

1890 Institutions' Extension Program and Rural Development

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ABSTRACT The black land-grant colleges' contributions to developing the rural South are traced back before they were added to the land-grant system by the passage of the Morrill Act of 1890. The 1890 Extension target clientele are small farmers and limited resource persons who were not being reached by the conventional delivery system. Before 1972, the 1890 institutions primarily assisted the 1862 universities to serve black farmers and provide training and housing for black specialists and agents. In 1972, the passage of USDA Appropriation Act, under 3(d) section of the Smith-Lever Act, provided funds for the 1890 institutions to fulfill the Extension function of the land-grant mission. Programs are designed to improve the well-being of all rural citizens. Accomplishments discussed include programs in such areas as leadership training, economic development, farmers' markets and developing community organizations to improve the clientele's ability to participate in the democratic process. An expanded role for the Extension programs of the 1890 institutions is proposed.

Introduction

This paper will delineate the past and present role of the Extension Service at the 16 black land-grant colleges and Tuskegee University (hereafter called 1890s) in the development of rural America. The origin and development of 1890 Extension Services will be reviewed. Also, the paper will highlight several outstanding 1890 Extension rural development programs. Finally, 1890's future role in rural development will be discussed.

Rural development is defined as the process aimed at improving the quality of life in rural communities. As defined, rural development is any program aimed at improving the well-being of rural people. This includes programs in agricultural development, industrial development, development of natural resources, development of the trade and service sectors, as well as the development of human capital.

The Morrill Act of 1862 and the Hatch Act of 1877 created the teaching and research arms of the land-grant system. The Second Morrill Act of 1890 added the 16 black institutions and later Tuskegee University to the land-grant system. The Cooperative Extension Service was not established until 1914 with the passage of the Smith-Lever Act. Extension's purpose, as defined by the act, was the diffusion among the non-university citizens of America useful

and practical information on agriculture, home economics and related areas. The Extension Service was established under the premise that through the development of better farmers, the country as a whole would be better off (Jenkins, 1980). It was established during a period when the majority of the American population lived on farms and the country was rural. Extension was established to develop and maintain a commercial agricultural base (Jenkins, 1980). Jenkins noted that America was a society of island communities and that Extension was shaped and advocated by people who supported a shift to a more interrelated urban-industrial business society. In essence, the Extension Service was created to develop rural America.

Development of 1890 Extension services

The 1890s, as well as many other black universities, played major roles in the development of rural America, especially in the rural South. Extension work by both 1862 and 1890 universities can be traced back before the passage of the Smith-Lever Act (Williamson, 1951). The 1890 Extension work can be traced back before the passage of the second Morrill Act of 1890 to the outreach efforts of Booker T. Washington and the faculty of Tuskegee Institute (Campbell, 1969). Tuskegee's Extension efforts began in 1888 under Booker T. Washington's leadership. Farmers were trained both on the farm and at the university through farmer conferences.

After the white state Extension Service was organized, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and various states deemed it necessary to extend the Extension efforts to black people, thus hiring the first black Extension worker at Tuskegee Institute in 1906 (True, 1928). A month later, another Extension worker was hired at Hampton Institute in Virginia. By the time the Smith-Lever Act went into effect, there were about 100 black agents in 11 states. By the end of 1923, there were 294 black agents in 16 southern states (True, 1928).

Many of the earlier Extension workers were educated at Tuskegee Institute. These black agents were located at the county level in rural America. They received subject matter training and assistance from the 1890s.

During the early years, the 1890s held annual farmers' days, agent training meetings and short courses for adults and youths on their campuses. The 1890 Extension Service assisted black farmers and their families, through education, to improve their living conditions by adopting better farming and home managing practices. A better balanced diet for adults and children, school lunches, day care for children, prevention of diseases, screening windows and doors of houses, and building of sanitary toilets are examples of programs emphasized by Extension agents. Major efforts also went into organizing community clubs and training community leaders. Extension

organizations worked closely with other groups such as black chambers of commerce, school officials and teachers, health societies, black churches and self-help leagues to improve the well-being of the citizens of rural America.

The Tuskegee Institute was the forerunner of 1890 Extension work with the development of the "Jessup Wagon Concept" (Campbell, 1969). The concept started when Dr. George W. Carver, using a mule and wagon loaded with Extension materials, traveled through rural Alabama teaching black farmers the latest production practices. Under the direction of Dr. Booker T. Washington and the financial support of Mr. Wagon of New York, Dr. Carver further developed the concept until it became known as the Jessup Wagon concept—Extension on Wheels. The Extension agent had a traveling Extension program. The morning consisted of working with the community's farmers and homemakers on the latest production and homemaking practices. The afternoon was filled with recreation activities for the children. Because of the success of this delivery technique, this program was duplicated by other 1890 Extension Programs. Efforts that improve the farm families' health, living conditions, income and ability to participate in the democratic process can be classified as "rural development." Much of 1890 Extension's earlier efforts can be classified as rural development.

The Smith-Lever Act that created the Extension Service allowed those state legislatures which had established the 1890s to designate the white or the black college to administer the Extension work (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1965). An attempt to amend the bill to include specific requirements that Extension work among blacks be conducted by 1890s failed. The prevailing argument was that separate programs might lead to dissimilar instructions. The result was that the white land-grant institutions administered all funds. Between the period 1914-1971, the 1890s received very little federal or state support to do Extension work (USDA, ES, Program Aid no. 1418, 1988). They were relegated to a position of supporting the 1862 universities. All funds were received by the 1862s, and then some monies would be allocated to the 1890s for black Extension work. Black Extension workers were employed and responsible to the 1862 Extension directors but were generally housed on the 1890 campuses. The faculty of 1890s assisted these workers in community development programs, farmer training days, and youth activities. The 1890s were responsible for program development (Rasmussen, 1989). Much of 1890s' outreach works were carried through vocational education programs (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1965). Agricultural teachers in black schools had an agricultural outreach responsibility. They assisted in training farmers on production management practices. Also, they organized community clubs and trained community leaders. These teachers received support and instructions from 1890 teacher training supervisors for agriculture.

The 1890s started receiving new funds for Extension with the passage of the USDA 1972 Appropriation Act, under 3(d) section of the Smith-Lever Act (Vines and Anderson, 1976). These new funds enabled 1890 Extension to develop and carry out programs designed to reach audiences that were unsuccessfully reached by 1862 Institutions. These audiences included small part-time farmers and limited resource families. The 1890 Extension Programs were structured on the following five priority areas: leadership development, family and youth development, community development, resource management and agriculture production (Vines and Anderson, 1976). An examination of this list clearly indicated that all five areas will have a direct or indirect impact on rural development.

The 1890 Extension Programs were organized in 1972 into the same four major areas as the 1862s: Agriculture, Home Economics, Youth, and Community and Rural Development (CRD). The CRD program efforts cut across all the other program areas. Agriculture, Home Economics and Youth programs have a direct or indirect impact on the well-being of rural people. Extension programs that teach small scale farmers to increase farm income, limited resource families to better manage the family's budget, and youths to be better citizens will have a positive impact on the socioeconomic conditions of rural communities. The relationship of CRD to agriculture, home economics and youth programs is recognized, but this paper will focus on those programs that the 1890s have classified as CRD.

1890 CRD Programs

The 1890s, based on National program guidelines, divided CRD into the following components: Leadership Development, Organization Development and Maintenance, Safety, Leisure and Cultural Education, Economic Development, Manpower and Careers, Housing and Home Environment, Natural Resources and Environment, and Business Management and Economics (CRD Program Leaders Workshop (1980), 1982).

Selected 1890 accomplishments in rural development

To obtain information on the 1890s' CRD efforts, the 1987 Extension's Narrative Accomplishment Reports (NARS) were evaluated. The results are reported by program components.

Leadership Development

All 1890 Extension programs have a leadership development program. The objective is to increase the awareness and participation of all citizens in their community, state and country governmental processes. The clientele ranges from rural ministers, lay leaders, elected and appointed government

officials and rural citizens. The subject matter includes such topics as parliamentary procedures, group dynamics, group problem solving, proposal writing, planning community programs, defining community problems, setting priorities, implementing community programs and locating resources for rural development. The programs range from one day meetings to a block of lessons being taught weekly over time. For example, Tennessee State and Alcorn Universities each conduct an Annual Ministers' Conference. At these conferences, ministers are trained to become disseminators of Extension information. Ministers receive technical information on Extension and other governmental programs. They also receive training on various delivery techniques to communicate effectively with community residents.

Organizational Development

The organizational development component is used to get rural citizens to become more involved in the affairs of their community. These programs usually complement leadership development programs. Leadership development teaches the skills and techniques necessary to be good leaders. Organizational development allows trained leaders to put learned skills in action through organizing and running an organization. These organizations are community based and designed to solve community problems. One example of such efforts is a group of local farmers' markets in Louisiana. These markets provide an outlet for farmers' produce. They also benefit rural families by providing an inexpensive source of fresh vegetables. Another example is a group of citizens organized as a community club that was successful at getting a water system in Talbot County Georgia.

Economic Development

The 1890s assist rural communities to evaluate their resources (land, labor and capital). Rural communities also assisted with economic development plans to create jobs, improve schools and community services. Examples of 1890 Economic development projects are 1) the development of a community recreation park that benefitted 4,700 rural residents in Jefferson County Florida; 2) the securing of a community development block grants to renovate and pave streets in a rural neighborhood in Georgia; 3) a cultural awareness program in Kentucky and 4) the housing and rural development project in Tuskegee to teach low-income families to select, finance, and manage a family home.

Examples of 1890 Extension efforts and accomplishment in rural development are many. The above programs were presented to show the wide range and scope of these efforts.

1890s Extension's future role in rural development

Rural America, especially the rural South, is experiencing severe economic problems. Many rural economies of the South still depend on the agricultural industry. With the demise of the agricultural industry in recent years, many communities are experiencing record numbers of business failures (including rural banks) and high unemployment. Minorities in rural areas are experiencing an even higher unemployment level than their white counterparts. For example, the overall unemployment for Louisiana is 12 percent, but for minorities it is 22 percent (LA Department of Labor, 1989; Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission, 1989). These same data indicated that in some rural communities, black unemployment levels are as high as 40%. This crisis in rural America has caused many citizens to have a feeling of hopelessness. Now is the 1890s moment. Extension CRD efforts need to be expanded to include literacy training, stress management, job finding and retraining programs, community promotion packaging, public policy training, fiscal management and financing alternatives for rural communities. Rural revitalization is a national as well as an 1890 Extension priority program for the current four year plans of work (fiscal years 1988 to 1992).

The 1890 Extension Services have a strong commitment to improve the lives of those individuals left out of mainstream rural America. They will continue to develop educational programs to improve the socioeconomic conditions of this clientele.

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