



TIMELINES

Section on the
History of
Sociology

December 2004
E-Newsletter
Number 1

IS THE HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY IMPORTANT?

Susan Hoecker-Drysdale

In this inaugural edition of the electronic newsletter of the Section of the History of Sociology, I should like to initiate discussion on the nature and importance of the history of Sociology. This is intended not simply to honor sociology's heritage, but rather to explore the many respects in which the history of sociology is valuable in itself as it attempts to weave the historical threads into the fabric of the discipline.

What is the history of sociology? And why is it important? I raise these questions not so much to answer them but to think about their implications. The history of sociology is often seen as the history of institutions. The question interpreted in this way suggests that we build chronologies, lists of names of sociologists, authors of articles and books and dates published, compendia of departments, research institutes, professional publications and particularly of professional organizations and their members around the country and in those countries where sociology seems to have emerged from the 19th century into the 20th.

Surely these data and pieces of information are required in building a historical portrait of the discipline. The

question thus posed, however, suggests that there is a history of sociology out there, that we know fairly well what it is and share some consensus about it, and that our task is to add to it, to make it more complete, but always to understand that there is an agreed standard version, an orthodox history of the discipline.

Another way to ask the question is: What **is** the history of sociology? This question insists on going beyond the orthodox version and its present facts, and implies that there is more to the establishment of a discipline and its growth and development than any standard version reveals, that we need to know **why** sociology developed in the way it did, **who** actually participated, **who** was excluded or marginalized, **how** other disciplines contributed to sociology's development, **what** were the conflicts and tensions in that development, **where** are the theory and practice of sociology to be found in various periods, **what** were the issues and concerns which prompted individuals to nurture this innovative way of looking at the world, and **what** were the forces which made sociology's existence important and even necessary for some?

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ASA Centennial Meeting

Aug. 13-16, 2005

Philadelphia, PA

The Journal of the History of Sociology: Its Origins and Scope

Jack Nusan Porter

I founded the Journal of the History of Sociology (JHS) and several other projects in 1976 in Boston,

Massachusetts in a burst of creativity between jobs. I discovered later that 1976 also marked the 100th anniversary of the first course in sociology (at Yale and taught by William Graham Sumner).

This was not the first history of sociology journal nor will it, hopefully, be the last. Michael R. Hill in the first issue of his Sociological Origins: A Journal of Research, Documentation, and Critique, said the following:

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2004 Graduate Student Paper Award

The Awards Committee is pleased to announce the recipients of this year's Section Awards. The awards were presented at a ceremony during the Section's Reception at the ASA in August. Michael De Cesare, PhD Candidate at the University of Massachusetts, received The Graduate Student Paper Award for his paper titled "Apathetic, Active or Antagonistic?"

A History of the American Sociological Association's Involvement in High School Sociology." This paper has been accepted for publication and is forthcoming in *The American Sociologist*. Michael has accepted a position on the faculty at the University of California, Northridge.



Michael deCesare

2004 Distinguished Achievement Award

The Distinguished Achievement Award recognized three sociologists 'for their pioneering contributions in publishing research in the field of sociology.' The recipients are Jack Nusan Porter, University of Massachusetts at Lowell, Founder and Publisher, *Journal of the History of Sociology*

(1977-1982); Glenn Jacobs, University of Massachusetts/Boston, Founding Editor, *Journal of the History of Sociology* (1977-1982); and Alan Sica, University of Pennsylvania, Editor and Publisher, *Journal of the History of Sociology* (1983-1987).



Jack Nusan Porter

2004 Harriet Martineau Society Award

Dr. Linda J. Rynbrandt, Professor of Sociology at Grand Valley State University, Michigan, received the 2004 Harriet Martineau Sociological Society Award for significant contributions to the study of early women sociologists. Linda, a longtime member of the Section on the History of Sociology, was cited for her

groundbreaking research on Caroline Bartlett Crane. The award was presented in San Francisco during the recent annual meeting of the American Sociological Association



Linda Rynbrandt



Chair's Comments

This is the inaugural edition of the electronic newsletter of the Section on the History of Sociology, American Sociological Association. This exciting innovation in our section will facilitate communication, allow for more comprehensive coverage and more frequent editions, and save sections funds considerably. I want to make special recognition therefore of the work of Cathy Coghlan, who, as our new newsletter editor, has so patiently and diligently collected material for its content and engaged in all the computer design work required for such a newsletter.

We all are indebted to Cathy and, on your behalf, I wish to thank her for her efforts. We have elected a strong executive council and strong committees this year (listed in this newsletter). We look forward to a new website for the HOS section. A committee is hard at work on a bibliography on the history of sociology requested by ASA which ultimately will be posted on the ASA website and will be a useful tool for all ASA members.

Tony Blasi has compiled the centennial volume, *Diverse Histories of American Sociology*, and is currently negotiating with a publisher.

We made a special attempt this fall to increase our membership, crucial in determining the number of sessions at annual meetings and the amount of section funding from ASA. As of September 31, 2004, our section membership stood at 179, down from last year but higher than 2002.



Susan Hoecker-Drysdale

We know that some members have sponsored student memberships that were not included in the September 31 figure. It is extremely important for section members to encourage interested colleagues and students to join the section now and certainly by January.

We are awaiting news from the ASA Executive and Program Committee regarding the 2005 program. The call for papers has been issued and we encourage submissions to our HOS session and related sessions on History. Program details will be in the next newsletter.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter and will find it useful. Please give us your suggestions for future issues. We invite your participation. Best wishes for the fall semester. Susan Hoecker-Drysdale, Chair, Section on the History of Sociology, ASA, 2004-2005

Recent Major Publications in the History of Sociology by Section Members

An Independent Woman's Lake District Writings, by Harriet Martineau, compiled, edited, and with an introduction by Michael R. Hill. Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, an imprint of Prometheus Books, 2004. ISBN 1-59102-172-3 Softbound. Index. Illustrations. 504 pp.

Social Ethics: Sociology and the Future of Society, by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, edited with an introduction by Michael R. Hill and Mary Jo Deegan. Westport, CT: Preager, 2004. ISBN 0-275-97886-9 Hardbound. Index. Xxvii + 168 pp.

Why Women Are So, by Mary Roberts Coolidge, with an introduction by Mary Jo Deegan. Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, an imprint of Prometheus Books, 2004. ISBN 1-59102-161-8 Softbound. 371 pp.

If you have a recent publication in the History of Sociology that you would like to share, please send the information to c.coghlan@tcu.edu, by Jan. 15, 2005



History of Sociology Important? -- Continued from page 1

The truth is that there are many histories of sociology, "Plural Histories", as suggested in the title of our Section's centenary volume. One can examine, for example, the development of sociology in relation to other disciplines. Peter Burke in *History and Social Theory* (1992) discusses the connections and differentiation between history and sociology, to show their complementarities, their parochialisms, and the ambivalences, one might say, about whether sociology needed history and history, sociology. Both fields experienced fads, changing trends, efforts toward uniqueness and independence, and finally, in sociology's case, a dismissal of the past. As sociology became more professionalized, more institutionally defined, more empirical, and more focused on the facets of contemporary society, it withdrew from historical concerns and often from theory. Burke calls it a "shift to the present at the expense of the past." In part he says, this is related to the American experience, where history itself was less important and less visible in everyday life than in Europe.(13) One can argue about the case he makes without neglecting the point that the American perspective on the history of Sociology is related to the experience and history of this country. Moreover, the quest to make sociology scientific resulted in a turn away from interests in the past. Albion Small, in *The Origins of Sociology* (1924) maintained that sociology "came into existence as an organic part of this maturing of social science as a whole...Sociology is a normal

advance of human thought from less developed to more developed dealings with human reality." (14-15) Small himself recognized that the work of building sociology was done also by those outside of, or marginal within, academe who wished to explore the social world, to understand it, to answer questions, and to solve social problems. "Indeed," Small remarks, "there is the wherewithal for a brilliant Doctor's dissertation on the subject "Sociology outside the Ranks of the Sociologists"! (15) The evolution or development of a social [and we would add, historical] self-consciousness in addressing matters of humans' experiences as social beings can be traced particularly to the German context, according to Small. He recognizes how the history of sociology is shaped and influenced by factors of politics, nationality, and ethnicity, (19) and, we would add race and gender. Small insists that to understand our discipline and its accumulated knowledge in whatever period, we must understand its history. Thus, the case for the centrality of the history of sociology is made early by sociology's founders. In time, as particular theories and schools rose into dominance, sociology as a science was declared to be a progressive accumulation of facts and new theories focused on the contemporary world. The past became anachronistic,

irrelevant, unimportant. Our theories, concepts, methodologies and findings were seen almost in isolation from context, as abstracted tools of timeless meaning. Today, however, the history of sociology **is** acknowledged as crucial to our understanding and critique of those tools because, additionally, it suggests new directions in our work, as Neil Smelser advances in his summary of the history of the discipline in *The American Sociologist* (Fall 2003). Our cognitive interests lie within rubric of the history of sociology and the sociology of sociology. Our endeavors provide perspective, context, enhanced understanding and critical thinking, and therefore also recognition of the limitations and partial character of our sociological knowledge.

A further question is **what** is the history of sociology? What constitutes the historical narrative of its development internationally and in America specifically? These questions will be taken up in the next newsletter.

Peter Burke. *History and Social Theory*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992.

Albion Small. *Fifty Years of Sociology in the United States (1865-1915)*. American Journal of Sociology 21 (May 1916) 721-864.

_____. *Origins of Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924.

Neil J. Smelser. "Sociology: *Spanning Two Centuries*", The American Sociologist, 34 (Fall 2003), 5-19.



Call for Nominations

Graduate Student Paper Award

Students who are actively enrolled (full or part time) in a graduate sociology program on December 15th 2004 may submit one scholarly paper for consideration for this award. The submission may be a sociology seminar paper, an article submitted or accepted for publication in a sociology journal, or a single chapter from a sociology thesis or dissertation. The paper should focus on a theoretical issue or empirical problem central to History of Sociology. Eligible students are invited to send three copies of a cover letter and three copies of their paper to arrive no later than March 1st, 2005 to Committee Chair, Yolanda Johnson, 711 Oldfather Hall, University of Nebraska - Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68588-0324 (e-mail: histofsoc@yahoo.com). Members of the current Graduate Student Award Committee are ineligible for the award.

Distinguished Scholarly Book Award

This award honors sociologists who have made significant contributions to the History of Sociology by writing books on the 'cutting edge' of sociological inquiry. Monographs and edited scholarly works published in 2003, 2004, or 2005 are eligible for consideration. The book's author(s) or editor(s) must be sociologists. All books submitted for consideration should be accompanied by a letter of nomination. Self-nominations are welcome if accompanied by a letter of support from another member of the ASA. To nominate a book send two copies of the book and two copies of a letter highlighting the book's significant contributions to the History of Sociology to Committee Chair, Dr. Michael Hill, Sociological Inquiry, 2701 Sewell Street, Lincoln, NE 68502 (mhill@iwcc.edu - write ASA HOS Book Award Inquiry in the e-mail subject line) before March 31, 2005. Members of the current Distinguished Scholarly Book Committee are ineligible for the award.

Distinguished Achievement Award

This award recognizes sociologists who have made outstanding contributions to the History of Sociology throughout their careers, or who have made ground breaking innovations or produced significant bodies of scholarly work in the History of Sociology. Nominees must be sociologists. Letters of nomination should highlight the nominee's outstanding innovation(s), career and contributions to the History of Sociology. Self nominations are welcome if accompanied by a letter of support from another member of the ASA. To nominate a person for this award, send a nomination letter, vitae, and samples of the nominee's work to Committee Chair, Dr. Vasilikie (Vicky) Demos, 1214 Orchard Circle, Salisbury, MD 21801 (demosvp@mrs.umn.edu) by March 1st, 2005. Members of the current Distinguished Award Committee are ineligible for the award.



JHS: Origins and Scope -- *Continued from page 1*

“Other independent sociological journals have gone before, and I draw inspiration from the precedents. Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s The Forerunner (1909-1916) was a brilliant, independent adventure in sociological writing. Chicago-trained Nebraska sociologist Julius T. House’s Present-Day American Literature (1928-1933) is another, lesser-known exemplar. And, The Journal of the History of Sociology, edited by Glenn Jacobs and Jack Nusan Porter from 1979 to 1984 (and subsequently by Alan Sica and Gerd Schroeter), is a more immediate predecessor.” (1998: 3)

The actual dates were 1978 to 1983 for the JHS but the point is that there were journals before us and there are journals after us. Michael Hill, Glenn Jacobs, and I also shared a similar need to be inclusive, especially of the role of women and minorities.

The time seemed right in 1976 because sociology and especially, the American Sociological Association (the ASA), the major sociological, professional group in the world, did not seem interested in its own history. In fact, I once asked an ASA officer if she could tell me how long (how many years) members were actually members of the organization, and she could not tell me. Even archives were disorganized. There was no central location. The University of Chicago had some relevant holdings; Pennsylvania State University under Alan Sica had some; the University of Nebraska under Mary Jo Deegan and Michael Hill were other sources; the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Canada was a fourth source; but most holdings were scattered all over the country, unknown to most scholars. The 100th anniversary of the ASA organization (1905-2005) has however bolstered interest in the field and will hopefully help organize, label and promulgate these historical and archival locations.

My own love affair with history began as a child of Holocaust survivors from Europe. History came first for me, sociology, second. I had to understand myself, and I hoped that sociology plus history might help me understand the psyches of my traumatized parents, their friends, and their children. I was also a new immigrant, having come to America from Russia (Ukraine) via Linz, Austria, in 1946 as a baby, and my experiences gave me an incentive to know history.

This all came to me under the guidance of a great teacher at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) in 1963, Karl Flaming (today at the University of Colorado--Denver), who asked his introduction to sociology students a question about their grandparents; nearly all hands shot up except mine---why? Because as a child of Holocaust survivors, I had no grandparents---25 members of my family had been killed in Europe in one night. I was forced by Prof. Flaming’s class to confront my own ethnic history, and being a sensitive kid, I did. I became a sociologist in that very instant. Thus, my European background led me to understand the historical basis of American society and the intellectual basis for American sociology.

Wisely, I immediately brought in someone who turned out to be a truly gifted editor--Glenn Jacobs of UMass Boston. I edited an issue or two when Glenn was unable to but the journal owes much to his talents, and later to those of Alan Sica, who took over from Glenn and I and edited it from 1983 until 1987, when the journal ceased publication, due to lack of library sales.

I am happy that a younger generation of students and scholars have stepped up to carry forward the tradition. Hopefully, we will get the “best of JHS” published on CD-ROM or in an anthology so that more can learn of our work. And the American Sociological Association (ASA) has finally recognized this journal and its own history during its own centennial year (1905-2005). It’s a shame the journal ended. It was far ranging and valuable. Perhaps, it will be resurrected in the future.

(For the full essay, contact Jack Nusan Porter, The Spencer Institute for Social and Historical Research, West Newton, Massachusetts, at jacknusan@earthlink.net)



History of Sociology Section Web Site

A web site for the Section on the History of Sociology is currently under development and information and materials are needed. Of particular interest right now are the historical documents of the section itself--when it was founded, a statement describing the process of founding the section, etc. Any items regarding the history of the section would be helpful. Items that can be submitted in an electronic format--especially past newsletters, correspondence, or discussions--would be particularly helpful. Please send materials, suggestions or questions to Eleanor Townsley, etownsle@mtholyoke.edu, and/or Mikaila Arthur, Mikaila.Arthur@nyu.edu. Thanks for your help!

Official ASA History of Sociology Section Bibliography

To all section members: Please send any bibliographic items on your favorite subjects (memoirs, department histories, minorities in sociology) to members of the committee: Jack Nusan Porter, Chair, jacknusan@earthlink.net, Michael Hill, mhill@jwcc.edu, or Pamela Roby, pamela.robby@usc.edu) or to Lee Herring with ASA at lherring@asanet.org. You can also send Jack a hard copy at the address below:

Jack Nusan Porter, Ph.D.
12 Dunstan Street
West Newton, MA 02465-2115

Coming Events

The Harriet Martineau Sociological Society's Third International Working Seminar will convene May 23-25, 2005, at Mammoth Cave National Park, Kentucky. This invitation is extended primarily to scholars actively working on Martineau's sociological, philosophical, and/or literary contributions. Space is limited. Please apply as soon as possible. To propose a paper and/or request further information, please contact Seminar Co-Organizer, Michael R. Hill, 2701 Sewell Street, Lincoln, NE 68502. E-mail: mhill@iwcc.edu Previous HMSS Working Seminars have been held at Mackinac Island, Michigan, in 1997 and in Ambleside, England, in 2002.

Retrospective

What were sociologists writing about 100 years ago? Many of the same topics which sociologists continue to write about today. Discussions about the role of sociology in society were commonplace as were investigations of the social problems of the day.

American Journal of Sociology, Volume 10, Number 3, November 1904

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Small, Albion W. "The Subject-Matter of Sociology"

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