

Introduction

John D. Rockefeller, Sr., founded the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial in October 1918 in memory of his wife. The state of New York incorporated the Memorial for general philanthropic purposes. During the eleven years of its existence, and with an endowment of almost \$74 million, the Memorial broadened its interest in welfare issues to support the social sciences. During the early years the Board of Trustees managed the Memorial's affairs. In 1922 the Board appointed Beardsley Ruml as director of the Memorial, and he guided the programs until the Memorial's consolidation with the Rockefeller Foundation in 1929.

The first thoughts for the programs of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial were to give grants that followed the late Mrs. Rockefeller's interests in missionary work and support of the welfare of women and children, the latter of which did not develop fully until later in the Memorial's history. During the early years the Memorial gave its backing to the Young Men's Christian Association, the Young Women's Christian Association, the Boy Scouts, and the Girl Scouts. Appropriations to Mrs. Rockefeller's interest in missionary work occurred with the funding of \$1 million to the Women's Christian Association in the Orient and \$366,666 to three missionary colleges in the Near East.

Considerable contributions from the Memorial supported organized emergency relief efforts in China and Europe. In the early 1920s the Memorial appropriated \$785,000 to the American Relief Administration and to its affiliate, the Student Friendship Fund, for food and clothing for teachers and students in Russian universities. The Memorial also made contributions to or through the China Famine Fund, the League of Nations, and the American Red Cross.

After this initial period of giving, the trustees began to consider a more systematic approach to philanthropy. In October 1922, Director Ruml submitted a bold plan to the trustees. This plan moved the Memorial further into the social sciences, into the fields of economics, sociology, political science, psychology, anthropology, and history. The Memorial did not abandon activities previously supported in leisure, public health, and emergency relief; it now centered its focus around three major programs: social sciences and science technology, child study and parent education, and interracial relations. In addition to sponsoring research, the Memorial made grants to support the distribution of this knowledge. The aim of the entire program was to achieve concrete improvement in the conditions of life and to contribute realistically to public welfare.

The Memorial sought to develop cooperative research among social scientists by giving appropriations to universities and to other research organizations as well as seeking practical applications of the results of its research. Schools of business, law, public administration, and social work received support. The Memorial aided the Atlanta School of Social Work, the New York School of Social Work, the schools at Tulane University and the University of Chicago, and the National Catholic School of Social Work.

The Social Science Research Council, organized in 1923 to correlate and stimulate research in the social sciences, received extensive grants. It promoted communication between students of social issues and sponsored cooperative research from different disciplines. The Memorial funded the publication of *Social Science Abstracts*, a publication produced under the guidance of the Council. Other agencies that received aid from the Memorial were the

Brookings Institution, the Institute of Pacific Relations, and the National Bureau of Economic Research.

The Memorial was interested in supporting the people working in the social sciences through fellowships. The Social Science Research Council administered the Memorial's fellowships in the United States. Outside the United States the Memorial supported countries with the aid of national advisers. It granted 239 fellowships to scholars from Austria, Australia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden. Besides funding the fellowships, the Memorial appropriated funds for travel, conferences, scientific journals, and to promote communication between specialists all over the world.

A national program concentrating on children's welfare and parent education grew from the Memorial's early interests in women and children. Among the institutions receiving major support were the Child Study Association of America, Teachers College of Columbia, and the State University of Iowa. This program included support for research on the growth and development of children; the training of people working in the field; and the preparation of books, pamphlets, study outlines, and other aids to help the parents.

Beginning in 1922 the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History conducted, with the assistance of the Memorial, studies of social and economic conditions among blacks since the Civil War. The association maintained close connections with various black universities and trained personnel for its social science faculties. In 1927 at Yale University the Memorial supported an interracial conference, which considered the basic problems of race relations in the United States.

On January 3, 1929, the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial was consolidated with the Rockefeller Foundation. The Memorial made a final grant of \$10,000,000 to the Spelman Fund of New York. An independently incorporated board, the Fund administered appropriations in child study, parent education, and interracial education and continued to support some agencies previously supported by the Memorial for the duration of the particular grant. The Fund's main program was in public administration and intergovernmental relations. The Memorial had just begun to develop itself in this area when it was consolidated with the Rockefeller Foundation.

The Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial deposited its papers with the Rockefeller Foundation Archives in 1929. The Memorial's files contain material on child development and parent education, public health, interracial relations, general education, social welfare, foreign and home missions, emergency relief in time of natural disasters and war, and development of social sciences. The files cover the period from 1918 to 1949, with most of the files from 1918 to 1929.

Organizations and special studies covered are the American Association of Museums, American Child Health Association, American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, American Home Economics Association, American Library Association, American Red Cross, Boy Scouts of America, Child Study Association, Child Study Fellowships, China Famine Fund, Columbia University, Commission on Interracial Cooperation, Commission on Relations with France and Belgium, Cornell University, East Harlem Health Center, Girl Scouts of America, Hanover Conference, Harvard University, League of Red Cross Societies, London School of Economics, Massachusetts Society of Mental Diseases, Maternity Center Association, McGill University, National Conference on Outdoor Recreation, National Council of Parent Education, National Council on Religion in Higher Education, National Organization for Public Health

Nursing, National Research Council, National Tuberculosis Association, Near East Relief, Neighborhood Teacher's Association, Palisades Interstate Park Commission, Playground and Recreation Association of America, Russian Intellectuals, Smith College, Social Science Research Council, State University of Iowa, Student Friendship Fund, University of Chicago, University of Minnesota, Welfare Council, Women's American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Young Men's Christian Association, and the Young Women's Christian Association.

Correspondents include Charles Brent, Kenneth Chorley, Edmund Day, Katherine B. Davis, Cleveland Dodge, Edwin Embree, Abraham Flexner, Guy Stanford Ford, Raymond B. Fosdick, Lawrence K. Frank, Ernest M. Hopkins, Charles Evan Hughes, Charles Merriam, Starr Murphy, George W. Murphy, W. S. Richardson, John D. Rockefeller, Sr., John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Beardsley Ruml, Sydnor H. Walker, and Arthur Woods.

The Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial is divided into four series: **Minutes and Dockets, Administration, Appropriations, and Finances**. The microfilm in this collection covers Series III: Appropriations, which is divided into ten subseries by areas of interest:

Subseries 1 – Public Health

Subseries 2 – Religious

Subseries 3 – Emergency Relief

Subseries 4 – Leisure

Subseries 5 – Child Study and Parent Education

Subseries 6 – Social Studies

Subseries 7 – Social Welfare

Subseries 8 – Interracial Relations

Subseries 9 – General Education

Subseries 10 – Miscellaneous

These subseries contain folders for individual appropriations plus general subject information, declinations, and information on particular individuals. Material included consists of correspondence, charts, maps, clippings, reports, and pamphlets.

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Rockefeller Archive Center