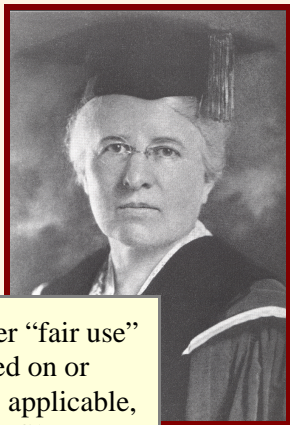


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## My Sociological Life History – 1928<sup>1</sup>

Lucile Eaves

FOR OVER THIRTY years I have been engaged, as student, social worker and teacher, in sociological activities. I have profited by the teachings of Professors Howard, Warner, Ross, Small, Vincent, Henderson, Thomas, Turner, Giddings, Clark, Devine, Miller and Adler. Each of these distinguished scholars made distinctive contributions to my education. It would require most of the summer to prepare an autobiography telling just what were their peculiar values in my personal development.

Three phases of sociological activities have interested me. First, institutional and social history, particularly that of the family, of population movements, and labor history, organization and legislation. Second, social and economic research, of the more rigidly scientific kind. Third, practical applications of results of observation of social conditions in betterment activities.

My sociological experiences and observations began before I entered Stanford University, as I spent three years on an Indian reservation in northern Idaho, where I engaged in the educational activities of a Government school for the Nez Perces.<sup>2</sup>

My first contact with American sociologists was made in 1893, while an undergraduate student at Stanford University. When I entered I expected to make English literature my major subject, but was quickly impressed with the superiority of the work given by George Elliott Howard, who had been chosen as the head of the History Department of the newly established university. Dr. Howard came to Stanford University after a period of study under great historians of German universities.<sup>3</sup> He was deeply impressed with the newer points of view in history by which the development of social institutions was being studied. He had recently completed his study of *Local Government Institutions of the United States*,<sup>4</sup> and was beginning labors on his monumental book dealing with the *History of Matrimonial Institutions*.

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<sup>1</sup> Eaves' autobiographical sketch was written in 1928 at the request of Luther L. Bernard. That sketch is augmented here with five paragraphs (the first three, and the last two) written in 1927. Edited from the original documents in the Luther L. Bernard Collection, Pennsylvania State University, Box 15, file 4. Dr. Eaves' vita notes that she was a member of the Labor Committee of the American Economic Association, the Research Committee of the American Sociological Society and of the Association of University Women, and was Chairman of the Committee on the Relation of Vocational to General Higher Education of the American Association of University Professors. While a member of the Executive Committee of the American Sociological Society, she prepared the research program for the annual meeting.

<sup>2</sup> Eaves taught in the Lapwai Industrial School for the Nez Perces where her father was Superintendent at the time.

<sup>3</sup> For details of his German studies, see Michael R. Hill, "Epistemological Realities: Archival Data and Disciplinary Knowledge in the History of Sociology—Or, When Did George Elliott Howard Study in Paris?" *Sociological Origins* 2 (No. 1, Special Supplement, 2000): 1-25.

<sup>4</sup> Eaves' reference here is to George E. Howard, *An Introduction to the Local Constitutional History of the United States. Vol. I: Development of the Township, Hundred, and Shire*. (Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, Extra Volume IV). Baltimore, MD: Publication Agency of the Johns Hopkins University, 1889). It took Howard considerable time and effort to find a publisher for this 526-page book. Volume II of the projected two-part work was advertised but never published.

All of his work in history was organized about a careful study of institutions—chiefly political. The courses furnished an admirable background for law students; and men who have become prominent in the legal profession were my fellow students in Dr. Howard's courses, where we studied English and American constitutional history, and Roman institutions.

During my senior year I had a seminar with Dr. Howard of which I was the sole member. He was then deep in his study of the history of the family, and I wished to specialize in this field. He assigned me a series of studies dealing with the primitive family, and supplied me with literature from his private collection. I worked diligently preparing critical comparative studies of theories about the primitive family.

My first course in theoretical sociology was taken with Dr. E.A. Ross, when he began his career as a sociologist.<sup>1</sup> The class contained only two or three of the more mature students. Mary Roberts Coolidge was my companion in this course.<sup>2</sup> She has since published books dealing with sociological questions and is at present a professor at Mills College. Dr. Ross's course consisted of a discussion of the work of Herbert Spencer and of Lester F. Ward. Some years later, when I returned to Stanford University as an instructor, I attended as a visitor Dr. Ross's course dealing with social aspects of education.

After leaving Stanford University I served for four years as head of the history department in the San Diego, California, High School. I followed no text book but devoted all my energies to the effort of selecting and organizing historical material so that it would have significance in enabling the students to obtain a better understanding of their own modern social and political environment. I served as secretary of the University Extension Society, and also gave several courses of lectures dealing with sociological or social history and psychology.

My next experience with sociologists was at Chicago University, where I registered as a graduate student in the summer of 1898.<sup>3</sup> I took a course with Dr. John Dewey, dealing with the history of modern philosophy; and registered in the fall for heavy work with Albion

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<sup>1</sup> For details of Ross' sociological work, with emphasis on his subsequent Nebraska years, see Bruce Keith, "The Foundations of an American Discipline: Edward A. Ross at the University of Nebraska, 1901-1906," *Mid-American Review of Sociology* 13 (Winter 1988: 42-56), and Michael R. Hill, "Ross, Edward Alsworth" in *American National Biography*, edited by John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes (Oxford University Press, Vol. 18, 1999: 907-908).

<sup>2</sup> Regarding Coolidge, an important sociologist in her own right, see Mary Jo Deegan, "Mary Elizabeth Burroughs Roberts Smith Coolidge," in *Women in Sociology*, edited by M.J. Deegan, Greenwood Press 1991: 100-109); Mary Jo Deegan, 1998. "A Rose is Not a Rosa is Not a Roseann is Not a Rosemary: The Many Names of Mary Elizabeth Roberts Smith Coolidge," in *Advances in Gender Research*, Vol. 3, edited by Vasilikie Demos and Marcia Texler Segal, JAI Press 1998: 163-95), Mary Jo Deegan, "Mary E.B.R.S. Coolidge's Why Women Are So," *Sociological Origins* 1 (Summer 1998): 4-8; Mary E.B.R.S. Coolidge, "Compensations of Writers and How I came to Write *Why Women Are So*," *Sociological Origins* 1 (Summer 1998): 9-13, and Mary E.B.R.S. Coolidge, *Why Women are So*, with an introductory essay by Mary Jo Deegan, Humanity Books, forthcoming).

<sup>3</sup> Eaves thereby joined "the Chicago Network" of notable women sociologists, a distinctive and influential female group identified by Mary Jo Deegan ("Women in Sociology: 1890-1930," *Journal of the History of Sociology* 1, Fall 1978: 11-34), or what Patricia Madoo Lengermann and Jill Niebrugge-Brantly more recently call the "Chicago Women's School of Sociology" (*The Women Founders: Sociology and Social Theory, 1830-1930*, McGraw-Hill 1998: 229-75).

W. Small, Charles R. Henderson, George E. Vincent and Charles Zueblin.<sup>1</sup> I was appointed University Extension lecturer and undertook the organizing of a class of teachers for a course dealing with social aspects of, or sociological interpretation of, American history. I will try to characterize briefly the sociology professors with whom I worked at Chicago University.

Professor Small had come into sociology from the ministry, and during the period I worked with him, he was very much influenced by his previous theological training. I am tempted to say that he at this time produced *theological* sociology, as all of his work was highly theoretical. He was busy translating German discussions of sociology, and was very much under the influence of theories of sociology which conceived of society as an organism with capacities other than those of its individual units. His point of view varied radically from that to which I had become accustomed while studying with Prof. Howard and while developing my own work in history. I think, therefore, that my courses with him made little impression, as I did not react to them sympathetically.

Dr. George Vincent was then deeply interested in social education. This course was connected directly with work in which I wished to specialize. I had very little work with him, but was much pleased with what I received.

I found Charles R. Henderson's courses particularly helpful and was much impressed with the fine spirit of the man. He also came to the University from the ministry and there were charming little stories told at the University about his deeply religious attitude. I remember that one insisted that he, in an absentminded moment, had suggested opening a doctors' examination with prayer—it was a joke among candidates for this degree that we would gladly welcome such kindly intercession before entering upon the ordeal. The course that Prof. Henderson taught which I remember best was a history of philanthropy. He had worked this out in a thorough and scholarly manner, and of course when presenting a subject in this concrete way he was following methods to which I had become accustomed—hence I responded cordially to such a course. I was a member of the seminars of both Prof. Small and Prof. Henderson, and did various pieces of research work under their supervision.

I was appointed instructor of history at Stanford University after four quarters at Chicago University. My new work at Stanford was to deal specially with Pacific Coast or Western history, and also with methods of historical research and of presentation of history in schools. I had an elaborate course dealing with what I called "methodology of history" and also in the social interpretation of history in public schools. My course in methodology of history was really sociological in significance and all of the Western history was studied from the standpoint of the development of civilization in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

After two years at Stanford University I took a position as head-worker of a social settlement in San Francisco. While engaged in this practical social work, I made special studies of labor problems. I was a regular contributor to the *Labor Clarion*, a local labor paper, and arranged conferences at the settlement dealing with labor problems.

In 1905, I registered as a graduate student at Columbia University.<sup>3</sup> My time here was divided between courses in sociology and economics. I selected chiefly seminar courses

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<sup>1</sup> Eaves studied with a veritable *Who's Who* of early Chicago school sociologists. For an overview of these men and their work, see Mary Jo Deegan, *Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School, 1892-1918* (Transaction Books 1988: 71-104). For further studies on the Chicago school, a good place to begin is Lester R. Kurtz, *Evaluating Chicago Sociology: A Guide to the Literature, With an Annotated Bibliography* (University of Chicago Press 1984).

<sup>2</sup> A student writer for the *Stanford Quad* (1901: 243) quipped of Miss Eaves at the time that she is "shrouded in the heart of opaque mysteriousness."

<sup>3</sup> Columbia then provided one of the few major alternatives to Chicago for advanced sociological study, with Franklin H. Giddings as the leading scholar there.

because I did not enjoy listening to lectures and preferred doing research in fields which appealed to my special interests. I presented reports of results of research in seminars conducted by Franklin H. Giddings, John B. Clark, Felix Adler and Edward T. Devine. The subject discussed in Prof. Clark's seminar was labor problems in San Francisco. My report for Dr. Giddings dealt with the teaching of social subjects in public schools. A similar subject was presented in Felix Adler's seminar. The work with Dr. Devine was a report on recreation centers in New York City. I took the history of economic theory with Prof. Seager. Dr. Devine's work was much like that I had with Prof. Henderson, except that it dealt more with recent developments in social work.

Prof. Giddings' courses were on a historical foundation as they dealt largely with social institutions. This of course brought them into harmony with types of work in which I had been most interested in the past. I felt that Prof. Giddings enjoyed stimulating discussions among his students, and that he sometimes indulged in debatable generalizations largely for the purpose of stirring up discussion. When I worked with him he had just come to the full realization of the great possibilities of a statistical approach to the study of sociological phenomena. My first training in the application of statistics to the study of modern social problems was received with him. I took the course in statistics with Prof. Miller but did not grasp many of the erudite matters which he presented, as my training in higher mathematics was not sufficient to enable me to understand the more technical computations. The date for my oral examination for the doctor's degree had been set a short time before the announcement came of the San Francisco earthquake and fire. I was appointed by the Red Cross to assist in relief work, and left without completing the year's work at Columbia. For over a year I was plunged in the work of directing details of the administration of what was called the "Industrial Department of the San Francisco Relief Corporation."

When the relief plans had been fairly well realized I felt free to return to my academic pursuits. I applied for and promptly received the Flood Fellowship in Economics at the University of California. At the same time I received a subsidy from the Carnegie Foundation. The Flood fellowship was renewed for a second year. I spent about eighteen months in the production of Vol. II, of the California University publications in Economics. This study of the "History of Labor Legislation in California" and of the San Francisco Labor Movement, continued my previous interest in local labor problems. The labor organizations recognized me as an old friend and gave me access to valuable source material. The Bancroft Library, which had been recently purchased by the University of California, contained a great mass of information. Material previously collected by C.C. Plehn was also given to me. Professor Adolph C. Miller and Prof. Henry Farnum of Yale, had a general oversight of this study.

Before completing the research work in economics, I was appointed Associate Professor of Practical Sociology at the University of Nebraska. My former teacher, George E. Howard, was now at the head of the department of political science and sociology of this university. He wished to start what were probably the first courses in applied sociology given at one of our large state universities. I was allowed great freedom in developing this part of the work of the sociology department. By alternating courses from year to year, it was possible to cover a great variety of subjects which I felt might have value in training university students to an understanding of sound plans for improving social conditions. I gave work dealing with modern social betterment movements, with labor legislation, with poverty and dependence, with social movements in public schools, with newer developments in criminology, and conducted a seminar for students interested in social research. During the five years in Nebraska, I had large classes of fine, wholesome young people, and found this work under the leadership of my old friend, Dr. Howard, to be very inspiring.

During the summer following the commencement of my work at the University of Nebraska, I returned to Columbia University and completed the work for my doctor's degree, which was granted in the spring of 1910. While connected with the University of Nebraska I returned for work in the summer session of the University of California, and also held a

research lectureship at California during one year. While holding this research lectureship I prepared a large number of encyclopedia articles; and gave a lecture course dealing with labor organization in Great Britain and the United States. I taught, also, a course in elementary economic theory.

In 1915, the opportunity came to me to go to Boston to take a position in which my time would be divided between research and college teaching. By this time I had lost interest somewhat in the continuous lecture work to large classes of students. A course always interested me while it was in process of development, but when I had to repeat it for two or three years it became quite boresome. I welcomed the opportunity to instruct a smaller group of students in research work where there would be a continual renewal of interest from year to year. My work at Simmons College began with two courses—one dealing with the family, and the other with social movements in the public schools. At a later time I concentrated my work at the School of Social Work, where I taught a course in economics for social workers and gave the work in statistics. I became responsible also for the supervision of master's dissertations. A part of my time in Boston has been given to the direction of the Research Department of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union. This research bureau has been maintained for over twenty years and is the only continuously functioning research agency to be found in Boston. The Union offers three or four research fellowships to gifted young women graduates of American or foreign universities. These women receive intensive training in statistics and research and, at the same time, produce reports of value to social agencies or throwing light on questions of significance for improving the conditions of women and children.

The research work of the School of Social Work is correlated with that of the Research Department of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union. This makes possible co-operative investigations by groups of ten to twelve graduate students. For example, during the current year we are studying factors associated with and social consequences of breakdowns in family incomes. Boston relief agencies supply us with vast stores of case histories which may be analyzed in order to obtain material for this study. My students are taught the most modern methods of analyses by means of code sheets and of tabulation with full equipment of punching, sorting and calculating machines. I believe that within ten years all statistical work will be handled by these labor-saving devices; and wish to familiarize my students with the technique of this form of social research.

We endeavor to co-operate with social agencies in order to make our work of practical value and seek also co-operation with other organizations from which we may obtain support. We have just obtained a fellowship grant from the Massachusetts Savings Banks Association, and hope that this will be renewed from year to year. This will enable us to produce a series of reports dealing with thrift agencies in Massachusetts. The Savings Banks Association will publish these reports and circulate them among its members and probably send them also to savings banks in other parts of the country.

The most original contribution to sociology which I have made since coming to Boston has been the utilization of case histories for sociological research. Our new Social Science Research Council aims to combine groups whose members have studied human life by different means or from different angles of approach. It is proposed that the technique of these varying fields shall be utilized in co-operative efforts to solve problems of human society. I am convinced that the individual must be recognized as the unit where these varying techniques meet. I do not believe that sociology and psychology can be correlated effectively in the study of social phenomena which are products of combined acts of individuals. The co-operation in the use of these techniques must begin with the study of individual reactions; then these studies may be combined by the use of statistical methods so that greater understanding will be won for phenomena resulting from combined activities. I have many ideas about how we may perfect case methods of study and then combine the results to obtain sociological generalizations of much greater scientific value than any we have produced in the past.

I have become convinced that research in the social sciences has far outstripped the social applications of results. In order to “do my bit” in remedying this situation, I expect to offer annually a course of lectures presenting important results of social research. These will be given in the centrally-located lecture hall of the Women’s Educational and Industrial Union, under the auspices of the Division of University Extension of the Massachusetts Department of Education.

When my active services are over and I have the leisure of a professor emerita, I may emulate the example set by Prof. Small,<sup>1</sup> and prepare what would be practically my autobiography, dealing with varied, intimate observations of the beginnings of sociology in American Universities. I have been present, as a pupil-nurse or midwife, at the births of many activities whose future developments were promoted by persons of greater talents, resources or opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup> See Albion W. Small, “Fifty Years of Sociology in the United States, 1865-1915,” *American Journal of Sociology* 21 (May 1916: 721-864).