

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Sociology Department, Faculty Publications

Sociology, Department of

2000

A SYMPOSIUM ON LUCILE EAVES: Lucile Eaves and Nebraska Sociology

Michael R. Hill

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, michaelhilltemporary1@yahoo.com

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/sociologyfacpub>



Part of the [Family, Life Course, and Society Commons](#), and the [Social Psychology and Interaction Commons](#)

Hill, Michael R., "A SYMPOSIUM ON LUCILE EAVES: Lucile Eaves and Nebraska Sociology" (2000). *Sociology Department, Faculty Publications*. 383.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/sociologyfacpub/383>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Sociology, Department of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Sociology Department, Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Hill, Michael R. 2000. Lucile Eaves and Nebraska Sociology.” (A Symposium on Lucile Eaves).
Sociological Origins 2 (Winter): 61-64.

A SYMPOSIUM ON LUCILE EAVES

Lucile Eaves and Nebraska Sociology

Michael R. Hill

THE MAJOR published, first-person accounts of early sociology and sociologists at the University of Nebraska include perspectives by George Elliott Howard (1908, 1927), Olivia Pound (1916), Hattie Plum Williams (1919, 1920, 1929), Edward Alsworth Ross (1935), Hutton Webster (1952), and Joyce O. Hertzler (1929). To this instructive and growing list we are pleased to add Lucile Eaves' sociological autobiography, written in 1928, as well as an example, drawn from Nebraska's *University Journal*, of her contemporary observations on social life (Eaves 1914a, b, 1915a, b, c).

Eaves (born 1869 – died 1953) was an academic pioneer: the first woman sociologist appointed to the Nebraska faculty. In Lincoln, from 1908 to 1915, together with George Elliott Howard, she trained Hattie Plum Williams, among many others. Williams, it should be noted, subsequently filled Eaves' position at Nebraska and later, in 1923, became the first woman to chair a coeducational, doctoral degree-granting sociology department (Hill 1988; Hill and Deegan 1991).¹ Whereas a brief biography (Cameron 1924) and a general overview of Eaves' career in sociology, together with a bibliography of her work, are readily available elsewhere (Deegan and Hill 1991), George Howard's (1927) detailed personal account nonetheless bears repeating here:

Dr. Lucile Eaves in 1908 accepted the call to become "Associate Professor of Practical Sociology." By university training and experience she was exceptionally well fitted for the position. Her A.B. and A.M. degrees, both in History, were taken at Stanford and her Ph.D. degree at Columbia. Her *History of California Labor Legislation* appeared in 1910.² This work is a careful and comprehensive investigation, from the sources, of the unique, sometimes dramatic, conditions of labor in California from the Forty-Niner days onward, with a critical examination of the problems and laws to which those conditions gave rise. The findings of the author, justifying in the main the attitude of organized labor, could not fail to increase the prestige of Dr. Eaves. These conclusions, expressed as theory were formed in the process of research, inspired the confidence and won for her welfare work the support of the powerful chiefs of organized labor in the city. Moreover, the investigation gave her knowledge and experience which were utilized in her later academic treatment of labor questions.

¹ Mary E.B.R.S. Coolidge, a former classmate of Eaves', temporarily took the administrative reins of the decimated department at Stanford following the forced ouster of Edward A. Ross and George Elliott Howard in 1901, but Williams remains the earliest known regular appointment of a woman to chair such a department (see Mary Jo Deegan, "Mary Elizabeth Burroughs Roberts Smith Coolidge," in *Women in Sociology*, edited by M.J. Deegan, Greenwood Press 1991: 100-109).

² This massive work (Eaves 1910) ran to 461 published pages.

For several years, she was head of the South Park Social Settlement in San Francisco.¹ Under her energetic management the Settlement became the center of social welfare work in that city. The youth of the neighborhood, both girls and boys, gathered here in large numbers to enjoy the facilities offered for study and recreation. Prominent men and women as class-leaders volunteered their services. The Settlement house became the gathering place for conferences of welfare workers and the chiefs of organized labor. The South Park Settlement became the radiant point of social betterment thought in the community. An incident may illustrate the influence and confidence thus inspired by Dr. Eaves. At the time of the disastrous fire of 1906 she was residing in New York. A summons for aid brought her back to the stricken city to take an important share of the complex task of relief.

From 1908 to 1915 she administered with vigor and efficiency the division of the department which she was chosen to serve.² Her extramural work was not less important than her classroom teaching. She became a courageous platform advocate of social reform measures. Her talent for forceful speaking brought her frequent opportunities. She appeared before legislative committees to defend or to oppose pending measures. In short, Dr. Eaves was contributing generously to the sociological department's reputation as the University center of progressive thought.

The course of instruction which she offered quite justified her title as Practical Sociologist. Besides studies in "Statistics" and on the "Biography of Social Service," the following courses, for one or two semesters, were offered:

(1) **Modern Social Betterment Movements.** This course included social settlements, welfare work of large employers, efforts to protect the health of the public, housing problems, public parks, playground, and recreation centers, and other problems.

(2) **Poverty and Dependence.** Included the causes of poverty and dependence and the principles of prevention and relief, state institutions for the care of dependents, methods of charitable and religious societies, and emergency relief in times of great calamities.

(3) **Socialization of Education.** Considered plans for the social and ethical training of the individual, and modern movements which are making the public schools more effective means for social progress.

(4) **Criminal Sociology.** Discussed the elements of criminology and penology and methods of reform as expressed in the juvenile court, reform school, indeterminate sentence, and better forms of prison management.

(5) **Labor Legislation.** The first semester studies European and American legislation protecting women and children wage earners, promoting industrial hygiene, and regulating the wages, hours of work and the relations of individual workingmen to their employers. The second semester includes social insurance and labor organization in Great Britain and the United States. In this course Dr. Eaves' vigorous demand for

¹ For details on the settlement movement, see Robert A. Woods and Albert J. Kennedy, *Handbook of Settlements* (Charities Publication Committee 1911).

² Eaves was appointed to the rank of Associate Professor in the University of Nebraska.

modern accident compensation laws aided in the struggle which freed Nebraska from medievalism in this regard.

(6) **Investigation of Social Problems.** Primarily for graduates. Intended especially for those who wish to prepare themselves for positions in connection with the social work of religious societies or of charitable or correctional institutions.

In 1915, after seven years of successful service, Dr. Eaves resigned, to accept a call to become director of the Research Department of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union in Boston. Thus Nebraska lost an able teacher and an earnest promoter of the social welfare. Efficiency in her new field of work is attested by the many publications of herself and her associates,¹ while Simmons College has afforded her opportunity, as Professor of Economic Research, to continue her service as teacher.

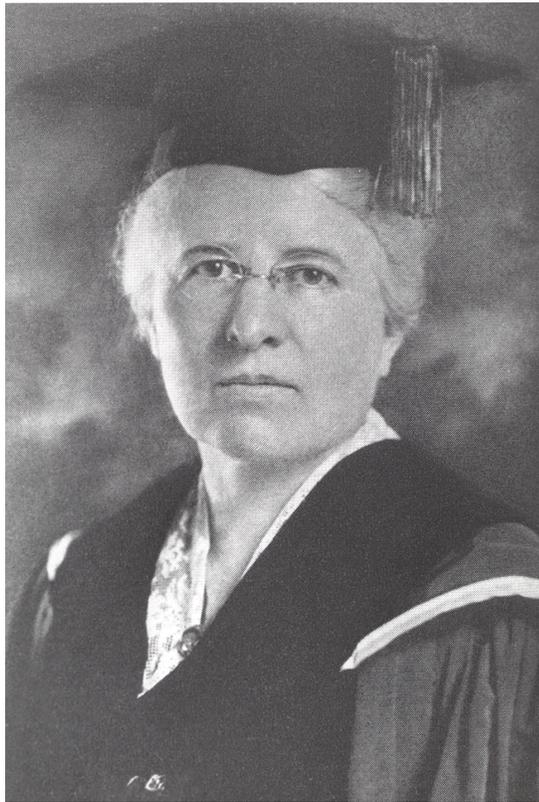
Nebraska lost Eaves to the East Coast when the University failed to pay her an adequate salary, much as the earlier services of Charles Ellwood were lost when the University failed to pay him anything at all—low salaries have a long, difficult and enduring history at the University of Nebraska. Dr. Eaves was, nonetheless, an energetic worker during her tenure in Lincoln. Eaves not only taught in the classroom but also traveled widely throughout the State, carefully observing the social scene. Her astute observations on the social situation and the needs of Nebraska young people appear below, following her sociological autobiography.

REFERENCES

- Cameron, Mabel Ward. 1924. "Eaves, Lucile." Pp. 390-392 in *The Biographical Cyclopaedia of American Women*, Vol. I. New York: Halvord.
- Deegan, Mary Jo and Michael R. Hill. 1991. "Lucile Eaves." Pp. 140-47 in *Women in Sociology*, edited by M.J. Deegan. NY: Greenwood.
- Eaves, Lucile. 1910. *A History of California Labor Legislation: With an Introductory Sketch of the San Francisco Labor Movement*. University of California Publications in Economics, Vo. 2. Berkeley, CA: The University Press.
- _____. 1914a. "The Training of Rural Leaders." *University Journal* 11 (November): 11.
- _____. 1914b. "The Rural School." *University Journal* 11 (December): 26-27.
- _____. 1915a. "Seen from the Car Windows." *University Journal* 11 (January): 47-49.
- _____. 1915b. "Successful Forms of Recreation for the Young." *University Journal* 11 (February): 65-66.
- _____. 1915c. "Work for Nebraska Women." *University Journal* 11 (March): 76-77.
- Hertzler, Joyce O. [1929]. "A History of Sociology at the University of Nebraska." (Edited by Mary Jo Deegan). *Journal of the History of Sociology* 1 (1979): 40-62.
- Hill, Michael R. 1988. "Research by Bureaucracy: Hattie Plum Williams and the National Commission on Law Observance, 1929-1931." *Mid-American Review of Sociology* 13 (Winter): 69-84.
- Hill, Michael R. and Mary Jo Deegan. 1991. "Hattie Plum Williams." Pp. 440-48 in *Women in Sociology*, edited by M.J. Deegan. NY: Greenwood.

¹ See, for example, *The Food of Working Women in Boston* (Massachusetts Department of Health 1917), and *Training for Store Service, The Vocational Experiences and Training of Juvenile Employees of Retail Department, Dry Goods and Clothing Stores in Boston* (Gorham Press 1920).

- Howard, George Elliott. [1908]. "Biographical Preface." Pp. Xxix-xli in *American Charities*, by Amos G. Warner, with a new introduction by Mary Jo Deegan. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction (1989).
- _____. [1927]. "Sociology in the University of Nebraska, 1898-1927." (Edited by Michael R. Hill). *Mid-American Review of Sociology* 13 (Winter 1988): 3-19.
- Pound, Olivia. 1916. "Hattie Plum Williams: Her Service to the Community and to the University." *University Journal* 13 (October): 20-21.
- Ross, Edward Alsworth. 1936. *Seventy Years of It: An Autobiography*. NY: Century.
- Webster, Hutton. 1952. *Genealogical and Autobiographical Notes*. Palo Alto, CA: [Privately printed].
- Williams, Hattie Plum. 1919. "The University and the Community." Pp. 70-73 in *The University of Nebraska, 1869-1919*. Lincoln, NE: The University of Nebraska.
- _____. 1920. "Women's Activities on the Campus." *University Journal* 16 (October): 35.
- _____. 1929. "The Social Philosophy of George Elliott Howard." *Sociology and Social Research* 8 (January-February): 229-33.



Lucile Eaves