



Mid-American Review of Sociology

**SPECIAL ISSUE:
NEBRASKA SOCIOLOGY**

George Elliott Howard
Sociology in the University
of Nebraska, 1899-1927

Michael R. Ball
George P. Howard's Institutional
Sociology of Marriage and Divorce

Charles A. Ellwood
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Comm. on Law Observance and Enforcement

Mari Sandóz
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The Intellectual Legacy of
Nebraska Sociology

Bruce Keith
The Foundations of an American
Discipline: Edward A. Ross'
Intellectual Work

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PREFACE TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE

Mary Jo Deegan
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Mid-American Review of Sociology, 1988, Vol. XIII, No. 2:iv

Nebraska was a tumultuous new state in 1869, the year its major University was founded. The early sociologists at Nebraska reflected this bumptious and daring spirit. This special issue of the *Mid-American Review of Sociology* explores several facets of the intellectual heritage and institutional foundations of sociology at the University of Nebraska.

Several of the major figures in Nebraska sociology and the society surrounding them are introduced in the following pages. The contributions to this issue lay the groundwork for a yet more comprehensive and integrated study of the foundational years of sociology at the University of Nebraska. Michael R. Hill's efforts in organizing and editing this special issue deserve particular commendation.

It is my hope that you will, as I have, enjoy reading these papers, both old and new, and thus discover more about early university life in the midwest and the then new-born profession of sociology.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF A DEPARTMENTAL HERITAGE

Michael R. Hill
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Mid-American Review of Sociology, 1988, Vol XIII, No. 2:v-viii

The creation, maintenance, and diffusion of each academic department's corporate identity is a social project. This is as true for departments of sociology as for any other academic organization. Numerous individuals and organizations -- within and outside a particular institute of higher learning -- participate in the constructive, reconstructive, and deconstructive processes that shape the content and character of the institutional heritage passed from one generation of scholars in each department of sociology to the next.

The institutionally-generated identities of academic departments of sociology are subject to all manner of distortions stemming from rumors, "war stories," selective retention, personal biases, and wishful thinking. Such distortions can be aggravated and compounded when organizational power is marshaled to institutionalize and reify the myths, grand stories, and heroes and heroines typically memorialized in traditional, word-of-mouth, mentor-to-student transmission. For example, the well-known *Heritage of Sociology* series, edited by the late Morris Janowitz of the University of Chicago, plays a significant role in keeping "the Chicago story" readily available in university libraries, academic bookstores, and doctoral reading lists across the United States. The modern heirs of the classic Chicago school clearly possess a rich historical reality about which to write and publish, but it must be noted that the prestige and power of the University of Chicago Press has been an especially important and adroitly employed mechanism for insuring the repetition and continued currency of the Chicago school's past accomplishments.

In the long shadow of the publishing blitz generated by the Chicago school (cf., Kurtz 1984), the remaining story of midwestern sociology is largely untold and underappreciated. What little published work exists on "the other" sociology departments in Illinois, not to mention the Dakotas, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin, often leaves major figures and issues unexplored, and sometimes distorts as much as clarifies.¹ For example, the major work on Edward A. Ross, one of the region's leading sociological founders, was written not by a sociologist, but by an historian -- with an historian's perspective and disciplinary biases.

The creative visions, progressive ideals, and intellectual discipline of the early midwestern sociologists provide a solid and dependable anchor for modern students adrift in the too often typical tempests of campus politics and disciplinary factionalism. The published corpus of sociological history is a social construction, and it presently denies midwestern students much of their rightful, empowering heritage. The goal of this special issue on the foundations of Nebraska sociology is to demonstrate that -- armed with

determination and appropriate methodologies -- it is possible for midwestern graduate students to reclaim significant parts of their intellectual legacy.

It is extremely difficult to adequately excavate the record of a department's intellectual and institutional heritage without resort to the methodologies of archival research and analysis. The graduate student contributors to this issue have been especially fortunate to be introduced to the intricacies of archival methodology first-hand by Professor Mary Jo Deegan. Her innovation, leadership, and years of experience in the field of disciplinary reconstruction (recently exemplified in her 1988 monograph on Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School, 1892-1918) have greatly benefited our collective efforts not only in producing this issue but also in several related and ongoing projects.

The papers and topics presented in this issue need little editorial introduction, as they speak well for themselves. George Howard, Charles Ellwood, and Edward A. Ross were sociological leaders of the first order, all three elected to the presidency of the American Sociological Society. Mari Sandoz, a student of Joyce Hertzler, is one of Nebraska's and the United States' most distinguished novelists, biographers, and social historians. Hattie Plum a student of George Howard, became the first known woman to chair a coeducational, doctoral-degree granting department of sociology in the United States. These are remarkable people to admire and to learn from. Each paper in this issue marks a significant aspect of Nebraska sociology, and whets our appetite (and we hope yours) for further investigations. It is important, however, to underscore the crucial role of full-fledged archival research in the production and publication of the papers in this issue.

Without cooperative, energetic archival work over the past year, much of the material in this issue would remain unknown and unavailable. George E. Howard's 1927 personal account of the Nebraska department lay for years unread, unknown, and unpublished in a file box in the University of Nebraska Archives. Charles Ellwood's 1899 essays were found on a brittle role of microfilm at the Nebraska State Historical Society. The existence of Mari Sandoz' unpublished interactional study was discovered through systematic reading of her archival papers and correspondence. The essays by Bruce Keith and Michael Ball are significantly informed by their archival understanding of the published works of Ross and Howard. The story of Hattie Plum Williams' work for the National Commission on Law Observation and Enforcement simply could not be told without searching through the boxes of her archival records at the Nebraska State Historical Society.

The final contribution to this issue, a bibliographical chronology of Nebraska sociology, demonstrates the limits of traditional bibliographic research. The bibliography is but a skeleton of untold accomplishments that only archival (and, for more recent years, qualitative) methods can complete. Nonetheless, old-fashioned bibliographic work has a role to play in regenerating the core of an academic heritage. Prior to the compilation of the bibliography, few Nebraska students could name more than two or three of the numerous sociological books authored and edited by Nebraska faculty

and students.

The student contributors to this issue hope that our work serves as a model for graduate students in our own and in other midwestern departments of sociology. Working collectively or alone, graduate students can do much to reclaim academic inheritances long ago relegated to forgotten archival files. Across the midwest, discipline-redefining accounts remain everywhere to be discovered, written, and institutionally remembered.

In addition to the generous help and encouragement provided by Professor Mary Jo Deegan, acknowledged above, the following persons and organizations deserve special thanks for their help, ideas, useful information, and interest: Lynn Beideck-Porn, Alan Booth, Kathy Borman, Miguel Carranza, Caroline Sandoz Pifer, Roxann Roggenkamp, Sharon Selvage, Helen Stauffer, Joseph Svoboda, Pat and Scott Wendt of Bluestem Books, the Nebraska State Historical Society, the University of Nebraska Archives, and the University of Nebraska Photographic Productions.

NOTE

1. Some exemplary exceptions are found in the series of midwest department histories edited by Mary Jo Deegan for *The Sociological Quarterly*, specifically: McGuire and Dawes (1983), Sica (1983), and Fine and Severance (1985). There is clearly more than local campus interest in the disciplinary history of each midwestern department. As Thomas Eynon (1983:469) noted, for example:

These...articles are part of a series edited by Mary Jo Deegan. In 1979 the publications committee of the Midwest Sociological Society recommended the appointment of Professor Deegan "to coordinate and commission articles on the history of sociology in the Midwest to be published over several years in *The Sociological Quarterly*."

The commissioned articles published in *The Sociological Quarterly* demonstrate the rich potential for future work in the disciplinary history of the midwest. A further example of major relevance is Joyce O. Hertzler's ([1929] 1979) account, "A History of Sociology at the University of Nebraska," with an editorial introduction by Mary Jo Deegan (1979). For a useful regional perspective, see Deegan (Forthcoming).

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SOCIOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA, 1898-1927¹

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THE PIONEERS: ELLWOOD AND PREVEY

The initial course in sociology in the University of Nebraska was offered in the first semester of 1898-99 by Professor W. G. Langworthy Taylor, head of the "Department of Political and Economic Science."² The course, taken by ten students, is called "Sociology: Giddings, Patten, and Spencer. It will trace the objects and nature of the science. It is especially recommended in order to give a more complete idea of the method in economic study."

In July of the year 1899-1900 Dr. Charles A. Ellwood accepted the position of Secretary of the Charity Organization Society of the City of Lincoln.³ Thus to friends in the University a trained sociologist seemed available for a part of his time. How could his services be secured? The budget was established; the announcement of courses had been published. Nevertheless, Dr. Ellwood was persuaded to accept the title of Lecturer in Sociology in the Department of Political and Economic Science; though, in March, as he humorously remarks, "I was promoted to the rank of Instructor."

During the first semester he gave a course in Sociology, turned over to him by Professor Taylor; also a course in Modern Charities. For the second semester a course in Social Psychology was turned over to him by Professor A. Ross Hill, of the Department of Philosophy; and he added a course in Criminology. Thus throughout the academic year Dr. Ellwood gave the University inspiring service for six hours a week. Literally he gave the service; for the only remuneration he received was the praise and the expressed gratitude of an impecunious Board of Regents. Naturally in April, 1900, he accepted the position of Professor of Sociology in the University of Missouri -- whose treasury was not empty -- and tendered his resignation effective at the close of the session. The story of Professor Ellwood's labors for twenty-seven years in constructing a great department of sociology may be read elsewhere in this volume.⁴

On the retirement of Dr. Ellwood, Comadore Edward Prevey, in 1900-1901, was called to discharge both functions which Ellwood laid down. As Lecturer, later Instructor, of Sociology in the Department of Political Economy and Sociology, as then named, he gave a course the first semester in Advanced Sociology, critically studying the work of Giddings in comparison with that of Comte, Spencer, and Ward; and a course in Social Psychology the second semester.

Mr. Prevey served the University until 1906; but after the coming of Professor Ross his teaching was confined chiefly to topics in applied sociology. He retired in 1906 to devote himself wholly to the duties of the