
Register of the United States. President's Research Committee On Social Trends Records, 1932

Processed by Natasha Porfirenko; machine-readable finding aid created by Michael C. Conkin

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Descriptive Summary

Title: United States. President's Research Committee On Social Trends Records,

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Creator: United States. President's Research Committee On Social Trends

Collection Size: 10 manuscript boxes4.2 linear feet)

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Abstract: Relates to demographic, educational, racial, recreational, cultural, religious, medical, legal, and governmental aspects of society; urban and rural trends; and the role of the family. Reports published under the title *Recent Social Trends in the United States* (New York, 1933)

Language: English.

Access

Collection open for research.

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Acquisition Information

Acquired by the Hoover Institution Archives.

Accruals

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Access Points

Hoover, Herbert, 1874-1964.

Social change.

Social problems.

United States--Politics and government.

United States--Politics and government--1929-1933.

United States--Social conditions.

Historical Note

The discussion of the project and the preliminary work were initiated in September 1929. Funds to support the studies were appropriated by the Rockefeller Foundation in November 1929, and were administrated by the Social Science Research Council in New York City.

The members of the original committee were Wesley C. Mitchell, Chairman; Charles E. Merriam, Vice Chairman; Shelby M. Harrison, Secretary-Treasurer; Alice Hamilton, Yale University; Howard W. Odum, University of North Carolina; William F. Ogburn, University of Chicago.

As for the executive staff, it consisted of William F. Ogburn, Director of Research; Howard W. Odum, Assistant Director of Research; and Edward Eyre Hunt, Executive Secretary.

Herbert Hoover's foreword to the two volume report of findings of the Committee indicates his reasons for initiating the work and making the effort to obtain support for the studies. A preparatory note explains the study procedures followed by the Committee and its collaborators. Both are quoted below.

Foreword by Herbert Hoover to the two volume set entitled *Recent Social Trends in the United States*, published by McGraw Hill Book Company, New York, 1933:

"In the autumn of 1929 I asked a group of eminent scientists to examine into the feasibility of a national survey of social trends in the United States, and in December of that year I named the present Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Wesley C. Mitchell to undertake the researchers and make a report. The survey is entirely the work of the committee and its experts, as it was my desire to have a complete, impartial examination of the facts. The Committee's own report, which is the first section of the published work and is signed by members, reflects their collective judgment of the material and sets forth matters of opinion as well as of strict scientific determination.

Since the task assigned to the Committee was to inquire into changing trends, the result is emphasis on elements of instability rather than stability in our social structure.

This study is the latest and most comprehensive of a series, some of them governmental and others privately sponsored, beginning in 1921 with the report on "Waste in Industry" under my chairmanship. It should serve to help all of us to see where social stresses are occurring and where major efforts should be undertaken to deal with them constructively."

Herbert Hoover
The White House
Washington, D.C.
October 11, 1932

Preparatory note:

As the basis for its report of findings the President's research Committee on Social Trends presents... chapters prepared by its collaborators and in a series of monographs separately published the scientific results of its researchers. The chapters and monographs are prepared with the primary purpose of revealing major social questions. They present records, not opinions; such substantial stuff as may serve as a basis for social action, rather than recommendations as to the form which action should take.

As a scientific undertaking the researchers in general have been limited to fields where records are available. In preparing certain of the chapters, notably that on the arts, continuous records proved very scarce; for some of the chapters, such as that on social attitudes and interests, it was necessary to make extensive collections of data not previously recorded; for others, especially those on population and the utilization of natural wealth, the abundance of data in one or more parts of the field led rather to problems of exclusion and selection.

The scope of the researches was made as broad as feasible not only in order to yield a picture of changing society in the United States, but also to provide a framework within which emerging problems might be seen in their due relations. Other

studies, such as those of the presidential Committee on recent Economic Changes and the various White House conferences have been drawn upon, not duplicated, and the schedule of investigation and publications was so arranged as to enable the collaborators to use the results of the decennial census of 1930 and of various other surveys, governmental and private which were in progress during the life of the work.

The investigators were recruited with the advice of officers of the Social science Research Council, of universities and other scientific institutions. Frequent progress reports were made by them and staff conferences were held from time to time as the researchers progressed. Preliminary drafts of chapters were submitted for criticism as to accuracy and freedom from bias. In published form the chapters represent not only a treatment of the factors of social change, but an attempt to coordinate and integrate the evidence into a useful whole.

Certain topics are excluded because for one reason or another they could not be fitted into the Committee's scheme. The current business depression is not explained. Much of the basic materials upon economic changes have been treated in recent publications. Little is said about the fateful issue of war and peace, although the financial costs of past wars are set out in the chapters on the functions of government and on taxation. Though foreign developments -intellectual, political, economic and social -have exercised a many sided influence upon American trends since 1900, they are mentioned only here and there. There is no chapter on the growth of scientific knowledge in general, or of social science and social research in particular.

A 75 page summary and review of findings for which the Committee takes the responsibility is carried in Volume I, preceding 29 detailed chapters. The problems of social change are presented in the summary under three groupings: Problems of physical heritage; Problems of biological heritage; Problems of social heritage.

In addition to the two volume report described above, twelve monographs were published to present fuller data on certain specific trends: population; communication agencies; education; metropolitan communities; rural communities; races and ethnic groups; political, social, and economic activities of women; recreation (Americans at play); the arts; health and environment; public administration; growth of the federal Government -1915-1932. A monograph on Labor in the National Life was announced but was never completed for publication."

Scope and Content

The documents in this collection consist almost exclusively of the committee's findings, in the form of typescript and mimeographed copies of twenty-six of the twenty-nine final chapters.

The papers of the executive secretary Edward Eyre Hunt were also sent to the Hoover Archives, and constitute a separate collection under his name. The material relating to the President's Research Committee on Social Trends can be found in Boxes 20-27, and consist of correspondence, memoranda, minutes, proceedings, and reports.

1-10.

COMMITTEE FINDINGS, 1929-1932.

Scope and Content Note

Publisher's announcement, and typescript and mimeographed copies of twenty-six of the twenty-nine surveys put out by the committee and eventually published in the two-volume set entitled *Recent Social Trends in the United States*, 1933, New York (chapters 3, 6, and 15 are missing)

COMMITTEE FINDINGS, 1929-1932

Box 1., Folder 1

**Publisher's announcement. Printed copy
Surveys. Typescript and mimeographed copies
Vol. 1**

Folder 2-5

**Chapter 1: The Population of the Nation, by Warren S. Thompson, director, Scripps Foundation for Research in Population Problems, and P. K. Whelpton
Chapter 2: Utilization of Natural Wealth (Part 1: Mineral and Power Resources, by F. G. Tryon, economist, U.S. Bureau of Mines and Brookings Institution, and Margaret H. Schoenfield, associate editor, *Monthly Labor Review*, former member of the staff of Industrial Research Department, Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, University of Pennsylvania; Part 2: Agricultural and Forest Land, by O. E. Baker, agricultural economist, United States Department of Agriculture)**

Box 2., Folder 1

Chapter 3: The Influence of Invention and Discovery (missing)

Folder 2	Chapter 4: The Agencies of Communication, by Malcolm M. Willey, professor of sociology, University of Minnesota, and Stuart A. Rice, professor of sociology and chairman of the Department of Economic and Social Statistics, University of Pennsylvania
Folder 3	Chapter 5: Trends in Economic Organization, by Edwin F. Gay, professor of economic history at Harvard University and director of research of the National Bureau of Economic Research, and Leo Walman, professor of economics, Columbia University
Box 3., Folder 1-4	Chapter 6: Shifting Occupational Patterns (missing) Chapter 7: Education, by Charles H. Judd, professor and head of the Department of Education and director of the School of Education, University of Chicago
Folder 5	Chapter 8: Changing Social Attitudes and Interests, by Hornell Hart, professor of social economy, Bryn Mawr College
Box 4., Folder 1	Chapter 9: The Rise of Metropolitan Communities, by R. D. McKenzie, professor and head of the Department of Sociology, University of Michigan
Folder 2-3	Chapter 10: Rural Life, by J. H. Kolb, professor and chairman of the Department of Rural Sociology in the College of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin, and Edmund de S. Brunner, research specialist, Institute of Social and Religious Research, and associate professor in rural education, Teachers College, Columbia University
Box 5., Folder 1-2	Chapter 11: The Status of Racial and Ethnic Groups, by T. J. Woofter, Jr., research professor of sociology, Institute for Research in Social Science, University of North Carolina
Folder 3-5	Chapter 12: The Vitality of the American People, by Edgar Sydenstricker, chief statistician, United States Public Health Service, and director of research, Milbank Memorial Fund
Box 6., Folder 1	Chapter 13: The Family and Its Functions, by W. F. Ogburn, with the assistance of Clark Tibbits
Folder 2-4	Chapter 14: The Activities of Women Outside the Home, by S. P. Breckinridge, Samuel Deutsch Professor of Public Welfare, University of Chicago
Box 7.	Volume II
Folder 1	Chapter 15: Childhood and Youth (missing)
Folder 2	Chapter 16: Labor Groups in the Social Structure, by Leo Wolman and Gustav Peck, member of the faculty of economics, College of the City of New York
Folder 3-4	Chapter 17: The People and Consumers, by Robert S. Lynd, professor of sociology, Columbia University, with the assistance of Allice C. Hanson
Box 8., Folder 1-2	Chapter 18: Recreation and Leisure Time Activities, by J. F. Steiner, professor of sociology, University of Washington
Folder 3-4	Chapter 19: The Arts in Social Life, by Frederick P. Keppel, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York
Box 9., Folder 1	Chapter 20: Changes in Religious Organizations, by C. Luther Fry, director of the Bureau of Standards for the Institute of Social and Religious Research
Folder 2	Chapter 21: Health and Medical Practice, by Harry H. Moore, director of the Study of the Committee on the Cost of Medical Care
Folder 3	Chapter 22: Crime and Punishment, by Adwin H. Sutherland, professor of sociology, University of Chicago, and C. E. Gehlke, professor of sociology, Western Research University
Folder 4	Chapter 23: Privately Supported Social Work, by Sydnor H. Walker, assistant director of the Social Sciences of the Rockefeller Foundation
Box 10., Folder 1	Chapter 24: Public Welfare Activities, by Howard W. Odum
Folder 2	Chapter 25: The Growth of Governmental Functions, by Carrol H. Woody, assistant professor of political science, University of Chicago
Folder 3	Chapter 26: Taxation and Public Finance, by Clarence Heer, University of North Carolina
Folder 3	Chapter 27: Public Administration, by Leonard D. White, associate professor of political science, University of Chicago

Folder 4	Chapter 28: Law and legal Institutions, by Charles E. Clark, dean and Sterling Professor of Law, Yale University, and William O. Douglas, associate professor of law, Yale University
Folder 5	Chapter 29: Government and Society, by C. E. Merriam, professor and chairman of department of political science, University of Chicago
Folder 6	Appendix: Improvement in Statistics of Social Trends, by Stuart A. Rice. Mimeograph copy