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INTRODUCTION TO THE TRANSACTION EDITION

AMERICAN CHARITIES AS THE HERALD TO A NEW AGE

The publication of American Charities in 1894 signaled the start of a new age. It crystallized the views of men and women working in economics, sociology, history, and philanthropy. Massive social changes—in urbanization, industrialization, immigration, the roles of women, and the relation between the home and the marketplace—generated social strains that could not be accommodated by traditional world views. Social problems in this new situation, particularly poverty, were perceived increasingly as secular instead of religious issues.¹ Solutions to these social problems were needed urgently, and Amos G. Warner, the author of American Charities, articulated a new vision amidst the clamor for new answers.

For over four decades—from 1894, when the first edition appeared, to 1930, when the fourth edition was published—American Charities defined the views of people working on the problems of poverty, mental illness, public child care, and philanthropy. This book towered over the intellectual and practical landscape of planned social improvements in the United States.² Today, however, it is almost completely forgotten. The reprinting of this classic will help explain its eminence and bring it once more into the intellectual discussions on fundamental texts in applied sociology, institutional economics, social work, and political science. I present

Amos Warner's brief but brilliant career, document the book's reception by his colleagues, outline its contents, and analyze its pivotal relation to "women's work" in sociology between 1894 and the publication of the third edition, in 1919.

Amos Griswold Warner, 1861–1900

Amos G. Warner was born during the Civil War at Elkader, Iowa on December 21, 1861. His father was a physician who was killed by a runaway horse three months before his son's birth.

His mother, Esther Carter Griswold Warner, was the type of woman who became a legendary pioneer. By the time she was forty-one years old she had been widowed twice and given birth to nine children, of whom two died in infancy and another three in early childhood. She filed in 1863 for a homestead in Nebraska, and in the following year she "packed up her three youngest children, two nephews, and her brother in a 'prairie schooner' and set out for Nebraska Territory" (Kelley, 1976:4). She moved into an area now called Roca, near Lincoln. This barren and almost uninhabited land was reached by wagon trails that led from the Missouri River to the Rocky Mountains (National Cyclopedia, 1906:446). She built a log cabin the first year, and by 1865 she completed an eight-room stone house after opening a quarry on her land (Beutler, 1971). (This house and its wooden beams still stand in Roca, Nebraska,) She advocated women's suffrage and became the state's most eloquent and persuasive speaker on the topic. She addressed the International Council of Women in Washington, D.C. in 1888, on the topic of women farmers, and in 1891 she spoke to the Nebraska Legislature on women's suffrage.

Warner's early academic training was conducted at

home and in small country schools. Although the nearest market was seventy-five miles away, in Nebraska City, Warner's mother subscribed to *The New York Tribune*, *The New York Independent*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and *The Youth's Companion* (Obit., *Nebraska State Journal*, "A Notable Woman," 1901). She worked hard to provide the best education for her children, so she sent her son, at sixteen years of age, to Lincoln. Here, in 1878, Warner entered the Latin Preparatory School at the University of Nebraska, where he became a student leader. He lived in Lincoln until 1885, when he completed his bachelor's degree at the University.

Following Warner's graduation, his mother took out a loan at the then exorbitant interest of 12 percent to send her son east (Obit., Nebraska State Journal, "A Notable Woman," 1901). In the fall of 1885, Warner entered Johns Hopkins University, where he studied economics and history with Richard Ely. He quickly entered into the exciting life and seminars surrounding Ely. Ely's students during this era included Woodrow Wilson, the future president of the United States; Albion W. Small, the first Chair of the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago; and Edward A. Ross, the eminent sociologist and, later, colleague of Warner.

Warner stood out even in this illustrious group of students. Thus, by the end of the first school year, he was awarded a fellowship, and in 1887 he was appointed general secretary of the Charity Organization Society of Baltimore. He obtained this post after John Glenn, the philanthropist, heard Warner deliver a speech on social problems. Still a graduate student at this time, Warner worked with Glenn and Daniel Coit Gilman, president of Johns Hopkins University and president of the Charity Organization Society, to set up a commit-

tee to examine "difficult cases" within the Baltimore agency (*Encyclopedia of Social Work*, "Warner, Amos Griswold," 1965:838). Warner established statistical guidelines for studying the poor and employed a social, rather than biological, perspective for the philanthropic work. He also worked with Gilman to develop an undergraduate course on philanthropy at the University. He was granted a doctorate in 1888 and returned to Nebraska to marry Cora Ellen Fisher, who was also a University of Nebraska graduate.

Warner accepted a position at the University of Nebraska in 1889 as an associate professor of political and economic science. His course on the "scientific study of industrial corporations was probably the first one offered on this subject in an American university" (Dictionary of American Biography, "Warner, Amos Griswold," 1943:460). He also taught "Social Science: A Short Study of the Chief Data of Sociology" (Hertzler, 1979:43), which was an early forerunner in this field. From 1889 to 1891 Warner offered a course on charities and corrections, which ultimately resulted in his now-famous text on American Charities (Hertzler, 1979:44).

Warner returned to Nebraska for the academic year 1890-91. In 1891, he accepted the invitation of President Benjamin Harrison, to become the first Superintendent of Charities for Washington, D.C.

There he worked out a classification to determine priorities for help based on statistical measurement of anticipated need. Where gaps in the existing program were found, he urged the establishment of new services. His most important innovation was a board of children's guardians (*Encyclopedia of Social Work*, "Warner, Amos Griswold," 1965).

He soon left this position to join the faculty at Stanford Junior University in 1893. In the summer of 1893, Warner wrote to the president of Leland Stanford University, David Jordan, that he would be "glad to unload" his work in philanthropy "and push my work in railroad and corporation law economically considered." Instead of realizing this hope, however, Warner continued his work in American charities and made his mark there.

He continued to work at Stanford with his former colleague from the University of Nebraska, George Elliott Howard. Warner, in fact, introduced Howard to President Jordan, and was responsible for the latter's move to California (Obit., *The Stanford Alumnus*, "Memorial to Amos G. Warner." 1900). Warner had many dreams and ambitions, and wanted to establish a new department combining economic, philanthropic, engineering, and financial problems into a comprehensive program. The first step in realizing this dream was the writing of his landmark text, *American Charities*. He wrote this book in a frenzy of activity, finishing it in less than two months.

Always a frail person, Warner's health seriously deteriorated after he contracted a cold during the Western Railway Strike of 1893, and by 1894 this developed into tuberculosis. In November 1894, only a few months after his arrival at Stanford, he was forced to take a leave of absence and move to the Southwest. Here he rested and underwent a series of treatments.⁴

He had a brief period of good health in 1897. He returned to Stanford to deliver four addresses on social science, published posthumously in 1904 as Lay Sermons by Amos Griswold Warner. Although these addresses were called sermons, Warner shared his generation's drive to move philanthropic work out of religious contexts. Ross reported that Warner once said: "Others may agitate and preach; I have concluded

I can do the most good by investigating these things and just telling the whole truth." (Ross, 1900:2). However, these speeches and his return to Stanford were too great a strain, and he retired once more to the desert. He died shortly thereafter, in January 1900, at thirty-eight years of age.

In addition to his most influential book, American Charities, Warner wrote a series of articles and more than a hundred editorials (Dictionary of American Biography, "Warner, Amos Griswold," 1943:460). His early writings on the territory of Nebraska are filled with lively accounts of courageous pioneers and the rascals who profit ed from the "wide-open" frontier (e.g. Warner, 1889). His one article in The American Journal of Sociology brings this same Western experience to the problem of the corrupt state that is supposed to control criminal behavior (Warner, 1895).

Warner was an active member of the American Economic Association, the American Statistical Association, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the National Conference of Charities and Corrections. He was hailed as a leader in applied sociology, social work, economics, and history. His brief but incandescent career made a major impact on each of these fields, and his book *American Charities* shaped the fields of sociology and social work for over forty years.

American Charities

American Charities was immediately accepted as a landmark text (e.g. Ayers, 1895). A year after its publication, the book was awarded The John Marshall prize from Johns Hopkins University (The National

Cyclopedia, "Warner, Amos Griswold, 1906:446). Powers' review summarized the general response: "It is just what we want." (Powers, 1895:156). Another reviewer also pinpointed the achievement of Warner's book in articulating a "modern" view:

Thirty years ago one would not have thought that philanthropy and economics could have any dealings with each other. As then generally regarded, political economy was barely human, and the farthest possible from humane. To pity was the first function of humanity; to profit, the business of economics in practice (Crowell, 1895:542).

Warner bridged the gaps among a failing religious perspective, a capitalist epistemology, and the rapidly changing social conditions that were making poverty and inequality increasingly visible and unacceptable to Americans. He also brought coherence to the hundreds of empirical studies conducted by different people in several countries. The book is a compendium, bringing order out of the chaos of previously unconnected information. The book was divided into four parts, each of which is outlined below.

I. Introduction and Theory. This section reviewed religious explanations for "charity," which often hid self-serving and status-seeking interests. He then considered the British political economists, such as Senior, Adam Smith, and Harriet Martineau, who drew upon an empirical tradition.

In an impressive review of statistical studies in several American, British, and German cities, Warner documented the various national patterns of unemployment, illness, and disability. Less impressively, he also examined morally charged categories such as "laziness" and "immorality." He documented the particular poverty of women and children, and showed the hard working lives of black people, contradicting the

racist stereotypes of the era. Warner also provided a rudimentary "systems model" of the causes of poverty (p. 28), revealing a depth of analytical complexity that provides historical continuity between his work and that of many contemporary scholars. Myths surrounding the poor, moreover, are given short shrift by Warner, who relied on crude, but often powerful data.

II. The Dependent Classes. The categories outlined in the theoretical "sytems" section are examined in more detail in this part. New techniques and institutions for working with the feebleminded (now referred to as "mentally retarded") and the insane (now referred to as "mentally ill") are presented. This section was reproduced in full in the fourth edition (Warner, Queen, and Harper, 1930), although it primarily summarized the services offered to these various groups, and the advantages and disadvantages of each service for a specific population in 1893.

Warner displays several unsavory biases in this section of his book. He accepted racial segregation, the Victorian beliefs concerning masturbation and "sexual excess," and some biological explanations of social behavior. In one place, he notes the evil arising from the married-woman's employment (p. 102), although he worked closely with one married woman, Mary E.B.R. Smith Coolidge (who wrote the second and third editions and is discussed more thoroughly below). Despite these prejudices, Warner generally questioned the accepted ideas and practices of his day, and displayed a skeptical and penetrating mind.

Indeed, some important theoretical insights are found in this portion of the book. He clearly advocated increasing specialization of services (what is now termed "increasing differentiation"); understood the "vicious circle" of problems (p. 116); argued for the

methodological importance of keeping good records, which he called "sociological bookkeeping" (p. 232); and supported the development of "applied sociology" (p. 220).

III. Philanthropic Finances. Warner's fundamental concept of "charities" is defined very late in the book (p. 302). Here he defined the term as "all those institutions and agencies which give direct material aid to the poor as such." "Public charities" referred to "those institutions or agencies which are entirely controlled by the state in any of its branches, federal, state, county, township, or municipality" (p.303). Other terms, such as "a public corporation" and "public funds," are also defined here. These terms organize the book, but also raise important questions about its internal consistency. Warner specifically rejected the study of mental illness as a "charity" (p. 303). for example, yet he examined this "social problem" in depth (pp. 239-59). Seen positively, however, Warner's analyses of the difficulties of deciding how to spend funds and manage endowments are as relevant today as they were in 1894.

IV. The Supervision, Organization, and Betterment of Charities. The development of State Boards of Charity and the coordination of services through an emerging professional ideology and network are discussed in this last section. Historically, this section is a major source of information about early applied sociology, social work, professionalization, and bureaucratization of services. Warner's ability to organize data is ably displayed here. Warner finished the book on an optimistic note. Despite the disarray of services, and the ever-increasing burden of problems, he pointed to the need for a continuous struggle to alleviate human suffering.

Mary Elizabeth Burroughs Roberts Smith Coolidge and American Charities

Warner's book was used and accepted as a classic text in applied sociology, and for many years he was considered a sociologist (see the *Dictionary of American Biography*, 1943, and *White's Conspectus of American Biography*, 1937, p. 355). The specialization of applied sociology was increasingly aligned with "women's work" in the discipline from 1892 to 1920 (Deegan 1981, 1987, 1988), and later associated with social work rather than sociology. In many ways, *American Charities* dramatically documents and symbolizes these professional definitions and redefinitions. This book mirrored the changing structure of gendered labor in sociology as well as documenting philanthropy and social welfare.

Many men, like Amos Warner, who engaged in applied sociology, had mothers active in the first wave of the women's movement. Warner shared this background with many male colleagues, such as George Herbert Mead, whose mother was the president of Mount Holyoke College (see Cole, 1940:202–39). The close relationships between these mothers and sons and their joint enactment of political ideals of social equality between the sexes enabled the sons to adopt the feminist views of their mothers. This became institutionalized when their sons trained women students and mentored women colleagues (Deegan, 1988).

During Warner's brief sojourn at Stanford University, he trained an outstanding woman student, then named Mary Elizabeth Burroughs Roberts Smith. She earned her doctorate under his tutelage, and Warner selected her to undertake any future revisions of *American Charities* (Howard, 1919:xvii). She became

an assistant professor of sociology at Stanford in 1893, making her the first woman to have a clear, full-time status in academic sociology in the country (perhaps in the world). When Warner became ill in 1894, Smith (later named Coolidge, a name I will use for convenience hereafter) immediately took over his coursework, although this was seen as a temporary step at that time. She also helped Warner compile materials for American Charities in 1893, and helped to correct the proofs of the first edition (Howard, 1919:xviii). Coolidge bought Warner's "Sociological Library" after his death, donating some of his rare foreign pamphlets to the University of Nebraska in 1922.5 She was an integral part of the initial writing of American Charities, and this major role was strengthened in her two revisions of the book (see Gehlke, 1919).

Coolidge's central intellectual role in perpetuating the influence of American Charities has been largely invisible in sociology for a number of reasons. First, this woman must have a record for the number of names she used as an author. Sometimes calling herself "Mary E.B.R. Smith," and "Mary Roberts Smith" (1900), she remarried in 1906 and at that time took her new husband's name, Coolidge. "Mary Roberts Coolidge" is the name used in the 1908 and 1919 revisions of American Charities, but in the 1914 Women's Who's Who of America she is listed as "Mary Elizabeth Burroughs Roberts Coolidge" (Leonard, 1914:204). Thus, Coolidge's very impressive bibliography can be listed as the work of four different people instead of one author's. (On social occasions she used the name "Mrs. Dane Coolidge" as well.)

Second, Coolidge did not place her name as a coauthor with Warner on the book cover. Her name appears only inside the book on the title page. In

contrast to her modesty, the two male sociologists who revised the fourth edition made themselves coauthors with Warner (Warner, Queen, and Harper, 1930). These new authors, who were male sociologists, entirely eliminated Coolidge's years of substantial labor in the second and third editions. The fourth edition reprints the second section of the first edition, and the selection of this most atheoretical section is hard to understand. The first, third, and fourth sections are the most powerful theoretically and comprise the least dated components. Selecting the updated work of Coolidge in the second section would have made the analysis more accurate for 1930, but it would also have shown the considerable overlap between applied sociology and social work. This blurring of disciplinary boundaries was avoided stringently by the new coauthors.

Although the second and third editions were reviewed positively and kept the book alive for a quarter of a century, Coolidge's contributions were invisible to many readers. Colcord's review of the fourth edition, for example, merely notes that the first two revisions "were heavily amended by other hands" (Colcord, 1930:231).

Third, the elimination of Coolidge's name and influence from the final edition of American Charities is deeply embedded in the wholesale removal of "woman's work" from sociology after 1920. During the period following 1920—and the third edition of American Charities was written in 1919—the intellectual history of sociology was rewritten so that men's early work in the profession was defined as "sociology" and women's work in sociology was redefined as "social work" (Deegan, 1987, 1988).

This process of rewriting history is echoed in the

fourth edition of American Charities. The title changes from American Charities to American Charities and Social Work. In the fourth edition, Coolidge's repeated references to the work of women sociologists, including Coolidge, Jane Addams, Edith Abott, Mary van Kleek, Florence Kelley, and Francis Kellor (Deegan, 1987), are omitted or rewritten to align with social work, not sociology. The work of male sociologists is given more priority. Thus, an image of continuity between men and sociology and women and social work is inserted in the fourth edition. This fourth edition imposes a juncture between Warner's first edition and the new one, while Coolidge stressed the continuity in the original book and its first two revisions. In American Charities, then, we see the rise to power of women's work between 1894 and 1919 and its dramatic decline by 1930.

Fourth, and finally, Coolidge's career in sociology foundered on the shoals of politics. She was working at Stanford when E.A. Ross was fired in 1900 for his stand on free silver and Japanese immigrants (Ross, 1936: Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1971). Ross became a cause celebre and several of his colleagues resigned along with him. George Elliott Howard was fired for his support of Ross, and these two men accepted posts the following year at the University of Nebraska. Lucille Eaves was another sociologist at Stanford who resigned due to her allegiance to Ross and she, too, was hired several years later, in 1908 to work with Howard in the Department of Sociology at the University of Nebraska. Coolidge, however, remained at Stanford after her eminent colleagues had resigned because her husband, who was another Stanford professor, pressured her to stay (Rosenberg, 1982, p. 195). Warner died a month after Ross was fired, as well, leaving Coolidge in a decimated department without a mentor. In 1903 Smith divorced her husband and the pain of doing so during the Victorian era led to a brief mental breakdown and stay in a sanatarium. When she tried to return to Stanford the following year, the institution would not rehire her.

Coolidge did not share the more fortunate fates of her previous Stanford colleagues. She had difficulty finding employment in academic sociology for many years. Ultimately she did accept the position of professor of sociology at Mills College in 1918 (she retired in 1926; Owen, 1945), but her early, eminent and powerful career at Stanford does not compare with her later, little known career at Mills. Thus, Coolidge was removed from a mainstream graduate department of sociology early in her career. This removal had dramatic, negative effects on her sociological eminence, while Ross and Howard each subsequently became presidents of the American Sociological Association. Coolidge, like many of her female colleagues, was elbowed out of power in sociology.

Conclusion

American Charities is a monumental text in the field of philanthropy. In many ways, it was the most important book in philanthropy between 1894 and 1930. It heralded a new age and mirrored its changes. It became increasingly aligned in sociology with work done by women from 1894 to 1919. American Charities was a powerful impetus towards active social change and amelioration. Coolidge's role in the next two editions was central in keeping Warner's name and influence alive for decades after his death.

American Charities was a voice for a new age and

epistemology. The book articulated emerging views in several professions; institutional economics, social work, and sociology. Changes in these professional areas of specialization led to varying receptions of the book over time. First, the book was heralded as a voice for the new modern age. The first, second, and third editions aligned it increasingly with applied sociology from 1894 to 1919. The fourth edition marked the book as a seminal bridge between two distinct disciplines defined in a new way by gender: sociology as the male, academic profession; social work as the female, applied "semiprofession."

American Charities has been replaced for many years by other analyses, data, and authorities. Now it is once again being examined. The reemergence of applied sociology in the 1980s makes the historical role of American Charities of particular salience once more. Similarly, increased interest in women professionals in general, and women sociologists in particular, also renews interest in this landmark text. Poverty and homelessness have grown over the last decade, once more calling for new analyses of social structure and responsibility. By looking at our past, mirrored in American Charities, perhaps we can find creative new ways to speak to our own generation and its crushing problems of inequality.

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Notes

1. The massive literature on these forces and era is documented in the following books, emphasizing the interaction between social upheaval and the emerging professions.

Jane Addams, Twenty Years at Hull-House (New York: Macmillan, 1910); Ernest Becker, The Lost Science of Man (New York: George Brazillier, 1971); Mary Jo Deegan, Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School, 1892–1920 (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Press, 1988); Steven J. Diner, A City and Its Universities (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); C. Wright Mills, Sociology and Pragmatism, introduced and edited by Irving Louis Horowitz (New York: Paine–Whitman, 1980); Margaret Rossiter, American Women of Science (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1982); Herman Schwendinger and Julia R. Schwendinger, The Sociologists of the Chair (New York: Basic Books, 1971).

- 2. American Charities was volume four in Crowell's Library of Economics and Politics, edited by Richard Ely, Warner's mentor. This series ultimately published a number of other prominent books based on a similar epistemology, several of which had a major impact on sociology, social work, and institutional economics.
- 3. Amos G. Warner to David Jordan, July 10, 1893, SC 58, 5/41, Stanford University Libraries.
- 4. Amos G. Warner to David Jordan, December 4, 1897, March 8, 1898, SC58 16/162 and 17/169, respectively, Stanford University Libraries.
- 5. I found Coolidge's letter of contribution and the pamphlets "on the shelf" in open stacks at Love Library at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. These materials are in an advanced state of neglect and decay.
- 6. The extensive literature on the emergence of social work as a career is found in Lubove, 1965. The hotly contested debate of whether social work is or is not a profession is beyond the scope or intent of this introduction.

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Nebraska-Lincoln, also helped me search for Warner materials. Although I do not cite materials from each of these libraries, the materials I read from their collections helped me find the literature cited in the references and build a picture of Warner's career after he has been largely forgotten for many, many decades. However, I have not been able to find any sizable collection of Warner papers. I would also like to thank the staff at the Women, Health, and Healing Institute, especially Sheryl Ruzek, Virginia Olesen, and Adele Clarke, who brought me to Berkeley to teach on disabled women in June 1986. This visit enabled me to study the Coolidge papers in some depth.

Archives

Bancroft Library, University of California-Berkeley Coolidge Papers

College Library, Mills College

Love Library, Lincoln, Nebraska, University of Nebraska Archives

Stanford Libraries, Department of Special Collections and Archives

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