

Public Library Service in the
Southern Appalachian Region:
An Overview

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THE TERM "Southern Appalachian Region" is one of the most ambiguous in the American language. Virtually each person and every organization dealing with the area have their own definition of exactly what it includes. As defined by Thomas R. Ford in *The Southern Appalachian Region; A Survey*,¹ the area includes all but the northwesternmost counties of West Virginia; thirty-one counties in the western part of Virginia; thirty-two in eastern Kentucky; twenty-two in western North Carolina; thirty-seven in east Tennessee; twenty in northwest Georgia; and five in northeastern Alabama. For purposes of this study, the author will consider as Southern Appalachia all of that area plus the eleven remaining counties in West Virginia, three additional counties in North Carolina and twenty-eight more in northern and northwestern Alabama, all of which are regarded as in Appalachia for purposes of their state library programs. All told, 233 counties having an approximate population of 7,878,513 people and a land area of 105,000 square miles² will be included in this study. It is one of the least understood regions in the United States.

Geographically, the area is a mixture. Basically composed of three quite clearly defined divisions, the Southern Appalachians include some of the most spectacular scenery, some of the richest deposits of coal and other minerals, some of the most appalling poverty, and some of the strongest, most independent people found anywhere in the world. On the eastern rim are most of the actual mountains, an area which includes the Blue Ridge and Black Mountains, the latter group

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encompassing the world renowned Great Smokies. In the center is what sociologists term the Great Valley, a region composed of four major valleys and their accompanying ridges; on the western edge is the Cumberland Plateau,³ characterized by its extraordinarily rich seams of coal, and by an abundance of streams and narrow valleys, some of them so deep that they are little more than slits in the earth in which sunrise comes around ten in the morning, and sunset is about three in the afternoon. Further to the southwest, in Alabama, are rich deposits of iron ore. Contrary to popular belief, the Southern Appalachian area is not predominantly mountainous. It is an area which is frequently characterized by terrain so rugged that in a few isolated sections, even today, mail is occasionally carried on muleback and four-wheel drive vehicles are a virtual necessity. In some parts of Kanawha County, West Virginia, for example, the board of education must transport children on minibusses because the standard ones are unable to negotiate the roads leading to the more remote hollows. Especially in the Cumberland Plateau, the abundance of streams makes flooding an ever-present danger and a perpetual problem. A sudden downpour or hard thaw in the springtime can quickly turn an almost dry creek into a raging torrent, capable of sweeping away homes and isolating the inhabitants.

Most of the Southern Appalachian region is sparsely settled. Much of it is difficult to live in, at best, because the very nature of the terrain discourages the development of many of the things Americans take for granted—good roads, a plentiful supply of water, schools, industry, and public libraries.

There are remarkably few cities or metropolitan areas of any size in Southern Appalachia. In West Virginia, there is the Charleston metropolitan area; another in the Huntington vicinity which includes eastern Kentucky's Boyd County, the sole metropolitan area in that part of the state; a third in the Wheeling vicinity; and another around Parkersburg. In Appalachian Virginia there is only the Roanoke area; in North Carolina, Asheville; in Georgia, Walker County is part of the Greater Chattanooga area in Tennessee; Tennessee has another heavy concentration in the Knoxville area. In Alabama, there are Florence, Birmingham, Huntsville, and Gadsden. In many parts of Southern Appalachia, the population of an entire county is apt to be less than that of a small town in other parts of the nation.⁴ Except for the metropolitan areas, which show population gains, the total number of people within the region is declining.

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The lack of metropolitan areas means that it is common for a family to find it necessary to travel at least fifty miles to reach an adequate shopping center and trips of over one hundred miles each way sometimes must be made if major medical attention is needed. For example, most of eastern Kentucky must depend on Lexington in the Bluegrass region as its primary resource center.

Economically, the Southern Appalachians are desperately troubled. Very little of the land is suitable for farming on any scale, and in many sections the limited amount of water is a deterrent to industrial development.⁵ Though marvelously rich in coal, commercial quality timber, iron ore, limestone, clay, natural gas and, in some places, water resources which can provide both hydroelectric power and transportation, the area is feeling the effects of the demon/blessing of the twentieth century: automation. Until automation came, many of the men living in the area held jobs in small mines or other similar operations. Now many men are being replaced with just a few machines, and there is virtually nowhere else in the area for the men to find other work. The various federal anti-poverty programs are providing a means of survival but often at the price of a man's self-respect. Few of these programs have accomplished what the people themselves want and have proved that they can handle—outside guidance in solving their problems, but not outsiders coming in and solving their problems for them.⁶ As a result, one of two things frequently happens: (1) the family goes on some form of welfare, often federally funded, and oftentimes ultimately destructive to the essence of the family structure; or (2) the family leaves the Appalachians to live in an urban area where the parents can find employment. Whole books have been written about the problems faced by migrants from Southern Appalachia trying to adjust to life in the urban North.

Several factors have greatly influenced the development of public libraries in the Southern Appalachians. All are so closely linked that it is difficult to separate them.

One of the most basic is the nature of the people who settled the region. Except for a rather heavy influx of English into North Carolina, the Southern Appalachians were settled by thrifty, Bible-reading Scotch-Irish who placed more emphasis on religion than on formal education. In the areas settled by the English—which include most of the actual mountainous country in the regions—schools, from the very beginning, were considered of great importance. Many of these early schools, as was true in much of the rest of Appalachia, were self-help

type boarding institutions which were usually operated by a church, often a northern-based denomination. In all parts of the region these schools were, in many cases, the first contact the young people had with books because their parents frequently were unable to read and write. Even today, the rate of functional illiteracy (considered as fifth grade reading level or below) is much higher in Appalachia than it is in most other parts of the United States. People who can barely read and write are not likely to consider it of any crucial importance that their children have access to good libraries.

The nature of the lives of those in Southern Appalachia is also a factor. Especially years ago people who had to work from dawn to dark in order to survive were too tired to have any desire for books, even if the books were available.

Still another factor is the influence left by the Civil War which disrupted life all over the region. West Virginia was particularly hard hit by the controversy and took many years to recover from its effects.

Another factor, and frequently today a very important one, is the matter of local politics. When public libraries first began to reach into rural areas, it was customary for the superintendent of schools to serve on the library board. In the beginning, this practice was based on the belief—often correct—that he was one of the few people in the community with enough knowledge of libraries to be intelligent on the matter. In time, his presence came to be viewed more as a possible conflict of interest than as something of real benefit to the library. Virginia still requires the presence of the county superintendent of schools on the county library board, but the Kentucky attorney general ruled several years ago that this could no longer be done.⁷

In some areas of the Southern Appalachians, all county funds are closely controlled by the board of education. What members of this body think is important generally gets financed; what they think is unimportant does not. However, in some instances, cooperation with boards of education has been excellent. In Charleston, West Virginia, Nicholas Winowich, director of the Kanawha County Public Library, reports that the public library could never have developed to the extent it has without the support and encouragement of the Kanawha County Board of Education.

Because of the geographic, economic, and sociological problems, public library service has developed slowly in the Appalachian region. In the early days, it was confined almost exclusively to the metropolitan areas and frequently operated as a project of the local women's club or

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some other civic-minded organization. Outside of these areas, public library service was usually limited to pack horse libraries,⁸ small, selected collections of books carried into the more remote areas on horseback or, more often, muleback; to deposit collections placed in accessible stores or in homes of responsible citizens; or to such early ventures as Berea College's horsedrawn book wagon which made regular trips as far back as 1912 into the countryside surrounding the college. In view of the distances involved, the condition of the roads (or, frequently, the absence of roads entirely), and transportation problems, these early attempts did much to bring books to an almost exclusively rural population. In many instances they were the only cultural outlet the people had and, inadequate as they might seem by today's standards, were greatly appreciated. But most people simply did without.

Though public libraries had received aid under a variety of federal emergency work relief programs beginning in the early 1930s,⁹ the first major breakthrough for Appalachia came in the form of outright assistance from the old Works Projects Administration (WPA), an anti-poverty tool of the Franklin D. Roosevelt era.¹⁰ The aim of the WPA was to reduce the number of unemployed in the United States and through its library program to attack the major problem of making library service to rural Americans more nearly equal to that found in the urban areas. Incidentally, the program gave many library administrators within the region the opportunity they had long wanted to demonstrate logical plans for state-wide library service.

Under the WPA plan for improving library service, each project was regarded as the means to an end and was designed to strengthen existing state programs, not to compete with them. Working within the framework of the state library agency, the projects were set up on a state-wide basis and were run by professionally trained librarians working with federal funds. A core of semiprofessionals, with some training, assisted the professionals with the administrative work.¹¹ Books were regarded as tools in the demonstration program and so could justifiably be purchased with federal monies. Much other money was spent on ways of getting the books to the rural people; in particular, bookmobiles were either bought outright or rented for the duration of the demonstration project.

Though only forty of the then forty-eight states were sponsoring WPA library projects by 1940, each state within Appalachia was involved in the plan. (There is no way to tell if Appalachian counties in participating states were involved, except in the case of West Virginia

which is entirely Appalachia.) Perhaps one of the most successful projects took place in Talladega County, Alabama, where several agencies participated in a jointly managed, county-wide library service.¹² The project later passed out of WPA sponsorship and into the hands of the local government.

In addition to sponsoring demonstration libraries, the WPA library projects also provided for construction and repair of library buildings, for the preparation and publication of various library tools, and for the provision of additional workers to assist in improving the programs in existing libraries. In some ways, the WPA project bore a distinct resemblance to the next major advance in the development of library service in Appalachia—the Library Services Act (LSA).¹³

The Library Services Act was passed by Congress in 1956. The main purpose of the act was to make it possible for the states to develop rural library services programs and, like the WPA library projects, the stress was on demonstration libraries. Since the end of the WPA in 1942, severe limitations on funds had made much rural work impossible, acute though the need was known to be. The Library Services Act helped alleviate the problem.

Initially, the act provided \$7.5 million a year for a five-year period. By 1959, LSA funds had either provided for new or vastly improved library service for 30 million Americans living in rural areas, many of them within the boundaries of the Southern Appalachian region. Also like the WPA projects, work under the act was done through the state library agency with funds provided by the federal government. In 1960 the act was extended and in 1964 it was amended to include non-rural areas and to provide funds for construction purposes. At that time, the act formally became known as the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA).

In March 1965 the public libraries of the Southern Appalachian region received another boon from the federal government when the Appalachian Regional Development Act¹⁴ was passed by Congress. Previously, two serious problems had existed in funding many library projects: (1) often the area involved could not raise money to match the federal grant as required under the LSCA, and (2) public libraries were not eligible for participation in other programs which subsidized needed facilities within Appalachia. Section 214 of the Appalachian Regional Development Act addressed both problems. Areas which had previously found it impossible to improve public library service were able to expand it or to initiate service where none had existed.

Under the terms of the Appalachian Regional Development Act, the

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projects must pass extremely careful scrutiny at both the local and state library agency levels before they are approved. In no instance can a project be approved unless it can be shown that it will serve an area with considerable growth potential and is one in which the return on public dollars spent will be maximized.

Public library service in the Southern Appalachian region has improved greatly since the passage of the original Library Services Act in 1956, but much remains to be done. Some parts of the area have excellent library service, other parts have pathetically poor service. State by state, this is how the picture appears to one Appalachian public librarian in 1971.

VIRGINIA

Public library service is provided in most of Virginia's thirty-one Appalachian counties. The eight unserved counties are predominantly rural, mountainous and sparsely settled. Randolph Church, state librarian, reported that Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) funds were expended for public library construction¹⁵ and are noted as follows:

1966/1967	Tazewell County Library	\$69,878
1969/1970	Lee County Branch, Lonesome Pine Regional Library	\$69,200
1970/1971	Wythe-Grayson Regional Library Buchanan County Public Library	\$53,629 \$87,396

There were no ARC expenditures for the fiscal years 1967/1968 and 1968/1969.

WEST VIRGINIA¹⁶

Due to the energetic leadership of Dora Ruth Parks, executive secretary of the West Virginia Library Commission, public library service in West Virginia has undergone a great change within the last fifteen years. Of all of Parks's accomplishments, perhaps the most significant has been her success in convincing state government officials of the necessity for improving public library service in their once-backward state. The result has been a substantial increase in appropriations for library development, both on a state and local level. Since most of the federal programs are based on the individual libraries, library systems, or library agencies paying a share of the cost of the new projects, West Virginia has been able to take considerable advantage of opportunities for federal subsidies. Since 1964, public libraries within West Virginia

have received a total of \$2,398,945 in combined LSA, LSCA and ARC monies. The total included funds for eleven separate projects and two equipment grants. In Kanawha County alone, this has meant that the Kanawha County Public Library has been able to move into badly needed new quarters, an obsolete bookmobile was replaced with a new model, a second floor is currently being added to the St. Albans Public Library, and a new library has been built in South Charleston.

West Virginia has fifty-five counties, all having some form of public library service. Geographically, the state is divided into eleven areas for purposes of library service. Ten of them are served by regional libraries operating directly under the commission. The eleventh, predominantly in the southeastern section of the state and comprising nearly one-half of the total land area, is served by the commission's Book Express Bookmobile Service and by a number of public libraries within the region.

To facilitate better library service in West Virginia, they inaugurated a teletype network which currently links eleven academic and twelve public libraries in the state. When material is needed on an interlibrary loan basis, the request is first put on the network. If the material fails to turn up within the state, the request is then sent to libraries outside of the state.

Through funds made available under federal grants, West Virginia has been able to provide public library service to two previously neglected groups. Title IV A permitted the establishment of library service for patients in state mental institutions and for inmates of state correctional facilities. A good beginning has been made, but the lack of funds for additional staff salaries is holding back further development of the plan. One such development includes the badly needed expansion of library service to the state's hospitals for the chronically ill who presently receive only minimal service.

Under Title IV B, state library programs have been established for the blind and physically handicapped. In the past, both of these groups were dependent on mail service from either the Pittsburgh Regional Library or the Philadelphia Free Library. Now talking books and a variety of special equipment of benefit to handicapped readers are available through centers in Charleston, Huntington, Morgantown, Wheeling and Keyser.

Though it is only a start, special trainee grants made from federal funds have already had a noticeable impact on the quality of professional librarians employed in the state. To date, ten grants have been awarded, and four newly trained librarians have returned to West Vir-

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ginia to work for a minimum of two years. Currently, one of these people is directing the commission's services to state institutions for the blind and physically handicapped; another is operating a similar program at the Kanawha County Public Library in Charleston; the third has become a full-time librarian in Kingwood; and the fourth is head librarian at the Clarksburg Public Library.

Library service in West Virginia has a long way to go but it has come a great distance in the last decade and a half.

KENTUCKY

The Appalachian area of eastern Kentucky is composed of thirty-two counties which encompass some incredibly beautiful scenery, a rather substantial number of coal mines which are rapidly being taken over by mechanization, a great deal of poverty and an amazingly small number of people. In all, there are only 639,400 people in the entire region. Anyone who has visited the area will find it easy to understand; someone who has not done so may be inclined to think the figure is a topographical error.

In 1945 only nine of the thirty-two counties—largely clustered together at the southern edge in the area where the states of Kentucky, Virginia, and West Virginia adjoin—had public library service. In the entire area, the only public library of any noticeable size was the Ashland Public Library in Boyd County with 10,770 volumes.¹⁷

The early WPA library projects did much to improve public library service in eastern Kentucky and the Library Services Act, along with succeeding legislation, did still more. Today, all of the counties within the region have some form of public library service. Most of it comes under the Regional Library Plan which Kentucky is gradually phasing out in favor of a system of merged libraries.

However, even with all of the work which has been done, public library service in eastern Kentucky is inadequate by any standards. This is by no means the fault of the hardworking librarians in the area.

Many federal grants to public libraries depend on the degree of financial initiative taken by the local library or by the county in which it is located. Since poverty is a major problem in eastern Kentucky, most people are concerned with the all-consuming occupation of keeping themselves alive. They often have no money for the necessities of life, much less additional money for taxation to support a public library. Most of these libraries must subsist on pitifully small budgets with little or none of the aid available to larger, more affluent systems. It is typical that the Big Sandy Region, serving Lawrence, Greenup,

Morgan, Wolfe, Lee, Estill, Owsley, and Johnson counties in the area, has received no ARC funds.

The new library buildings which have been provided are, in many cases, the only new public buildings in the entire county. Through assistance provided by the Kentucky State Department of Libraries, there is an ever-expanding, unusually high quality book collection for all of the libraries in the area and *the books are used!* With new books, new buildings, and a good interlibrary loan service, the use of library materials is doubling and tripling in the new buildings.

The main weakness in library service in the region lies with the staff—or more specifically, with the lack of it. Because there is not enough money to pay the needed salaries, especially on a professional level, the number of librarians is inadequate to provide the type of library service which all would like to give. In many instances, one person is the entire staff of a county library. With such conditions, only the bare essentials of service can be given, and such desperately needed programs as work with the disadvantaged or the functionally illiterate must necessarily be put aside until the staff can be provided.

Strides have been made, and it is earnestly hoped that the merger scheme, along with other plans for improvement, will result in much improved public library service over the next decade.

NORTH CAROLINA

With its long-time emphasis on education, one is not the least surprised to discover that North Carolina offers some of the best, most progressive public library services to be found in the Southern Appalachian area. Even in 1945, a time when a severe dearth of public libraries was evident in several parts of the region, twenty of North Carolina's twenty-four Appalachian counties had some form of public library service and six of the counties, all in the southwestern part of the state, were under the jurisdiction of two regional libraries. (The original regional libraries were Nanthahala, serving Cherokee, Clay, and Graham counties, and Fontana, providing library service to Macon, Swain, and Jackson counties.) Today, all of the Appalachian counties are served by public libraries; the original two regional systems have grown to four which lie wholly in the area, and a fifth serves one Appalachian county and several outside of the region. Plans are currently under way to merge several of the regional libraries into larger service units.

Perhaps because North Carolinians value schooling so much, they have been more willing than most to contribute local funds for library

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purposes.¹⁸ In addition, each county routinely receives \$4,000 a year in basic state aid for library services. There is yet another way in which many North Carolina libraries receive financial aid from within the state. This is through what is called the "effort grant," a procedure in which a portion of financial aid to libraries is distributed on the basis of an index of effort, computed as the ratio of the total personal income of a county to its appropriations for library service. It is felt by some administrators that this procedure is not entirely fair to many of the rural counties since their educational and economic levels are lower than those found in more heavily populated areas and, because of this, they qualify for less aid while needing more of it.¹⁹ The effort index is intended to overcome discrimination against poor counties and it is possible that the device does not work as planned. Personnel grants, which pay half of the salaries of certified professional librarians in the regional libraries and assure a minimum salary of \$9,384 a year, do much to insure the quality of the personnel.

Partly because of this stress on the local area sharing the burden of support, public libraries in Appalachian North Carolina received a total of \$866,193 in federal aid from Appalachian funds during the period 1965-1970. An additional \$40,000 for use in Avery County has been requested, but not yet given approval, as of March 30, 1971.²⁰ Figures are not available on the amount these counties received from LSCA funds.

In part due to a lively state library program, many North Carolina public libraries offer vital, increasingly meaningful service to their patrons. Mary L. Barnett, librarian of the Morganton-Burke Library in Morganton, writes with great enthusiasm of circulating sculpture and reproductions of fine paintings, and sound filmstrips of children's books. Monthly film programs intended for teens and adults are shown during the winter. During the summer, viewers can watch color movies while eating their bag lunches in a newly air-conditioned building.²¹ All of this, and much more, is accomplished with one professional librarian assisted by six full-time clericals in the winter and nine in the summer.

In the Nantahala Regional Library, in former Cherokee Indian territory, a new collection of primary and secondary sources of Cherokee Indian history is being established in the Murphy Library. All libraries within the state participate in an extensive interlibrary loan program, through this, via the IN-WATS phone service, they have access to toll-free telephone reference service through the state library. Patrons may obtain books, records and Xerox copies at a flat fee of twenty-five cents a package.

Though there are some comments about the inadequacy of quarters

and the need to replace outdated equipment, North Carolina librarians seem quite pleased with the state of affairs in their area. They would seem to have good reason to be.

TENNESSEE

In 1945 twenty-one of the thirty-seven Appalachian counties in Tennessee provided some form of public library service to their residents. Included in those counties was the single largest public library within the entire Southern Appalachian region: the Chattanooga Public Library with 221,141 books.²² There were no regional libraries within the area at the time. Today, all counties in east Tennessee have public libraries, and all except the populous Knox (Knoxville) and Hamilton (Chattanooga) counties operate within the framework of regional systems.

In several respects, public library service in the area is noticeably different from that found in other parts of the Southern Appalachian region. In most other sections, a regional library consists of two or, more frequently, three counties banded together to provide library service for their citizens; in Tennessee, a public library region is composed of no fewer than six, and frequently as many as nine, counties forming a library service unit.

Tennessee public library development was greatly influenced by the Tennessee Valley Authority experimental program carried out in the early 1930s.²³ As a result, much use is made of small libraries—some of them hardly large enough to justify the title branch library—or stations in stores, banks, and similar places. This is most often the case in the least populated areas. It is a concept which has been largely abandoned in other parts of the region in favor of concentrated bookmobile service. The feeling, as expressed by Lucile Deaderick, director of the Public Library of Knoxville and Knox County, is that "bookmobile service is no substitute for even a small station or branch with a permanent collection of books regularly changed."²⁴ Bookmobiles are used, but not to the extent found in other parts of the region.

Unlike most places in Southern Appalachia, Knoxville finds itself facing the problems of the inner-city area. Considerable urban renewal work is being done in the community and, in a number of cases, the once acceptable patterns of library service have proved totally unsuitable for the emerging conditions. Thus far attempts at adapting public library service to the new needs of the community have proved to be highly successful.

A concerted effort is being made to improve state-wide interlibrary

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loan service. The eventual goal, considered to be a rather long time in the future, is to have a union catalog in the state library in Nashville with the Memphis, Nashville, and Knoxville Public Libraries serving as centers for their respective areas of the state. However, technical information centers have long been in operation through which service is made available to the smaller counties surrounding the metropolitan areas. The service focuses mainly on providing answers to business and technical questions but in recent years has been expanded to include general research facilities for these counties. In east Tennessee, this work is carried on through libraries in Knoxville and Chattanooga.

Much stress is currently placed on getting adequate and, in many cases, new buildings for the public libraries of east Tennessee. Though complete figures are not available on the use of ARC and LSCA funds, in 1967/68, \$23,955 in ARC assistance was used to help with the construction of the Edward Gauche Fisher Memorial Public Library in Athens, Tennessee (Fort Loudon Region); in the same year, the Sevier County Public Library in the Nolichucky Region received \$26,510 in ARC funds toward the construction of a new library building. Recently (no year was given), an \$18,000 ARC appropriation was made toward the construction of a new Franklin County Public Library building. A new main library building is currently being built in Knoxville with the aid of a combined LSCA/ARC appropriation of \$604,000.²⁵

Though public library service is developing at a substantial rate, there is feeling that it could move ahead faster if more money were available for professional salaries. In many instances, the lack of these funds is making it necessary to use people without library degrees, but the situation is being helped in some areas by voluntary inservice training sessions.

GEORGIA

Current information was not available to the author at the time the paper was being written. All counties within Appalachian Georgia do have some public library service.

ALABAMA

The Appalachian region of Alabama includes a total of thirty-five counties. In 1945 only twelve of them had any form of public library service, and only one regional library system existed within the area. In 1971 all thirty-five counties have some form of public library service, and thirteen of these are included in five regional systems. In many instances, public library service is limited to one inadequate building at-

tempting to serve the entire county without benefit of any form of extension service. While twenty of the counties report that their total populations have access to public library service, there remain 323,564 people within the area who are not within reach of a library.

Though state public library service officials are quick to point out the deficiencies in their program, they are equally eager to explain that they consider the most important single resource within the state to be its people, for without them, none of the other resources can be developed or amount to anything. In Alabama, stress is placed on improving the standard of living of the people, and public library officials feel that the best way to do this is through a system of new and improved public libraries.

Unlike other states in this study, the Alabama Public Library Service comes within the scope of a much larger agency—the Alabama Development Office. This facility also includes the Appalachian Regional Commission State Representative and is charged with coordinating programs for developing the state as a whole, in view of the funds available from both local and federal sources. While the chief function of the office is considered to be coordination, it does influence priorities. Because of this, after a beginning in which nine projects benefiting public libraries were undertaken with the aid of ARC/LSCA funds, there followed a period of time during which the agency turned its attention to non-library projects. This year, after several high priority projects failed to materialize, money is once again available for public library development.

Of all the states within the region under consideration, Alabama is the most highly industrialized. The area around Birmingham has long been known for its concentration of industry, and several counties in the northern and northwestern part of the state are rapidly becoming so. It is the announced intent of the state to attract as much industry as possible. Those considering establishing or moving a facility to a new area take a hard look at the social and cultural offerings before they move in. A good public library can make a considerable difference to whether an otherwise backward area is attractive to industrial growth.

In recent years, one of the most important factors in the development of public library service in Alabama has been the availability of financial aid through LSCA/ARC funding. It has made possible many projects which would have otherwise been out of the question because of a lack of money. According to figures released by the Alabama State Public Library Service, to date the combined aid from these sources has amounted to \$1,963,558.²⁶

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Public library service in Alabama still has a long way to go. In the Appalachian region of the state alone, there are twenty library buildings which need to be replaced with adequate structures, and funds need to be found to pay for additional books and supplies. And some way must be found to finance the salaries of badly needed staff, on both professional and non-professional levels. Except for the first of these, which come under LSCA or ARC funding regulations, no federal aid is available for these things.

Twenty-five years ago, about one-half of the counties within the Southern Appalachian region had some form of public library service, and not many had what could be termed "good" library service. Today, with only a scattering of exceptions, the area has almost total coverage. In some instances, as state public library officials admit, this still means that the county is served either by a bookmobile coming in from another county or by one small collection of books housed in an inadequate building which has no means to extend its services beyond the bounds of the immediate community. However, situations like these are rapidly becoming obsolete. In an ever-increasing number of instances, public library service within the Southern Appalachian area is approaching, or equaling, that found in other, more affluent parts of the nation.

The need for public library service within the region has become recognized not only by hard-working local people but, essentially, by officials at the federal level of government. Due to the Library Services Act, its amended version, the Library Services and Construction Act, and aid from the Appalachian Regional Commission, funds have become available to improve public library service in a way which would not have been possible under the more traditional methods. The effectiveness of these programs has been proved by their extension beyond the original time designations.

Experimental programs, largely funded by the first two acts, have done much to convince even hardcore objectors that good public libraries are imperative not only to the growth of the people within the region, but also to the growth of the region itself. Industry seeking to expand or relocate will do neither in an area which does not provide its employees, or prospective employees, with educational, informational and cultural opportunities. Of these desired opportunities the public library is one of the most important in providing a community with an invaluable resource.

Much remains to be done. In parts of Southern Appalachia some

people are inclined to be reluctant to work with "outsiders" who come into the area to become involved or to direct programs. Perhaps the best progress is made when leaders come from within the area itself. Money must be found to educate local people to take over positions of responsibility. In other parts of the region, state laws, probably inadvertently, hamper the development of public library service by pre-determining the purposes for which local taxes may be levied. In these instances the statutes must be changed to allow the people to impose upon themselves taxes for library purposes if that is their wish. A serious need exists for additional buildings and a way must be found to upgrade currently inadequate structures. Salaries, especially on a professional level, are another major problem. In some parts of Southern Appalachia, professional salaries are below the national level so qualified people prefer to work elsewhere. Some effective way must be found to deal with this situation.

Public library service within Appalachia is an emerging thing. It is growing steadily and has a tremendous potential for further growth.

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3. Southern Appalachian Studies, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.
4. In 1969, Owsley County in Kentucky had 4,700 people in an area of 197 square miles. This was a decline of almost 700 people according to the 1960 figure. See: Rand, McNally and Company, *op. cit.*, pp. 216, 218.
5. Claudill, Rebecca. *My Appalachia; A Reminiscence*. New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966, p. 83.
6. Dunbar, Tony. *Our Land Too*. New York, Pantheon Books, 1971, p. 227.
7. Little (Arthur D.) Inc. *A Plan of Library Service for the Commonwealth of Kentucky; A Report to the Kentucky Department of Libraries, June 1969*. Cambridge, Mass., Arthur D. Little, 1969, p. 12.
8. Edwards, Dorothy. "The Romance of Kentucky Libraries," *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 17:293, Dec. 1942.
9. Stanford, Edward Barrett. . . . *Library Extension Under the WPA; An Appraisal of an Experiment in Federal Aid* (The University of Chicago Studies in Library Science). Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1944. These agencies include the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the Federal Civil Works Administration, and a number of others.

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10. Chapman, Edward A. "W.P.A. Library Demonstrations Serve Millions of Readers," *ALA Bulletin*, 34:225-31, April 1940.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 226. A semiprofessional had training in a non-ALA accredited school, in a summer session or in a library training class.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 228.

13. See: Stanford, *op. cit.*, pp. 250-51.

14. U. S. Laws, Statutes, etc. *United States Code*. 1964 ed. Supp. V. Vol. 2. Title 40--Appendix. Prepared by the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives. Washington, D.C., U.S.G.P.O., 1970, pp. 2714-30. (See especially section 214, p. 2725.)

15. Church, Randolph. Letter dated April 7, 1971.

16. Information, including figures, in this section is from: West Virginia. Library Commission. *Annual Report: 1970*. Prepared by Dora Ruth Parks. [n. p.], 1970, pp. 1-32.

17. *American Library Directory, 1945*. Karl Brown, comp. New York, R. R. Bowker, 1945, p. 168.

18. Stephens, George. "Public Libraries and the Knowledge Explosion," *North Carolina Libraries*, 26:66, Spring 1968.

19. Brown, Kenneth, director of the Pack Library in Asheville which serves Buncombe County. Letter dated April 19, 1970.

20. Figures taken from statistical pamphlet issued by the North Carolina State Library, [n. d.].

21. Barnett, Mary L. Letter dated April 19, 1971.

22. *American Library Directory, op. cit.*, p. 481.

23. Taylor, Thurston. "The TVA--A Library Utopia," *ALA Bulletin*, 31:660-61, Oct. 1, 1937. This program laid heavy stress on the role of the public library in continuing adult education. It emphasized (1) small, quality units for individualized service, (2) easy convenient access to the book collections, (3) top quality librarians working with them, and (4) free access to the resources of a large library.

24. Deaderick, Lucile, director of the Public Library of Knoxville. Letter dated April 21, 1971.

25. The figures in this paragraph were taken from the following letters: Middleton, Marie D., regional director of the Fort Loudon Regional Library Center in Athens, Tennessee. Letter dated April 20, 1971; Sharpless, Dorothy E., director of the Nolichucky Regional Library Center in Morristown, Tennessee. Letter dated April 22, 1971; Smith, Janet, director of the Highland Rim Regional Library Center in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Letter dated April 19, 1971; and Deaderick, *op. cit.*

26. Information taken from pamphlet: "ARC Projects," State of Alabama Public Library Service, [n. d.].

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