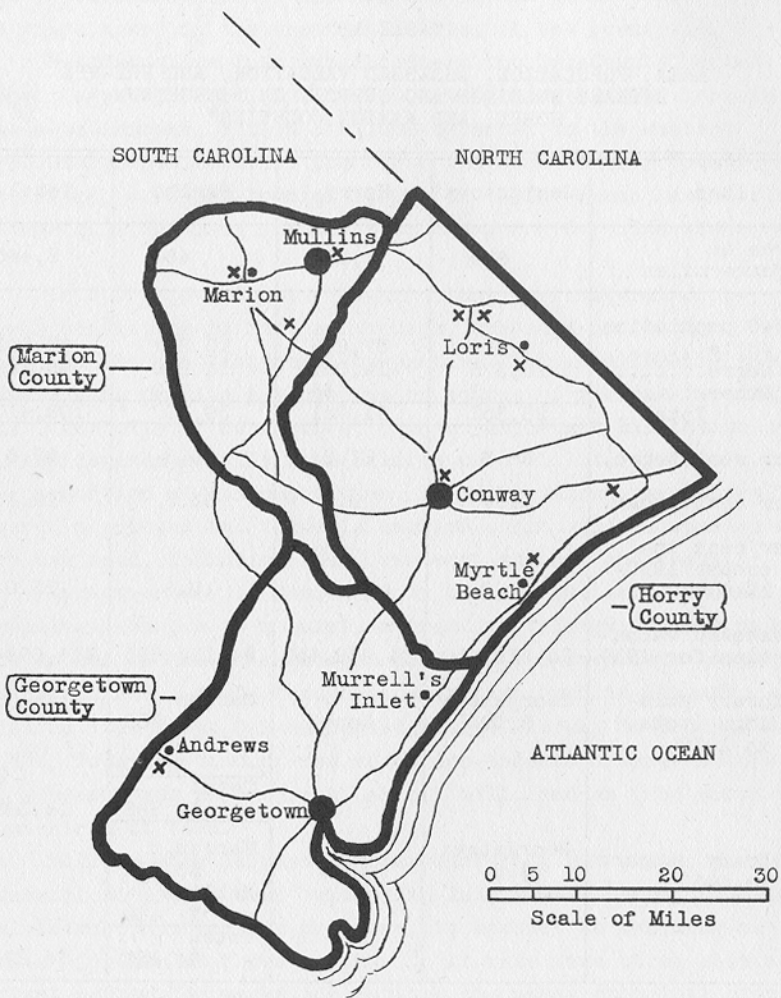
<sup>17</sup>Horry is pronounced "oh-ree."

approximately 2,450 square miles in the extreme eastern corner of the state. As can be seen in Figure 20, Georgetown and Horry counties, bordering the ocean from Charleston County to North Carolina, contain approximately one-third of the state's total coastal shoreline. The northeast boundary of Horry County follows the North Carolina state line due northwest for about 40 miles. Marion County lies immediately to the west of Horry County. Geographically Georgetown and Horry are typical of the coastal region, consisting of low marshy swamps and sandy flats.

Table 18 compares the three counties with regard to area, population, urbanization, assessed valuation, and library facilities in 1932. From these data it can be seen that Horry occupies almost one-half the total regional area and has almost half of the total population but barely one-third of the assessed valuation. Georgetown, on the other hand, with barely one-fourth of the region's population, has easily one-third of its total area and assessed valuation. Marion is by far the smallest of the three counties, yet alone has two cities of more than 5,000 inhabitants. The total assessed valuation of the region is approximately \$15,000,000. Thus, while none of the counties individually could maintain a strong area-wide library system, together they could support such a program at a reasonable standard of adequacy.

Unlike the Bi-County area this region has grown rapidly in population since 1930. During the decade ending in 1940 Colleton County increased only 1.7 per cent and Dorchester 5.1 per cent, while Marion increased 10.6 per cent and Georgetown and Horry increased 21.2 and 31.9 per cent respectively. The entire Tri-County region increased its population by more than 20,000 persons, or almost 24 per cent, during the same period.

The total population of the three counties in 1940 was 108,410. Of this number only 20,763, or one-fifth of the region's inhabitants, live in places of 2,500 or more persons. In other words these counties are predominantly rural. Throughout the entire region there are only four communities that can be called urban. Georgetown, the seat of Georgetown County, has a population of 5,559. Next to Charleston it is the largest coastal city in the state. Conway, Horry's principal trading center, is a thriving city of 5,000 which had barely 3,000 inhabitants in 1930. Marion County has only two towns worthy of mention. They are



- County headquarters for the regional library
- Public libraries or lending stations
- × School libraries with WPA workers

Fig. 20.--South Carolina's WPA-assisted Tri-County Regional Library area.

TABLE 18

AREA, POPULATION, ASSESSED VALUATION, AND PRE-WPA  
LIBRARY HOLDINGS AND SUPPORT IN GEORGETOWN,  
HORRY, AND MARION COUNTIES<sup>a</sup>

Item	Georgetown	Horry	Marion	Total
Area in square miles	813	1,152	480	2,445
1940 population				
White.....	10,976	37,879	13,287	62,142
Negro.....	15,375	14,037	16,810	46,222
Other.....	1	35	10	46
Total...	26,352	51,951	30,107	108,410
Per cent Negro.	58.3	27.2	55.8	42.6
Per cent urban.	21.4	9.8	33.3	19.1
Per cent increase 1930-1940.....	21.2	31.9	10.6	23.8
Assessed valuation for 1939	\$5,519,450	\$4,979,452	\$4,195,685	\$14,694,587
Library holdings (vols.) in 1932	Georgetown 2,000	None	Marion 9,388 Mullins 3,000 Total 12,388	14,388
Library support in 1932	Georgetown \$96	None	Marion \$3,762 Mullins \$ 420 Total \$4,182	\$4,278

<sup>a</sup> Sources: Sixteenth Census of the United States; 1939 Report of the Comptroller of South Carolina; and Mary E. Frayser, Libraries of South Carolina, op. cit.



Marion (5,746 inhabitants) and Mullins (4,392 inhabitants) which lie 8 miles apart in the northern section of the county.

Besides these four urban centers the Tri-County region has 3 villages of from 1,000 to 2,000 inhabitants. The largest of these is Andrews, a town of 2,008 persons, on the western edge of Georgetown County. The other two are in Horry County. Myrtle Beach, a resort town of 1,597, is on the ocean; and Loris, a village of 1,238 lies inland, near the North Carolina state line.

In Georgetown County the principal agricultural crops, formerly consisting of rice and indigo, are corn and cotton. Logging and the manufacture of turpentine from an extensive growth of native pine provide a second major source of revenue for the county. The city of Georgetown, once an important plantation port, now depends heavily upon a large pulp mill to support a large proportion of its population. Finally, along the entire seaboard, a substantial trade is carried on in various species of native sea food, including fish, oysters, shrimp, and crabs.

Marion county is dominated by the two cities of Marion and Mullins. Marion is a quiet, attractive village, with a neat public square and well landscaped parks, a pre-twentieth century court house, and a good, though conservative, public library, said to be "the first tax-supported public library in South Carolina."<sup>18</sup> Today the industries of Marion include a large lumber mill, a veneer and brick plant, an oil mill, and an iron works on the outskirts of town.

Mullins, the largest tobacco market in the state, is a "lackadaisical little town" except in late summer, when, with the annual tobacco auctions in progress, it becomes "a bustling metropolis" for two to three months.<sup>19</sup> At this time it is also an important center for marketing cotton, the other principal crop in this section of the state.

Before the WPA there were three local public libraries in the tri-county region--two in Marion County and one in Georgetown. The one in Marion alone was entirely tax-supported. In 1932 it had a collection of almost 10,000 volumes and an annual

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<sup>18</sup>Federal Writers' Project, op. cit., p. 369.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 368.

income of \$3,762. Mullins also had a library of 3,000 volumes at this time; but its support was only \$420. Georgetown's library, with a book stock of 2,000, existed on less than \$100 a year, obtained from subscriptions and fees.

Before the tri-county regional experiment was undertaken all three counties had participated individually in the WPA library assistance program. Each had attempted to establish independent area-wide library service with a WPA-rented bookmobile and a small loan of project-owned books. Conway, the principal city of Horry County, had also organized an independent public library, in 1938.

In the summer of 1940 these counties became interested in the possibilities of pooling their resources to develop area-wide library service on a regional basis, and the WPA offered to assist them in organizing a permanent tri-county library system. As a first step it made a survey of the entire area, to provide a basis for planning a sound regional demonstration. Detailed data for each county were compiled on its area, location, road conditions, population, wealth, industries, assessed valuation, indebtedness, schools, organizations, and on its total public, private, and school library facilities. From this survey a plan was developed whereby existing libraries could be used to provide a nucleus for an integrated public and school library service for the whole area.

The special features of the regional program were to be:

1. The merger of the public and county libraries in each county.
2. The pooling of the book collections of all three counties.
3. The interchange of borrowing privileges throughout the system.
4. The development of a union catalog of holdings of all libraries.
5. The interloan of any title upon request.
6. The periodic rotation of deposit collections from county to county.
7. Contractual agreements between the WPA and the participating counties and libraries.
8. The election of an interlocking regional library board.

In September the WPA engaged a professionally trained supervisor to serve temporarily as Tri-County Regional Librarian. It rented a new bookmobile chassis to replace one that had worn out in Horry County, and loaned 1,200 new volumes to the demonstration to supplement the nucleus of titles already available in the region. Upon taking up her new position the supervisor drew up contracts merging existing county and city library facilities in each county and organized a regional library board representing the county boards of education, the participating public libraries, and the Commissioners of each county.

Since each county already had a bookmobile and one or more basic book collections, a headquarters for area-wide service was established in each county, instead of one to serve all three counties. Two of these centers, naturally, were located in Georgetown and Conway. In Marion County the regional headquarters, originally in Marion, was moved to Mullins early in 1941, as a new library building with facilities to house it there was then nearing completion.

During the winter of 1940-41 bookmobile routes were re-scheduled to disregard county lines and to provide more efficient operation and coverage. An inventory of each county's total book stock was taken and numerous unclassified non-fiction titles in the various county collections were given Dewey Decimal numbers. Borrowing privileges were then extended to all registered residents of the entire region by all of the participating libraries. In January a systematic bi-monthly plan of rotating books was inaugurated when Horry County transferred 300 of its volumes to Marion, Marion transferred 300 of its books to Georgetown, and Georgetown transferred a collection of 300 titles to Horry. Needless to say, a record of these transfers was kept at each county headquarters with the complete regional inventory so that any title in the system could be located promptly if needed for an interloan.

Since a basic service objective of this demonstration has been to make every book in the region available to a borrower in any of the three counties, special requests were an important feature of the program. Lists of the new books loaned to the demonstration by the WPA were carried by each bookmobile, to assist rural borrowers and school teachers in requesting specific titles to be delivered on its next return trip. Titles not on

the truck were located through the union catalog at its county headquarters. If a given title was not held by any library in the system it was placed on a "want list" and considered for purchase when book orders were being compiled. Among the 124 titles requested during the month of March, 1941, were Uncle Tom's Cabin, Robinson Crusoe, Tobacco Road, Vasari's Lives of the Painters, Rebecca, Out of the Fog, Mein Kampf, Oliver Wiswell, Poems of William Blake, and For Whom the Bell Tolls.

In addition to its function of integrating the existing library facilities of the region and extending bookmobile service to rural areas and schools (see Fig. 21) this regional library demonstration has also brought about the establishment of new local libraries and reading rooms in a few communities formerly without any kind of library center. In Horry County, for example, it has helped the towns of Loris (1,238 population) and Myrtle Beach (1,597 population) to start small libraries of their own as branches of the regional library system. In Georgetown County it has begun community reading rooms with deposit collections in Andrews (2,008 population) and Murrell's Inlet (210 population). (See Fig. 22.)

By the end of March, 1941, the Tri-County Regional Library demonstration was assisting or operating a total of 23 different units, including 4 established public libraries, 4 reading rooms, a mending unit, and 15 school libraries. It had 47 workers on the project, including public library aides, school library and reading room attendants, book menders, and bookmobile operators and aides. The total bookstock of the system included over 30,000 volumes, of which 13,000 were owned by the counties, 18,000 by the public libraries of Marion, Mullins, and Conway, and 2,500 by the WPA. During March the three bookmobiles traveled 2,912 miles on 37 routes, making 286 stops. At this time the entire demonstration had almost 10,000 registered borrowers and a total circulation of approximately 18,000 a month.

Service to the 46,000 Negroes who comprise 42 per cent of the region's population has been deliberately postponed by those in charge of the demonstration. Since such service as these folk receive throughout the state is characteristically extended from agencies which were established to serve the white population, it was deemed expedient to concentrate first on developing a strong and permanent regional system, without forcing the racial issue.



Fig. 21.--Direct bookmobile service to rural homes in Horry County.



Fig. 22.--WPA community reading room at Murrell's Inlet (Georgetown County).

With such great differences as exist in these counties in the proportion of Negroes to white persons, this issue might well have become a serious point of contention among the participants to the demonstration, had it been raised when contracts were being considered. It might even have caused the entire undertaking to fail.

This Tri-County Regional Library demonstration was visited in behalf of this study during the month of May, 1941. At that time it was well organized and ready to operate smoothly until a regular income could be obtained from the participating counties for its independent maintenance. Unfortunately the Regional Librarian who had developed the program from its beginning left the project in June, 1941, to move to another state. With the demonstration barely under way one cannot predict its ultimate result. However, by sound planning and organization the program has already provided the counties concerned with an adequate framework for a permanent regional library system, if when WPA aid is finally withdrawn they really want area-wide service continued.

#### Service to Special Groups of Readers

The preceding portions of this chapter have emphasized the WPA's function of assisting in general public library development in South Carolina. This section treats some of the library project's services to special groups of readers, such as children and teachers in public schools, Negroes, and organized groups of citizens with specific interests.

Service to schools.--Since there is no active state library agency in South Carolina the state-wide library project is officially sponsored by the State Board of Education, and individual area-wide demonstrations are co-sponsored by county Boards of Education. Unlike many states South Carolina has no state-supported program for the development of school libraries. Thus the WPA in this state has undertaken to include library assistance to schools as a regular feature of most of its county-wide public library demonstrations.

There are five types of assistance which the South Carolina WPA project renders in behalf of school libraries throughout the state. These five types of assistance are:

1. Furnishing and training WPA workers to staff school libra-

- ries or to assist regular librarians or teacher-librarians.
2. Supplementing school library resources with deposit collections and serving teachers and pupils directly by including school stops on all bookmobile routes.
  3. Cataloging uncataloged school libraries.
  4. Assisting schools in selecting additions to their own libraries.
  5. Repairing damaged or worn books for school libraries.

From such statistics as are available it is not possible to show precisely what proportion of the facilities of the South Carolina project are devoted to the improvement of school library service. However, figures on employment, cataloging, book repair, and circulation indicate that over half of the entire program benefits school libraries directly.

In March, 1941, almost half of all certified workers on the project were employed directly in staffing or assisting more than 250 school libraries. At that time over half of the circulation from bookmobiles throughout the state occurred during stops at schools. From 1937 to 1940 almost half of the cataloging done by WPA workers was for school libraries; and during the same period more than three times as many books were repaired for schools as for public libraries. All told, by June, 1940, the project had cataloged 18,000 volumes and had repaired more than 1,000,000 volumes for the school libraries of South Carolina. In the spring of 1941 they were still cataloging school library books at the rate of 500 to 700 a month and were repairing from 8,000 to 10,000 school library volumes a month. During 1938-39 the schools directly under the library project had a book stock of 208,986 volumes, 69,732 borrowers, and a circulation of 1,701,154.<sup>20</sup>

Service to Negroes.--In a recent study of library service to Negroes in the South it is pointed out that in the 13 states comprising the Southern Region<sup>21</sup> only one-fifth of the Negro population are provided with public library service, and that of the

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<sup>20</sup>Federal Works Agency, Work Projects Administration, State of South Carolina, "Statewide Library Project Annual Report, July, 1938-July, 1939." (Mimeographed.)

<sup>21</sup>Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

6,000,000 Negroes without library service 2,000,000 live in areas where such service is available to white inhabitants but is denied to Negroes.<sup>22</sup> In 1932 only three counties (Greenville, Charleston, and Richland) were giving some library service to Negroes. In 1939, according to Mrs. Gleason's study (which does not include WPA-assisted service) almost 700,000 Negroes, or 85 per cent of the state's total Negro population, were without access to library facilities.<sup>23</sup>

In commenting upon the attitude of state and local officials toward providing services for Negroes, the above-mentioned study makes the interesting observation that most southern communities are far less interested in developing adequate Negro library facilities than they are in merely "being able to say that something is being done for the Negro."<sup>24</sup> South Carolina is certainly no exception in this regard. Thus, the extent to which the WPA has developed library service for Negroes is hardly comparable to what it has done for the state's white population. By comparison with the situation in 1932, however, WPA-assisted library facilities for Negroes in 1941 represent a substantial gain.

As early as 1936 the South Carolina WPA library project began to assist in the development of library service for Negroes. It placed WPA workers in a number of the larger Negro school libraries, which were then opened to the Negro public. It began a system of service by small deposits in Negro community centers in some counties and assisted established libraries in opening and staffing Negro branches in certain cities and towns. It even undertook to provide bookmobile service to rural Negroes in a few counties. Finally, it co-operated with philanthropic groups in preparing and distributing collections of books donated for the exclusive use of Negroes.

In March, 1941, library units operated by WPA workers were serving an estimated population of almost 50,000 Negroes in 12 different counties (see Fig. 23). Most of these units were in schools, since it is difficult to secure adequate separate quarters for Negro public libraries and since the proportion of adult Negroes in this state who read with facility is relatively

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<sup>22</sup>Eliza A. Gleason, The Southern Negro and the Public Library (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), p. 108.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 186.



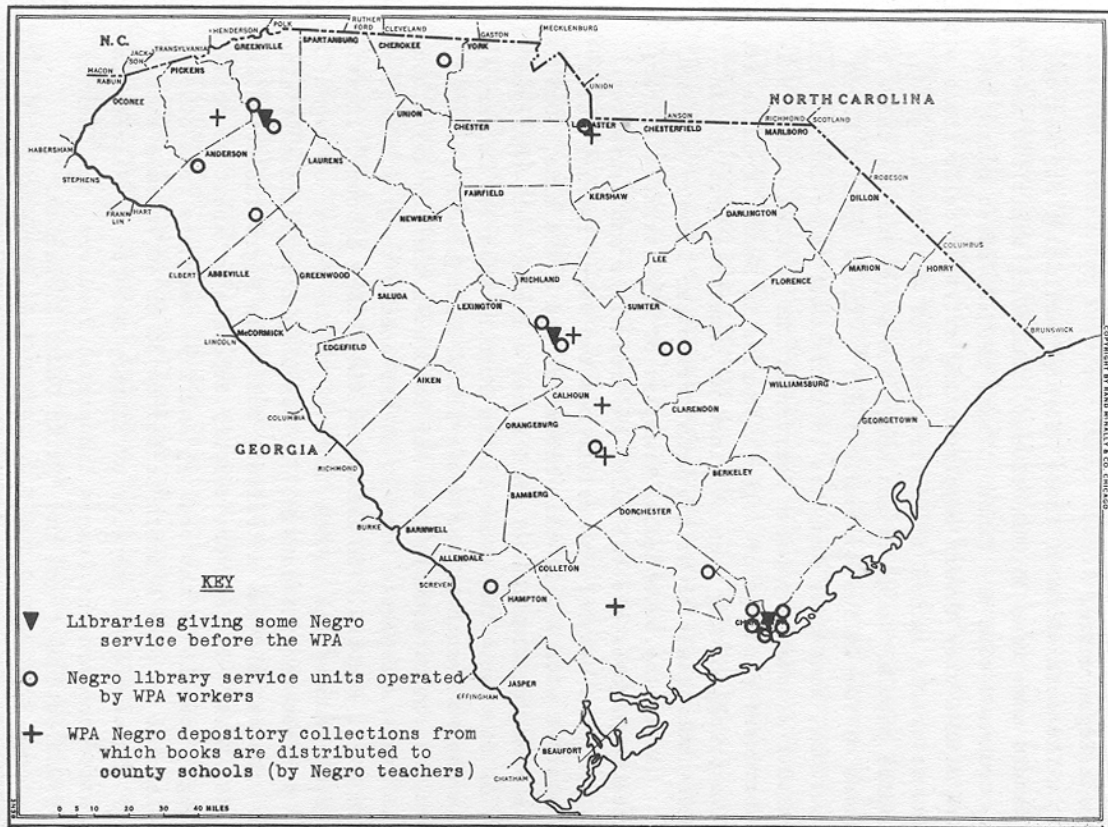


Fig. 23.--Negro library service in South Carolina in March, 1941

small. The total annual circulation of WPA-assisted Negro libraries since 1938 has been from 140,000 to 150,000. During most of this time the project was employing from 25 to 30 regular workers on these Negro units.

The book stock of these library facilities for Negroes now totals more than 35,000 volumes, including about 500 new volumes purchased with WPA funds. These project-owned books, selected with a view toward supplementing existing collections with recent materials suited to the interests of this racial group, emphasize popular works by and about the Negro such as those recommended by the Julius Rosenwald Fund.<sup>25</sup> These special Negro collections, loaned as deposits to individual Negro lending units, constitute a notably popular feature of the service. As a rule the permanent holdings of Negro libraries in South Carolina are not inspiring, having been obtained as donations from philanthropic individuals or as discards from other library systems.

Among the outstanding examples of WPA-assisted library service to Negroes are the units in Greenville and Lancaster counties. The city of Greenville has two Negro library units, each staffed with a full-time librarian and a WPA aide. One is at the Sterling High School, which has a large, well-equipped library of its own. The other is the Phyllis Wheatley Library, a regular Negro branch of the Greenville Public Library, which serves the entire county. One day each week the library's bookmobile makes a separate circuit of the county to give direct service to rural Negroes. In Lancaster the Kelsey Library, likewise a Negro branch of the public library, is the center of Negro library service for the county. It has a book collection of almost 9,000 volumes, and has a trained, full-time Negro librarian and a WPA assistant. It delivers monthly deposits of about 75 books to six Negro schools in the county; and five teachers from other schools come in once a month to borrow 30 or 40 volumes each.

Three special aspects of library service to Negroes in this state concern the Jeanes Industrial Teachers, the "Harvey Kelsey Collections," and the "Faith Cabin Libraries."

The Jeanes teachers, privately financed Negro specialists

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<sup>25</sup> Tennessee State Department of Education, The Negro, a Selected List for School Libraries of Books by or about the Negro in Africa and America (Nashville, Tennessee: revised and reprinted through the courtesy of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, 1941).

in vocational education, are traveling advisers who assist colored schools throughout the state in developing practical instruction in manual arts and crafts. Owing to the lack of separate bookmobile facilities for Negroes, these teachers have helped the WPA project materially in many counties by personally assisting in the distribution of deposit collections of books to rural Negro schools not otherwise reached by county library demonstrations.

The "Harvey Kelsey Collections" refer to books collected by Harvey Kelsey, a Negro of Washington, D.C., for the purpose of providing the colored inhabitants of his native state, South Carolina, with free library materials. The Kelsey Library in Lancaster was begun around a nucleus of books obtained through his efforts. The Colleton-Dorchester Bi-County service to Negroes was also inaugurated with a collection of several thousand volumes obtained through his efforts in 1938. In the spring of 1939 deposits from this collection were distributed by project workers to some 20 Negro schools in the two counties.

The "Faith Cabin Libraries" constitute another attempt to make books available to Negroes by soliciting gifts from persons outside of the state. Oddly enough these libraries came into being through the devotion of a young, white clergyman to an old Negro schoolmaster who had befriended him during his childhood and had helped him to complete his education. In the midst of the depression this young man, Willie Lee Buffington, desirous of doing something for his old Negro friend, wrote to selected persons in the North asking for books to start a small library for the colored folk near his childhood home. In this way he obtained a substantial number of volumes which he then presented to "Uncle Euriah" Simpkins, the old school master. With these books as a nucleus more were collected, and on a wooded knoll overlooking "Uncle Eury's" home in Saluda County, the nearby Negroes built a log lodge to house the collection and christened it their "Faith Cabin Library," since it had been "founded on faith" (see Figs. 24 and 25).

From this beginning similar libraries were developed by and for the Negroes in a number of other communities, such as Belton (Anderson County), Plumb Branch (McCormick), Pendleton (Anderson), and St. Matthews (Calhoun). All told more than 20 such "libraries" are said to have started as a result of Willie Buffington's original idea. Most of them have relatively poor



Fig. 24.--The first "Faith Cabin Library,"  
Saluda County, South Carolina.



Fig. 25.--"Uncle Euriah" Simpkins

collections of books, since they depend upon donations for most of their holdings. A few of them, however, staffed with WPA workers, are giving service that is more adequate than that offered to Negroes by most communities in the state.

The Faith Cabin Library at Pendleton has given particularly good service with very limited resources. Its WPA worker, a fine type of Negro, has developed a popular shelf of books by Negro authors, has obtained subscriptions for Negro periodicals, has sponsored successful reading clubs and contests, has organized two regular story-hour groups, and has observed such occasions as Book Week and Health Week with special library programs. This library has its own collection of approximately 3,000 volumes, including many standard titles obtained as a gift from the Newark (N.J.) Public Library.

In concluding this discussion of library service to Negroes in South Carolina it must be pointed out that in spite of the activities of established libraries, the WPA, and private philanthropy, few Negroes in this state yet have what a white community would consider adequate library facilities. By and large, the books that are available in collections assembled for Negroes are exceedingly dull, or out of date, or both. Thanks to WPA assistance it can at least be said today in more communities than before that "something is being done for the Negro"--to use Mrs. Gleason's apt phrase once again. However, in both quantitative and qualitative terms the library services available to Negroes in South Carolina still fall far short of any reasonable minimum standard of adequacy which might be named.

Reading clubs and contests.--Wherever groups of citizens with special interests have programs involving the use of library materials the WPA state-wide project in South Carolina has endeavored to adapt its county-wide services to meet these needs. Thus, just as its area-wide demonstrations have been helped by the support of such organizations as County Councils of Farm Women, Home Demonstration Clubs, American Legion Auxiliary chapters, Parent-Teacher Associations, and local book clubs or literary societies, so the project has provided these groups with special library services from time to time. The most important way in which it has assisted individual organizations has been by co-sponsoring reading clubs and contests conducted for their members. The part played by the WPA library project in the reading program

of one such organization is treated in detail, as an example.

In 1939 and again in 1940 the WPA co-operated with the South Carolina Home Economics Association in conducting reading contests for rural residents. Locally the contest was sponsored by Home Demonstration Clubs and other community groups. The object of the contest was to read and report on at least 8 non-fiction books from a selected list of titles. The WPA assisted the Association by preparing and mimeographing an appropriate list of approved books, by distributing these lists through its circulating outlets, and by maintaining as many of the recommended titles as possible on its bookmobiles, library stations, and reading rooms. WPA workers also collected book reports from contestants, and kept records to determine who had successfully completed the program when the contest closed. All participants fulfilling the eight-book requirement in six months were to receive a certificate testifying to their achievement.

In 1939 the book list for the contest included 245 titles. In 1940 this was increased to 440 to provide a wider choice. The groups of subjects in which reading was to be done were Food and Nutrition, Clothing and Home Management, Family Relations and Child Care, Personality and Etiquette, Social Sciences, Fine Arts, Everyday Science, Education and Vocations, History, Biography, Travel, and Religion.

Each year 7 different counties participated actively in the program. In 1939 more than 400 books were read and reported on by the 47 persons winning certificates. In 1940 the circulation of required titles exceeded 500. In all, during these two contests more than 150 persons completed the program successfully, and many more took part but failed to finish in time or to turn in reports on all their reading. In relation to the state's total population this achievement is certainly not remarkable; but to the rural participants, formerly without library service, this program of directed reading demonstrated how libraries can help them to learn about subjects affecting their everyday life.

Two other groups with which the WPA library project has co-operated in the conduct of reading programs are the state Congress of Parents and Teachers and the American Legion Auxiliary. The latter project, though not completed when data for this study were assembled, is of special interest today because of its relation to the problem of national morale in civilian defense.

The American Legion Auxiliary, in the interest of increasing an understanding of democracy and an appreciation of our American heritage, decided to conduct an "American Way Reading Club" as its primary educational undertaking for 1941. Following the pattern of the Home Economics reading contest described above, the program was begun, with WPA assistance, early in the year. A list of approved books, based on Democracy, a reading guide prepared by Benson Y. Landis for the American Library Association,<sup>26</sup> was mimeographed by the WPA and distributed throughout the state. The subjects included in this list were: About Our People, American Inventors and Inventions, American Literature, The American System, Democracy, Economic Issues, Interesting Places, International Relations, Negroes, Our American Neighbors, Our Possessions, and The Story of Our Country. As in previous contests, the WPA supplied its lending outlets with as many of the recommended titles as possible.

Early reports indicated that this program was arousing considerable interest in counties where there were enough books to meet the demand. In some communities teachers enrolled whole classes of school children as club members. In the Tri-County region two or more shelves on each bookmobile were devoted to "American Way" books. Posters in local libraries also helped to increase participation in several cities and towns. One county (Cherokee) reported a circulation of over 600 books to reading club enrollees during its first month.<sup>27</sup>

As has been noted, the actual volume of reading that is stimulated by club or contest programs is not phenomenal. In a state as retarded in library development as South Carolina, however, any undertaking which leads rural inhabitants to read socially significant books cannot be dismissed as unimportant. The WPA project, therefore, welcomed the opportunity to adapt its services to meet the library needs of special groups such as these in the realization that in so doing it in turn wins their active support for the state-wide development of libraries.

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<sup>26</sup>Benson Y. Landis, Democracy: A Reading List (Chicago: American Library Association, 1940)(Published as a supplement to the ALA Bulletin, January, 1940).

<sup>27</sup>At the conclusion of the "American Way Reading Club" program certificates were awarded to 441 persons.

### Specialized Project Activities

The preceding section of this chapter discusses some of the services the South Carolina state-wide library project has provided for special groups or classes of readers. This section deals with four of the project's specialized functions which in themselves do not constitute actual library service but which are important staff activities closely related to the success of the entire program. These four functions are cataloging and book selection services, book repair, workers' training, and publicity.

Cataloging and book selection services.--In South Carolina the WPA library project performs two kinds of cataloging and book selection service. Like other state-wide projects it selects and catalogs books bought with WPA funds and apportions them to individual counties for use in area-wide demonstrations. As a special feature not common to most WPA projects it also offers aid in book selection and "co-operative cataloging" services to established school and public libraries throughout the state.

The selection and cataloging of project-owned books in South Carolina follows the practice of most state-wide projects and requires little description. The work is centralized at the state headquarters in a single unit consisting of a professionally trained supervisor, three skilled workers and one of intermediate grade. Books are classified according to the Dewey Decimal system, and both descriptive cataloging and subject headings are kept to a very simple form. By the end of June, 1940, this unit cataloged well over 25,000 volumes for project use.

When this project began to offer its "co-operative cataloging" service to school libraries in 1936 it was one of the first (if not the very first) of the states to undertake this function as a regular feature of WPA library assistance. Actually the service referred to here is not "co-operative cataloging" as the term is usually applied (for example, to the arrangement among scholarly libraries for the co-operative cataloging of unusual titles not cataloged by the Library of Congress). Instead it is simply the cataloging and classification by the WPA's central cataloging unit of the collections of established but previously uncataloged libraries.

The WPA's cataloging service for established libraries is



called "co-operative" because the participating libraries submit author, title, and imprint data for their books, the State Department of Education furnishes materials, WPA workers make, arrange, and deliver the necessary author, title, and subject cards, and the University of South Carolina provides quarters where the work is performed. The charge for the service is only three cents per title, just enough to reimburse the Department of Education for materials. Libraries that take advantage of the plan agree to keep their catalogs up-to-date, after they have been received. Each library using the service is sent a complete, properly filed dictionary catalog and a shelf list. Since one object of the plan is to improve the holdings of school libraries only titles on standard lists (such as the A.L.A. Catalog, and the H. W. Wilson Company's Standard Catalog) are cataloged. Recently the service was extended to include small public libraries with uncataloged collections.

By the end of June, 1940, the South Carolina project had cataloged 18,000 volumes for 70 different school libraries throughout the state. In the summer of 1941 the Library Service Section in Washington made extensive use of this state's experience when it prepared an official circular<sup>28</sup> describing the organization and operation of a Central Cataloging Service for state-wide projects. The "co-operative cataloging" service was established because the great majority of school libraries in South Carolina lacked both the necessary bibliographical tools and the trained personnel needed to perform this function efficiently.

In March, 1940, for a similar reason the WPA offered the services of its central technical unit to assist established libraries in selecting books for purchase. During the first year this service has been used largely by small public libraries. The service is free and the local librarian is under no obligation to follow the WPA's suggestions. The librarian merely states the amount of money she wishes to spend, specifies roughly the proportion of fiction, non-fiction, adult, and juvenile titles she wants, and any special subjects for which specific recommendations are desired. The trained unit supervisor consults the

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<sup>28</sup>U.S. Work Projects Administration, Central Cataloging Service ("WPA Technical Series," Library Service Circular No. 4; Washington, D.C.: Work Projects Administration, October 31, 1941).

book selection tools at her command, makes up a list meeting these specifications, and returns it to the library in question. During the first four months of operation the WPA book selection service compiled tentative buying lists for eleven different libraries throughout the state.

Book repair.--The rehabilitation of soiled, mutilated, or use-worn books and magazines is a housekeeping function of all library service systems. In the early days of library work relief it offered a simple and inexpensive method of creating widespread employment for relatively unskilled persons on short notice, and was therefore one of the first types of activity provided for white-collar workers. In some states, as workers became proficient in this type of work it was extended to include actual binding and rebinding. Moreover, some projects liberalized their activities to permit the extensive repair of school textbooks as well as library materials. By the end of 1938, however, when it became evident that such mending units were performing considerable work which properly belonged to commercial binderies, the WPA rigidly curtailed such activities to eliminate all actual binding and the repair of textbooks by library projects.

TABLE 19

NUMBER OF VOLUMES REPAIRED BY WPA MENDING UNITS  
IN SOUTH CAROLINA, 1936-1941<sup>a</sup>

Period Covered	For Schools	For Public Libraries	WPA-Owned Books	Total
1936-1937.....	.....	.....	.....	476,725
1937-1938.....	485,192 <sup>b</sup>	155,058	.....	640,250
1938-1939.....	346,691	123,128	.....	469,819
1939-1940.....	172,993	44,320	1,260	218,573
1940-1941.....	86,294 <sup>c</sup>	68,748 <sup>c</sup>	3,177 <sup>c</sup>	194,396
1936-1941.....	1,091,170 <sup>c</sup>	391,254 <sup>c</sup>	4,437 <sup>c</sup>	1,999,763

<sup>a</sup>Sources: Annual Reports of the South Carolina State-wide WPA Library Project.

<sup>b</sup>Includes 291,804 textbooks repaired for schools.

<sup>c</sup>Breakdowns of data for the year 1940-41 are for the period from July, 1940, through March, 1941, only.

The only noteworthy aspect of WPA book repair activity in South Carolina is its increasing consolidation into fewer and larger units. Originally there were local mending projects in every county. In March, 1941, these had been consolidated into 25 units employing 174 workers. Ultimately it was intended to consolidate the work into four strong, central units, one to serve each of the WPA administrative districts in the state.

Statistics on WPA book repair in South Carolina from July, 1936, through June, 1941, appear in Table 19. During this period the average cost per volume has ranged from 30 to 40 cents.

Workers' training.--In-service training is an important element in the entire WPA library assistance program. Most project employees have never been engaged in library work before receiving relief employment, and many of them lack the accuracy, orderliness, self-assurance, and understanding required by such work when they are first assigned to a library project. Many project employees would be considered unemployable in a normal labor market. In the interest of furthering project efficiency and improving morale among the workers, informal but systematic training has been organized as an integral part of WPA library service projects.

In South Carolina monthly training meetings for all project employees were begun as early as 1936. At that time instruction was limited to a discussion of very simple library tools and routines and to the development of self-reliance and such habits as neatness and accuracy. Since 1938 the training program has been organized on a district basis, and three-day institutes have sometimes been held in place of one-day monthly meetings.

In each district one supervisor is in charge of training in book repair, another in library methods and publicity, another in reference tools, and another in extension or bookmobile service. Like other states South Carolina has developed training manuals to implement its instruction program. For instance, it has a 68-page manual on county-wide bookmobile service, a 95-page one on book-mending techniques, and others on publicity and general library procedures and tools. These manuals and courses introduce all project employees to such matters as book arrangement, filing, charging methods, and the uses of such tools as card catalogs, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and yearbooks. Each worker also receives special instruction in the duties of his particular

job.

The object of WPA workers' training is not to develop them into librarians. Its purpose is solely to qualify them to perform efficiently and under supervision many of the clerical duties that are required in the operation of any library service system.

As a corollary to its program of training for workers many projects also conduct district meetings and training institutes for their supervisory staffs. Such gatherings keep individual supervisors posted on administrative changes affecting the project, provide an opportunity for staff members to discuss common problems, and serve to improve morale throughout the project. The formal topics treated at such institutes in South Carolina have included organization and administration, libraries and national defense, the purpose and technique of supervision, project relations with established libraries, workers' training and discipline, problems in evaluating project achievement, and the nature and significance of the "sponsor's contribution."

Publicity.--Planned and effective publicity is an essential feature of any program with the objective of permanently improving library facilities by demonstration. Thus the final aspect of the South Carolina library project to be treated in this chapter is its publicity, or "public relations." The following is a record of this project's use of publicity.

In 1937, 1938, 1939, and 1940 the State Supervisor prepared and distributed mimeographed annual reports depicting the scope and progress of the project and containing testimonials of gratitude from important beneficiaries of WPA-operated library services. In the spring of 1940 the Anderson Daily Mail printed a special "Library and Education Edition" describing South Carolina's library facilities and needs and telling of county-wide services then operating with WPA assistance. In June, 1940, a large graphic exhibit and a moving picture were prepared and shown at the annual conference of the American Library Association, in Cincinnati. In the same year material for articles on Negro library service and rural libraries was supplied to authors for national magazines. From time to time special reports on the project are prepared and sent to Washington for the information of the Library Service Section. The State Supervisor has appeared before various educational organizations and citizen's gatherings

to explain the project's objectives and facilities whenever she has been called upon to do so. Locally the individual supervisors of county demonstrations are responsible for such public relations as are maintained.

The noteworthy characteristic of most of this project's publicity is that it appears to have been directed at a national rather than a state or local audience. As a result librarians in other parts of the nation have been made aware of what South Carolina has done or is doing with WPA assistance. In terms of the objective of developing permanent tax-supported library service, however, it is unfortunate that more use was not made of regular, planned, and locally-directed publicity in individual county-wide demonstrations. Such publicity could focus attention on the ultimate goal of the project and might help materially in achieving it.

#### Summary

This chapter has undertaken to show how the opportunity presented by the federal work relief program has been used to further the development of library service in a specific state. South Carolina was selected for study because, like the entire Southeast region, its geographic, economic, and social conditions are not conducive to the development of libraries along traditional lines of organization and support. In 1935 South Carolina, a relatively poor and predominantly rural state with few libraries and no active state library agency, offered a fertile field for testing the soundness of multi-county or regional units for the government and administration of area-wide library service. This study is concerned with the extent to which the South Carolina WPA library project recognized and took advantage of this particular opportunity.

The record of the project by the middle of 1941 is imposing when quantitative comparisons are made with library facilities in the state before WPA. Thanks to federal assistance many sections were receiving library service for the first time, new local libraries and reading rooms had been established, many more Negroes had access to "free books" than before. Large numbers of school and public library books had been repaired and restored to usefulness. Many school libraries had been cataloged for the first time. More than 30 bookmobiles had been obtained for use

in demonstrations, and the suitability of this method of reaching rural readers in this state had been quite thoroughly tested. Co-operative, centralized facilities had been developed for the selection, processing, and repair of books. In short, as a direct result of WPA assistance the state-wide support and use of public and school library facilities for both races had increased by 1941 to a notable degree, compared with South Carolina's library service in 1932.

From the point of view of official state recognition of any responsibility for library development, however, the legislature was apparently still no more inclined to take action in 1941 than it had been before the WPA, for in 1942 the State Library Board was still without any appropriation from the state.

In terms of the opportunity confronting the WPA in 1935, the record of the project is much less fortunate than might be desired. For a number of reasons the potentialities for the development of strong, area-wide systems of library service in this state have been only partially realized.

WPA library assistance in South Carolina has been diffuse rather than concentrated, extensive instead of intensive; and therefore its achievements, viewed objectively, reflect this lack of control, direction, or focus. Proportionately more individual communities in this state have received some benefit from the program than in many other states. Few communities, however, have received enough carefully directed benefits to provide a strong basis for a permanent, efficient, independent library service system.

Many reasons could be advanced to explain why the program took the form that it did in this state. Urgency, expediency, the distribution of relief loads, local pressures, and even "politics" might be praised or blamed for the manner in which the library project evolved. In a word, most of the reasons are merely part of a broad situation in which WPA library assistance suddenly became available in a state not yet prepared to put it to the best possible use. Unlike states with a nucleus of strong libraries, South Carolina lacked both the experience in library development and the organized library leadership essential to sound library planning. Without either an active state agency or a clear plan for library development its WPA program naturally tended to become diffused, in its desire to benefit all sections of the state

equally.

In fairness it should be noted that much good actually was accomplished by the project. Many sections of the state were formerly without books or libraries. With WPA assistance they received the benefits of both to a limited degree.

In 1941 the WPA library project was undertaking to survey the state, evaluate its progress, and redirect its entire program as a result of its findings. Thus, by 1941 it had learned from experience the necessity of planning on the basis of existing facts. In 1935 South Carolina was sorely in need of advice and assistance in planning how it might best use its WPA library aid. Today its project leaders realize that the state's economic and geographic limitations make regional units the most efficient basis for library organization and support. However, after encouraging the development of individual county libraries for five years their task of obtaining whole-hearted inter-county collaboration is not so easy as it might once have been.

The experience of South Carolina demonstrates that a basic feature of any future nation-wide program of aid for libraries should be a provision for advice and assistance in planning for states in need of such professional guidance. Since 1938 the Library Service Section has performed this function for the WPA. It is only unfortunate that such help was not available three years earlier, when it was most needed.