SOCIAL SCIENCE IN THE MAKING
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Essays on the Russell Sage Foundation, 1907–1972

David C. Hammack
Stanton Wheeler

RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION
NEW YORK
The Russell Sage Foundation, one of the oldest of America’s general purpose foundations, was established in 1907 by Mrs. Margaret Olivia Sage for “the improvement of social and living conditions in the United States.” The Foundation seeks to fulfill this mandate by fostering the development and dissemination of knowledge about the country’s political, social, and economic problems. While the Foundation endeavors to assure the accuracy and objectivity of each book it publishes, the conclusions and interpretations in Russell Sage Foundation publications are those of the authors and not of the Foundation, its Trustees, or its staff. Publication by Russell Sage, therefore, does not imply Foundation endorsement.

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To the Trustees of Russell Sage Foundation:

I have transferred to Russell Sage Foundation... a fund, the principal of which... shall be held, and the income thereof applied to the improvement of social and living conditions in the United States of America....

The scope of the Foundation is not only national but is broad. It should, however, preferably not undertake to do that which is now being done or is likely to be effectively done by other individuals or by other agencies. It should be its aim to take up the larger and more difficult problems, and to take them up so far as possible in such a manner as to secure co-operation and aid in their solution.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Olivia Sage.

New York, April 19, 1907
Foreword

The Russell Sage Foundation was born in an era of enormous optimism about the power of social research to transform social life. The new wave of American philanthropists at the turn of the century recognized that poverty, unemployment, poor housing, and poor public health can have fundamental social and economic causes that transcend individual moral failings. Like many Progressive Era reformers, they looked to the emerging social sciences to analyze social problems and point the way toward solutions. Social research, they hoped, could inform and rationalize the increasingly urban and industrialized mass society that was emerging in the early years of the twentieth century.

In 1907, when Margaret Olivia Sage obtained a charter from the New York State Assembly establishing the Russell Sage Foundation as the first general-purpose foundation in the country, the goal of the new organization was expansively defined as “the improvement of social and living conditions in the United States of America.” The new Russell Sage charter granted the trustees extraordinary leeway to use “any means to that end.” But in the illustrative list that followed, it seems no accident that “research” came first.

Within ten years of its founding, the Russell Sage Foundation had indeed established a thriving social research enterprise. There were active research programs in child hygiene, recreation, consumer credit, industrial relations, social surveys, and social statistics. The goal of this work was avowedly practical; it aimed to support recommendations for social reform and to design more effective remedial programs. Citing this early abundance of
applied social research, one recent inventory of American "think tanks" compiled by historian James A. Smith described the Russell Sage Foundation as "arguably the nation's oldest surviving policy research institution and a prototype for those that followed."* Smith's historical claim may well be true, but it is misleading in one respect. For, although the Russell Sage Foundation may have been an early model for the hundreds of policy research shops that now dot the landscape in American social science, the Foundation has since become an institution of a very different kind.

Together, the historical essays in this volume provide the best account of how the Foundation moved away from its roots as a policy think tank. There are other histories of Russell Sage, most notably Glenn, Brandt, and Andrews' authoritative two-volume account of the Foundation's first forty years, but this book of essays is the only extended treatment of the Foundation's history that includes both its distinguished early years and its emergence after World War II as the principal private foundation devoted to strengthening basic research in the social sciences.

The opening chapter by historian David Hammack tells the story of the Foundation's vigorous first decade—the extraordinary outpouring of social surveys pioneered by Paul Kellogg's Pittsburgh Survey, the impressive research on working conditions and labor relations led by Mary van Kleeck, and the new model of social work developed by Mary Richmond. Hammack's subsequent chapters cover the period between the two world wars, when the Foundation developed several projects on a grand scale in housing and urban planning, and provided much of the intellectual underpinning for Herbert Hoover's brand of social reform, known then as the "Associationist State." Hoover believed that social problems could best be addressed by private organizations acting voluntarily and by research organizations like Russell Sage providing expert advice. The severity and intransigence of the Depression largely undermined these ideas and brought the federal government massively into the business of providing

social services and designing social policy. By the 1940s, the Foundation's continuing support for the private provision of social services had become something of an anachronism.

Professor Stanton Wheeler, now of the Yale Law School and once a Foundation staff member, picks up the story after World War II, when the Russell Sage Foundation quite deliberately decided to turn away from direct support for social action and toward efforts to strengthen social research. As Wheeler tells it, the leaders of the Foundation described themselves in decidedly postwar rhetoric as relocating Russell Sage to the "second trench." The Foundation's new aim was to strengthen the more basic capacities of social science, but always in ways that would provide intellectual and scientific support for efforts to design and implement social policy on the "front lines."

Under the administration of Donald Young, from 1948 to 1963, this new direction was most prominently revealed in the effort to apply social science to the professions and to the arts of social practice more generally. Foundation programs in the sociology of medicine, law, and social work led to new concepts of the function of professional practice and created entirely new subfields of sociology, which continue to thrive. Unlike Russell Sage's earlier studies of social work, which were intended to guide and reform practice directly, the postwar research on the professions was designed for more basic purposes: to understand the social function of professional practice and to illuminate the underlying social processes that sustain (or inhibit) their conduct. Although the goal of improving professional practice remained, the kind of social science that was entailed by the goal had been considerably deepened.

During Gilbert Brim's presidency, from 1963 to 1972, the range of the Foundation's basic research programs broadened significantly. While extending its work on the professions to journalism and the military, the Foundation pushed into new areas of research on matters as diverse as life-span development and aging, mental testing and human-resource management, techniques for evaluating social programs, the development of social indicators, and even behavioral biology. Increasingly, Russell Sage learned how
to play a linking role between the rapidly expanding world of academic research in the universities and its original concerns with social policy and social practice. To this end, the Foundation developed a number of unique institutional features in the 1960s, such as mixing external grant-making with support for Visiting Scholars working in residence at Russell Sage. These innovations persist to the present and give the Foundation much of its current capacity to enlist basic social scientists in the study of stubbornly difficult social questions.

The Brim period set the pattern for the Foundation in substantive ways as well. Looking back, it is not difficult to see that Russell Sage's efforts to strengthen social science and maintain its social relevance have been of three types. One category of programs has been motivated by the need to find out more about the causes and consequences of some social problem, or to deepen our understanding of social change. The Foundation's program in the 1980s on the social effects of gender role change is a clear example; so too is our current effort to understand the recent collapse of demand for low-skilled labor that has caused poverty to persist amidst plenty in advanced economies. A second category of programs includes those designed to push social science onto new ground, often by exploiting an interdisciplinary opportunity not adequately recognized within the social science disciplines. An excellent example was the pioneering effort, during the Brim years, to open up the study of human development over the life course by joining forces in developmental psychology and sociology. Another illustration is the Foundation's recent program in behavioral economics, which sought to examine the consequences of adopting a more realistic psychology of choice of our understanding of market behavior. Finally, there have been a number of programs that aim to strengthen the methodological equipment of the social sciences. The work in the Brim period on social indicators and social program evaluation is an excellent example; so too is our recently completed effort to advance the use of quantitative techniques for synthesizing research in the social sciences.

These are not the kind of programs, nor is this the institutional history our Progressive Era forebears might have anticipated,
convinced as they were of the very immediate connection between social research and social amelioration. But it is a history that can readily be understood, at least in retrospect, as the inevitable maturing and deepening of their fundamental aspiration to bring social science to bear effectively on the improvement of social life. If, for example, the social survey movement, initiated by Russell Sage, did not immediately mobilize local communities to improve urban conditions, as Kellogg and the other advocates of social surveys seemed to expect, these early social surveys nevertheless raised important statistical and theoretical questions about how best to develop meaningful indicators of social well-being and how to probe for the underlying causes of social disadvantage. Similarly, while the Foundation’s early efforts to rationalize the delivery of social services did not lead directly to an efficient private social safety net, they did succeed in turning scientific attention toward difficult technical questions about the use of research to design and evaluate social programs, and more fundamentally, they raised enduring moral and philosophical issues about how best to achieve social equity and personal security in a freely competitive and economically productive society.

These issues, and many others like them, now lie at the core of the great intellectual and scientific undertaking that social science in the twentieth century has become. By participating prominently in strengthening this scientific enterprise, the Russell Sage Foundation has attempted to fulfill the aspirations of its founder in the most serious possible way. We are indebted to David Hammack and Stanton Wheeler for telling so much of the Foundation’s story—and for telling it so very well.

Eric Wanner
President
Russell Sage Foundation
A Center of Intelligence for the Charity Organization Movement: The Foundation’s Early Years

David C. Hammack

Judged by its charter and by the character of its initial program, the Russell Sage Foundation might be described as the oldest general-purpose foundation in the United States. Yet it was created to serve particular purposes for one movement, the movement to organize charity and professionalize social work, and it is generally viewed as having been devoted to the field of social work from its founding in 1907 until its reorganization in 1947. In fact, the Russell Sage Foundation was also deeply involved in several other fields during its first decades: it was as influential in the fields of housing, zoning, and city planning; industrial relations; and social research as it was in the field of social work. It was also prominent in public health (especially in educating people about ways to avoid tuberculosis) and in education. And it sought effectively to shape movements for the welfare of women and children, to reform the pawnshop and consumer loan business, and to care for the blind.
Three factors account for the apparent contradiction between the Foundation's very general statement of purpose and actual program, on the one hand, and its much more limited social work reputation, on the other. Margaret Olivia Sage and her attorney, Robert W. de Forest, did not think in terms of social work as that field developed over the next forty years. They thought in terms of the charity organization movement that, as they conceived it—but as many later observers did not—was designed to address a very broad range of social problems, usually (although by no means always) through private action. Many of the Foundation's early activities were intended to address matters that, by the 1940s, were no longer considered to fall in the province of social work; many of these matters—urban planning, public health, and consumer protection—developed their own institutions and their own histories. Finally, de Forest and his colleagues, with Mrs. Sage's evident approval, worked through the Foundation to influence legislation and establish a remarkable group of new institutions. In many cases, they felt that it would be counter-productive to have the Foundation take credit for—or even be associated with—the actions they took and the institutions they created.

Rationale For A General-Purpose Foundation

John D. Rockefeller was one of the first to call for the general-purpose foundation when he proposed, in 1901, that "men of worth and position...erect a foundation, a trust, and engage directors who will make it a life work to manage, with our personal cooperation, this business of benevolence properly and effectively."1 But Rockefeller's own early efforts in this field had followed the example of the first great American foundation, the Peabody Fund, established in 1867 very specifically for "the promotion and encouragement of intellectual, moral, or industrial education among the young of the more destitute portions of the Southern and South-Western States of the Union."2 Rockefeller's earliest foundations were also devoted to specific purposes: he set up the Sanitary Commission for the Eradication of Hookworm
Disease and endowed the University of Chicago before establishing the General Education Board (1903) for the rather more general purpose of promoting “education within the United States of America, without distinction of race, sex, or creed.”

Initially, however, the General Education Board confined its program to the improvement of education for both blacks and whites in the South. Andrew Carnegie, similarly, established the Carnegie Institute to support technical education in 1896, the Carnegie Institution of Washington to support advanced research in 1902, and the Hero Fund in 1904. The Carnegie Corporation of New York, whose more general purpose was “to promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding among the people of the United States by aiding technical schools, institutions of higher learning [the simplified spelling is Carnegie’s], libraries, scientific research, hero funds, useful publications, and by other such agencies and means as shall from time to time be found appropriate therefor,” appeared only in 1911, and for many years served primarily as a source of funds for the other Carnegie endowments. The Rockefeller Foundation, “to promote the well-being of mankind throughout the world” by attempting “to cure evils at their source,” was proposed to Congress in 1910 and chartered by the State of New York in 1913.

Margaret Olivia Sage thus set an example with the simple and breathtakingly general language of the charter she obtained from the State of New York in 1907. The Russell Sage Foundation, her charter read, was established to promote “the improvement of social and living conditions in the United States of America,” by “any means” the Foundation’s trustees deemed appropriate, including “research, publication, education, the establishment and maintenance of charitable or benevolent activities, agencies, and institutions, and the aid of any such activities, agencies, or institutions already in existence.” The language used in the acts that created the Carnegie Corporation in 1911 and the Rockefeller Foundation in 1913 was “practically identical,” as a Rockefeller attorney emphasized in a successful effort to deflect criticism when the Rockefeller Foundation sought to incorporate in New York.

Establishing the Russell Sage Foundation was the largest of
many philanthropic acts carried out by Mrs. Sage with the fortune of some $65 million left to her by her husband. Russell Sage had made this fortune in the railroad, telegraph, and lumber industries and through shrewd investments in stocks, bonds, and gold. He himself opposed philanthropic works of all kinds. He and Margaret Olivia had no children, however; indeed, it seems likely that they lived on terms of estrangement from one another. After his death in 1906 his widow took great delight in using his fortune to do good works, and to do them as often as possible in his name. "I am nearly eighty years old," she said at the first meeting of the Russell Sage Foundation's Board of Trustees, "and I feel as if I were just beginning to live."6

We must await the completion of studies now underway to understand Mrs. Sage's purposes fully. A cache of her letters now in the papers of the Russell Sage Foundation at the Rockefeller Archive Center suggests that she developed a wide range of interests out of what had originally been a strong evangelical commitment, and out of a commitment to women's concerns.7 She made many small gifts to religious institutions, ranging from the church of a black congregation in Sag Harbor, Long Island, to a large chapel for Cornell University. She provided at least some support to the Salvation Army, and met more than once with members of the Booth family as they worked to establish their organization in the United States. She contributed to many women's organizations, paid for a maternity hospital on Guam, built chapels and dormitories for several other women's colleges, and provided the founding grant to Russell Sage College in Troy, New York. She was particularly concerned that children engage in healthy and "wholesome" play, and paid for special playgrounds and Fourth of July celebrations. But she also gave major buildings to several universities and men's colleges, endowed the Russell Sage Institute for Pathology at the City Hospital and City Home in New York, and made significant contributions to organizations concerned with the blind. And she purchased Marsh Island, off the coast of Louisiana, as a wildlife sanctuary.8

Mrs. Sage was well aware of contemporary developments in philanthropy, and in setting up the Russell Sage Foundation she
drew on the precedents of the Peabody Fund, the General Education Board, and the Carnegie Institute. She seems to have decided upon a broad statement of purpose by a process of elimination. "You do not incline toward any mere religious propaganda," because "this ground is well covered by our church boards," wrote her attorney, Robert W. de Forest, in a decision-memorandum, "and to whatever extent you would wish to give for such a purpose, you would presumably act through them." He noted as well that "you have not thought of founding any new college or university. There are enough already, and the best results in this direction can be undoubtedly attained by aiding those in existence, as you are already doing." Mrs. Sage's inclinations, as she had expressed them to de Forest, "rather tended toward social betterment—improvement of the hard conditions of our working classes, making their homes and surroundings more healthful and comfortable and their lives happier; giving more of opportunity to them and their children."

As de Forest pointed out, the problem was to decide how to carry out this purpose. He mildly deprecated "appeal to the eye in the way of buildings," preferring institutions such as the "General Education Fund and the Carnegie Institute" that devoted "their entire resources to active work from some unobtrusive center." Mrs. Sage was well aware of—was perhaps even considering significant contributions to—many particular causes, ranging from subsidized model tenements or lodging houses for women to neighborhood charity buildings, and from tuberculosis sanatoria and convalescent homes to subsidized "industrial insurance for the working classes" to industrial education. De Forest questioned whether "any foundation directed specifically to some single form of social betterment," such as those he reviewed, "is wise as a permanent memorial intended to do good from generation to generation.... A foundation most wisely adapted to present needs might find those needs better supplied from other sources in the course of the next generation, and thus become unnecessary." Mrs. Sage might well be guided, he concluded, by the "thought that with the constant change and shift of social conditions, and extension, or it may be contraction, of the sphere of government activity,
the future may develop other and greater needs for philanthropic action than any which are now apparent."

These considerations led de Forest to "the analogy of the General Education Board, the Carnegie Institute, and the Burke Foundation, as the best form of organization. Their basic idea," he wrote, "is to place a large principal sum in the hands of a small body of trustees, with power to use the income in whatever particular way they think best from time to time to accomplish some general purpose. The principal sum is always to remain intact. The Trustees are organized as a corporation and have a right to perpetuate succession.... If the wisdom and experience of good administrators is so essential for any particular form of benevolence," he concluded, "why not give that wisdom and experience the largest possible scope to choose its own particular forms of benevolence within some general sphere?" Andrew Carnegie repeated de Forest's language as well as his sentiments when he wrote, five years later (in his simplified spelling), that "conditions upon the earth inevitably change; hence, no wise man will bind Trustees forever to certain paths, causes, or institutions."

De Forest urged Mrs. Sage to direct her foundation to "the larger and more difficult problems" in the improvement of social conditions, and to do so "in such a way as to secure co-operation and aid in their solution." The foundation should, he added, seek to become for the entire nation a "center of charitable and philanthropic information" such as "the Charity Organization Society makes for the city." Following this advice, she moved from the beginning to establish a national center for the study of social welfare policy and for the promotion of cooperation among charity organization societies and related organizations—the kind of organization that in recent years has come to be called a "think tank."

Every member of the first Board of Trustees was selected for his or her ability to contribute to the broad purpose of defining and studying social problems under the terms of the charity organization movement, and of "securing cooperation" for the implementation of recommended solutions. The most influential of the first group of trustees, in addition to Mrs. Sage, were Robert W. de Forest and John Glenn. De Forest, an attorney for the railroads that
brought Pennsylvania coal to New York City, headed for forty years the boards of both the Charity Organization Society of New York and the Metropolitan Museum of Art; in 1903 he had served as President of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections. Glenn, who quickly became the Foundation's first General Director, was also a railroad lawyer; he had served as President of the Board of Supervisors of City Charities of Baltimore and had preceded de Forest as President of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections in 1901.

Three of the other initial trustees also had broad experience in business and administrative affairs. Phelps-Dodge heir and banker Cleveland H. Dodge (whose father had been a founder of the YMCA and the Society for the Suppression of Vice) had played leading roles in the Red Cross, the YMCA, and the American Museum of Natural History. Robert C. Ogden, a former partner in John Wanamaker's dry goods business, led General Education Board and Peabody Fund efforts to improve education in the South, and was thus familiar with the most prominent large-scale philanthropies of the time. Daniel Coit Gilman was President of the Johns Hopkins University and active in Baltimore charities; when he died in 1908 his replacement was Alfred Treadway White, a merchant who was President of the Brooklyn Bureau of Charities and a notable developer of privately subsidized low-income housing.13

Unlike the other early foundations, the Russell Sage Foundation not only owed its existence to a woman but included four women among its first nine trustees. This fact reflected the prominent parts that women played in the charity organization movement. Mrs. Sage herself was one of the trustees. Another was Helen M. Gould, the daughter of Jay Gould, Russell Sage's frequent business partner and a notable donor to patriotic, religious, and charitable organizations, who "had for years," according to John Glenn, "been like a daughter to Mrs. Sage." De Forest selected the other two women trustees: Gertrude S. Rice, a founder of the Charity Organization Society of New York; and Louisa Lee Schuyler, founder of the New York State Charities Aid Association.14
Ambitions of the Charity Organization Movement

The Russell Sage Foundation trustees, led by Mrs. Sage, de Forest, and John Glenn, quickly defined their initial program. This program was to change significantly after World War I, but the basic direction set at the beginning was largely maintained for forty years.

At Margaret Olivia Sage’s insistence the trustees decided, early in 1912, to build their own building; this was the one time, the trustees wrote in a memorial minute on the occasion of her death, when she “sought to direct their action.”\(^{15}\) They selected a location near Gramercy Park, down the block from the United Charities Building that housed the Charity Organization Society. Here they erected an impressive nine-story structure in Italian Renaissance style, designed by the architect Grosvenor Atterbury and decorated with carved panels symbolizing Service flanked by Study and Counsel, Religion, Education, Civics, Justice, Health, Work, Play, and Housing. The first two floors of the building contained meeting rooms; the top two floors housed a library. In all, nearly 8 percent of the Foundation’s initial capital of $10 million was invested in the building.

The programs housed in this building grew quite directly out of the Charity Organization Society movement as it existed at the turn of the century. This movement has encountered its full share of criticism. Its earliest advocate in the United States was an immigrant clergyman, the Reverend S. H. Gurteen, who had been associated with the London Charity Organization Society before he moved to Buffalo in the early 1870s. In the United States, Gurteen was soon asserting, “the most truly deserving were those who did not seek, and, therefore, very often did not get relief,” while “the pauper, the imposter, and the fraud... were carrying off at least one-half of all charity, public and private.” In his widely distributed *Handbook of Charity Organization* and in his speeches and sermons, Gurteen emphasized rigorous casework and close coordination among both private and public relief-giving agencies as the means of identifying those worthy of assistance, encouraging hard work and thrift, and excluding those capable of supporting
themselves. Gurteen disparaged both the giving of alms by churches and the distribution of "outdoor relief"—the provision of money, food, or fuel to the poor—by government authorities.\textsuperscript{16}

In the view of historian Roy Lubove (and of many professional social workers who made their careers within the large government agencies created during and after the New Deal), Gurteen and similar charity organization leaders "imposed a blend of Malthusianism, Manchesterian economics, Social Darwinism, Romanticism, and the crude hereditary biology of McCulloch and Dugdale upon the Christian love and brotherhood which theoretically inspired all benevolent efforts. The result," Lubove concluded, "was a vast amount of rhetoric concerning the importance of a thorough understanding of the background of each case of dependency, combined with a series of preconceived moral judgments and presuppositions about the character of the poor and about human nature."\textsuperscript{17}

Michael Katz's judgment is equally harsh: "charity organization was more than a way of repressing pauperism, of putting an end to indiscriminate almsgiving." It was also "a bureaucratic resolution of tension over sex roles among the well-to-do in the Gilded Age," as men managed the charity organizations and confined women who wished to be active in the larger world outside the family to the traditional female role of visiting the poor.\textsuperscript{18} Few historians of the subject have been able to resist John Boyle O'Reilly's stinging couplet about "That Organized Charity, scromped and iced, / In the name of a cautious, statistical Christ."\textsuperscript{19}

Mrs. Sage and her associates, including women as well as men, understood the charity organization movement they led in very different terms. This was due in part, perhaps, to the broadening impact of their experience in New York City, the nation's largest, most diverse, and most cosmopolitan city. In part it was due to the fact that they had not yet seen the charity organization societies of New York, Boston, Cleveland, and most other cities evolve into family service (often psychological counseling) societies familiar to later historians of social work.\textsuperscript{20} In part it was surely due to the influence of Josephine Shaw Lowell, the redoubtable leader of the New York Charity Organization Society and a woman
who moved inexorably, as Katz has written, "through scientific charity to the left wing of respectable reform." And in part it was due to the fact that they, like Mrs. Lowell, were closely associated with business and political leaders who, like Robert W. de Forest, Seth Low, and Theodore Roosevelt, were actively seeking ways to improve the condition of the poor—and to hold industrial and class conflict down to manageable proportions.

Mrs. Lowell never doubted the necessity of carefully organizing and concerting charitable agencies, or of rigorously investigating each case of need; and she firmly opposed the provision of outdoor relief by public agencies as inefficient, subject to political corruption, and pauperizing. But as early as 1890 she was coming to believe that the best way to relieve poverty was to raise wages, and that the best way to raise wages was to encourage workers to form effective unions, and to require employers to negotiate. By 1898 she had helped create the atmosphere within the Charity Organization Society of New York that encouraged Lawrence Veiller, then a caseworker, to report to her that only "32 percent of the poverty" afflicting families in his district "was the result of their own faults, while 68 percent was due to causes beyond their control," such as the death or absence of the man, injury or illness, old age, or lack of work.

Charity Organization Society leaders in large cities such as New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, and Baltimore increasingly agreed that they ought to emphasize efficiency in the management of available charitable resources, and, as Robert W. de Forest put it in a discussion within the New York COS, focus on "'preventive work'—that is, work directed to the removal or amelioration of the causes of poverty and distress as distinguished from merely relieving poverty and distress in individual cases after they have been caused." Thus, the Russell Sage Foundation's initial program can be seen as embracing two complementary efforts: to professionalize social work and to eliminate deleterious environmental conditions.

De Forest emphasized these points in an extraordinary memorandum of January 3, 1907, advocating the creation of a Department for the Improvement of Social Conditions in the Charity
Organization Society of New York. “While no less attention should be given to the care of needy families in their homes,” he wrote, “the most effective work is to strike at those conditions which made these families needy, and, so far as possible, to remove them.”

De Forest noted that in 1899 the COS had organized a Tenement House Committee chaired by himself and with Veiller as its chief of staff, and that in 1900 Governor Theodore Roosevelt had appointed a State Tenement Commission, with the same two people in the leading roles. Under the tenement house law proposed by that commission and enacted with COS support, he claimed, “the sanitary conditions of old tenements have so improved as to very materially diminish the death rate and the disease rate among the tenement classes,” and enough new-law tenements, “practically model as respects light, ventilation, and sanitation, have been built or are now in process of erection” to house one million people in the City of New York. De Forest did not claim “exclusive credit” for this result, but he did insist that it was “brought about by organization and cooperation which the society initiated and which it fostered.” Through this means, he concluded, the COS accomplished far more toward “eliminating and diminishing some of the more important causes of pauperism... than could have been brought about by the same amount of effort and the same amount of money expended for the relief of individual suffering.”

Similar results, de Forest insisted in another memorandum, had been achieved through “the Provident Loan Society which we initiated and which has loaned this year upwards of $9,000,000,” enabling “the poor to borrow at a fair rate.” The Charity Organization Society’s Tuberculosis Committee, in an effort that held special appeal for Mrs. Sage, had, de Forest added, done educational work that was “almost as marvelous” in attracting attention to the tuberculosis problem. The COS had also played a leading role in improving the quality of casework. And it had “initiated the first movement for philanthropic education by opening a summer school,” a school whose marked success had encouraged imitators in Boston and Chicago.

It was de Forest’s broad vision of the charity organization move-
ment that defined the Russell Sage Foundation's program for its first forty years. Under his leadership as vice president from 1907 until Mrs. Sage's death in 1918, and then as president until his own death in 1931, the Foundation served as a think tank for the charity organization movement. It played the central role in a national movement to alleviate poverty through the professionalization of social work, the study of social problems, the shaping of legislation, and the creation of private agencies designed to meet specific social needs. The Foundation's effort to professionalize social work and promote the efficient organization of charity has received the most attention. But it also made major contributions to a wide variety of efforts to eliminate the conditions that, in the view of its founders, engendered poverty and dependency. It developed model capabilities in social research, mounted the nation's most ambitious program for the study of industrial relations, and significantly shaped movements to improve the welfare of women and children, to reform the pawnshop and consumer loan business, to care for the blind, to improve public health (especially to educate people about ways to avoid tuberculosis), to reform housing, and to encourage zoning and city planning.

By the late 1940s these fields had become so distinct from one another that each had developed a distinct sense of identity (and of its own history), and the Foundation abandoned its attempt to contribute to them all. Henceforth it concentrated on efforts to apply social science to policymaking and to the professions. But to de Forest, Mrs. Sage, John Glenn, and others of the first generation of Russell Sage Foundation leaders, as to their contemporaries in many private organizations concerned with the management and reform of social welfare in the United States, all the activities in its initial program belonged to a single, coherent effort.

Social Studies and Institution Building

De Forest's recommendation that Mrs. Sage's new foundation should avoid any "appeal to the eye" and work "from some unobtrusive center" to "improve social and living conditions" found
expression in the many institutional arrangements the Foundation employed in its first forty years. The number and variety of these arrangements have sometimes obscured the record and memory of the Foundation’s activities.

Historian Ellen Condliffe Lagemann has employed the useful phrase “technologies of influence” to describe the studies, commissioned by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, in their efforts to shape public policy and private action in many fields. As she describes them, such “technologies of influence” consisted of studies, conducted by the leaders of the private and governmental institutions who would be affected or by people such leaders trusted. Good studies were “practical”; they provided efficient solutions to problems that were likely to be adopted as “blueprints” by the managers of influential organizations.28 Through such studies and through joint action with other agencies, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching helped define the nature and curriculum of American high schools, encouraged the secularization of higher education, and promoted the expansion of professional education in American universities: it also launched the Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association (1917) and helped create the Educational Testing Service (1947, uniting independent agencies that dated from 1930 and later).29

The early Russell Sage Foundation employed an even more diverse array of “technologies of influence” than did the Carnegie foundations described by Lagemann. The Foundation not only supported and published studies itself, serving as an early think tank; through its own departments and through grants to external agencies, it also developed institutions to provide new social services. Some of these Foundation-supported activities eventually enjoyed a flourishing, distinct existence, while others, by design, remained obscure. These arrangements reflected de Forest and Glenn’s shrewd and often creative judgments about the organizational strategies most likely to secure particular objects.

But these arrangements were also so “unobtrusive” that historians (and later managers of the Foundation itself) have found it difficult to identify many of the Foundation’s leading roles. When
Allen F. Davis described settlement house workers as the nation’s most effective “Spearheads of Reform,” for example, he was unaware of the directing role that de Forest, Glenn, and their associates played behind the scenes in such fields as housing and workmen’s compensation. And when Barry Karl and Stanley N. Katz argued that the Russell Sage Foundation’s early program was merely “a continuation and modernization of the tradition of social work,” they were not able to take into consideration the full range of its activities in industrial relations, education, housing, public health, city planning, and social research.30

The complexity of the Russell Sage Foundation’s relations with its early grantees is evident in the story of its support for the Pittsburgh Survey. One of its most successful projects, the Pittsburgh Survey produced a major exhibit, many articles, and six influential volumes. Historian Robert Bremner judged the Pittsburgh Survey to be “by far the most important of the prewar social investigations”; he quotes Jane Addams as writing that it sparked “the veritable zeal for reform” that swept the United States between 1909 and 1914.31

The origins of the Pittsburgh Survey lay in the creation of the Charities Publication Committee by de Forest, other leaders of the Charity Organization Society of New York, John Glenn, Daniel Coit Gilman, Jane Addams, Jacob Riis, and others in 1905, two years before Mrs. Sage established the Foundation. The Committee’s purpose was “to get at the facts of social conditions and to put those facts before the public in ways that will count.” The Committee intended to support “important pieces of social investigation not undertaken by any existing organization.”32

The Charities Publication Committee began by arranging a consolidation of Charities, the newsletter of New York’s Charity Organization Society; The Commons, Graham Taylor’s similar publication in Chicago; and Jewish Charity, a New York periodical directed to the Jewish community throughout the United States—thereby creating a new national journal, Charities and the Commons. Edward T. Devine, the new publication’s first editor, quickly undertook an extensive investigation into housing and family conditions in the poorest areas of Washington, D.C. This study—which
induced President Theodore Roosevelt and Congress to establish a juvenile court and introduce sanitary and housing regulations for the District of Columbia—attracted the attention of Alice B. Montgomery, chief probation officer of the Allegheny County Juvenile Court, who urged the publication committee to study Pittsburgh.

In response to Ms. Montgomery's letter, the Charities Publication Committee arranged for William H. Matthew, head worker of Pittsburgh's Kingsley Settlement, to organize a local committee (which included the president of the Pittsburgh chamber of commerce) to sponsor the work and put up a token $350. The Charities Publication Committee provided an initial contribution of $1,000, then turned to the Russell Sage Foundation for the $26,500 required to hire a substantial staff and complete the research.33 The Committee published the results of the study first in a series of articles in Charities and the Commons, and then, after renaming itself Survey Associates, Inc. (and adopting the new name The Survey for its periodical), in the form of six substantial books, with publication costs again subsidized by the Foundation.34

Paul U. Kellogg, who directed the Pittsburgh Survey and edited its publications, became editor of The Survey, making it into a leading national periodical for social workers, donors, and social reformers. Neither the Charities Publication Committee, Survey Associates, Inc., The Survey, nor Survey Graphic (an illustrated, more popular companion magazine), were ever legally part of the Russell Sage Foundation, but they were created and managed by the same set of people, and they all drew financial support from the Foundation. Kellogg's Survey publications were significantly shaped by the Foundation's leaders, especially by de Forest, who kept up a lively correspondence with Kellogg. Altogether, the publications received subsidies of about $328,000 from the Foundation, as well as additional gifts from de Forest.35

Parts of the Pittsburgh Survey operation did move into the Foundation. By 1909 the Field Department of the Charities Publication Committee had become the Foundation's Charity Organization Department. Three years later the Foundation added a Department of Surveys and Exhibits headed by Shelby M. Har-
rison, who had directed statistical and exhibit work for the Pittsburgh Survey.

Harrison and his associates in the Department of Surveys consulted across the country with people who wished to study various social problems in their own communities; in several cases Harrison actually directed such studies, which were then published by the Foundation.36

The Foundation followed a similar approach in the field of education, in which it was briefly prominent under the leadership of Leonard P. Ayres. A former superintendent of schools for Puerto Rico, Ayres was, according to historian Lawrence Cremin, the "pioneer" in applying quantitative measures to problems of school administration. The Foundation itself published Ayres' Laggards in Our Schools (1909), which established basic norms for the ages of students in the elementary and secondary grades; his Scale for Measuring the Quality of Handwriting of School Children (1911), which became a national standard; and his Index Number for State School Systems (1920), a widely influential assessment tool that was in demand for many years after he left the foundation. But Ayres' elaborate and influential Cleveland School Survey, which put these and other measurement techniques into extended practice and was carried out under his direction by a total staff of thirty full- and part-time employees and consultants, was published in twenty-five volumes by the Survey Committee of the Cleveland Foundation.37

In its first years the Russell Sage Foundation worked through other "independent" organizations. Since the mid-1890s, de Forest and Charity Organization Society investigator Lawrence Veiller had worked closely to promote housing reform in New York City. They had prepared an influential study and exhibit on the city's tenements in 1897, and had seen the enactment of the New Law Tenement Act they had proposed while de Forest was serving as Housing Commissioner under Mayor Seth Low in 1903.38 In 1909 de Forest and Glenn joined Veiller in setting up the National Housing Association, directed by Veiller. Between 1909 and 1936 Veiller used this agency to publish a quarterly, Housing, to conduct studies and conferences on building codes and zoning laws, and to advocate such changes in the law. Veiller was never a formal
employee of the Russell Sage Foundation, but over these years it supported his efforts with grants to the National Housing Association and to the Citizens' Crime Commission of New York (another name, more or less, for Veiller), totaling nearly $300,000, and by publishing his books *Housing Reform* (1910) and *A Model Housing Law* (1914 and 1920) as well as Flavel Shurtleff and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr.'s *Carrying Out the City Plan* (1914). In the 1940s the Foundation's trustees made Veiller an annual grant in lieu of a pension "in view of the long period in which the Russell Sage Foundation has been practically the sole support of the work carried on by him."  

The early Russell Sage Foundation employed still other means in its effort to create and support other organizations. It expanded its building to accommodate the New York School of Social Work. It expanded its building again to provide extensive facilities for the Committee on Regional Plan of New York and Environ (a committee that was clearly modeled on the Charities Publication Committee/Survey Associates), which, like the Pittsburgh Survey, produced a multi-volume study of the three-state New York metropolitan region and went on to establish the Regional Plan Association of New York and New Jersey.

Through its library, the Foundation supported the New York School of Social Work and the Regional Plan, and created a center for the monitoring of private charity, foundations, and government social services. One of the Foundation's librarians, Bertha F. Hulseman, drew on its collections to edit the first two editions of *American Foundations for Social Welfare* (the nation's first foundation directories, published in 1930 and 1938). A third edition, edited by Shelby M. Harrison and F. Emerson Andrews, was published as a book in 1946. These activities continued when the Russell Sage Foundation trustees launched the Foundation Center Library as an independent entity under Andrews' direction. Now known as the Foundation Center, this organization is still by far the most important data-gathering organization in its field.  

The Foundation's early program utilized yet another administrative device: investment in limited-dividend (in effect, in privately subsidized) model housing. Between 1909 and 1922 it
invested nearly a sixth of its capital—$1,400,000—in the Sage Foundation Homes Company (a separate corporation whose directors were a subcommittee of the Foundation’s Board of Trustees), which developed Forest Hills Gardens in the New York City Borough of Queens. Forest Hills Gardens succeeded in producing an influential curvilinear street pattern, excellent recreational spaces, and high-quality town-house designs suitable for suburban areas with small gardens. It entirely failed, however, to earn any profit for the Foundation (in fact it lost about $300,000). It also failed to provide low-cost housing for working people.41

Finally, during its first forty years the Russell Sage Foundation also provided substantial funds to existing organizations—again, organizations led by members of its Board. It contributed more than $1 million to the New York Charity Organization Society (Robert W. de Forest, President); $350,000 to the Brooklyn Bureau of Charities (Alfred Treadway White, President); and nearly $900,000 to the State Charities Aid Association of New York (headed by Louisa Lee Schuyler). Between a third and a half of this money was for the largely successful educational and public health campaign against tuberculosis (for which an additional $115,000 went to the National Tuberculosis Association). Most of the rest supported committees (usually committees headed by de Forest’s long-term associate Lawrence Veiller) concerned with housing and with the supervision of such public institutions as criminal courts and homes for children. These grants were the clearest possible response to a concern raised by Louisa Lee Schuyler after the first meeting of the Foundation’s trustees: “how to strengthen and not to weaken existing organizations.”42 Once again the personal and institutional interconnections were tightly interwoven and highly complex. De Forest continued to serve as President of the New York Charity Organization Society until his death in 1931. Schuyler had founded the State Charities Aid Association of New York. Alfred T. White, who became a trustee in 1919, continued as President of the Brooklyn Bureau of Charities until his death in 1921. Veiller, de Forest’s old associate, headed the housing and criminal courts committees of the New York Charity Organization Society.
Professionalizing Social Work

The early Russell Sage Foundation did take the lead in professionalizing social work by acting to improve knowledge, education, organization, and supervision in the field. In social work it mounted many efforts through its own facilities. But it also made many of its contributions through ostensibly independent agencies.

Reasoning that the professionalization of social work required a secure body of knowledge and new schools for social workers, the Foundation's leaders quickly made research grants to social work schools in Boston, Chicago, St. Louis, and New York. When these grants produced disappointing research, the Foundation itself set up a variety of research departments—Charity Organization, Child Hygiene, Recreation, Child Helping, Consumer Credit, and Social Surveys—staffing them with experienced researchers drawn more from organized charity than from the universities.43

To support researchers in these departments the Foundation also established a major research library, a Department of Statistics, and an editorial office. By 1917, these facilities made the Russell Sage Foundation the "best place in the country for the study of practical problems," as de Forest described the ambition. The library, which built on materials previously assembled by the New York Charity Organization Society, gathered together one of the best collections of works on poverty and dependency, on charitable and social service agencies, on public health, and on foundations in the United States.44 The statistical department, under the leadership of Leonard P. Ayres, set national standards for the collection, analysis, and presentation of data.

The Russell Sage Foundation moved effectively to confirm its leading position in social work. It began by engaging the nation's leading caseworker, Mary E. Richmond, to set up what became the Charity Organization Department in 1909. This assignment capped a long career during which Richmond had risen from clerk to general secretary of Glenn's Baltimore Charity Organization Society, and had moved on to straighten out the severe problems of the COS in Philadelphia. At Russell Sage, Mary Richmond produced classic social work textbooks, including Social Diagnosis (1917);
What Is Social Case Work (1922); and (with Fred S. Hall) Child Marriages (1925) and Marriage and the State (1929); and a collection of essays and reflections, The Long View (1930). She also directed the production of a long series of pamphlets and model forms for private charity organization societies and their caseworkers, and developed methods for training social workers. Altogether, according to Roy Lubove, “no single figure made a greater contribution to social work theory than Miss Richmond.”

As John H. Ehrenreich has written, Richmond’s approach was fundamentally “sociological,” because she insisted that caseworkers view each client “as having an objective economic or social problem.” It was the caseworker’s job to identify this problem, then to intervene “in the environment to change it or to enable the client to wend his or her way through it,” as much as it was the caseworker’s task to change the client himself. Social Diagnosis, Ehrenreich concludes, both “marks the beginning of the modern era in casework” and sums up the views of “the pre-psychiatric generation of social workers.” Richmond did not emphasize individual psychological problems, and did not support the movement to employ psychiatry in social work. Although she vigorously upheld individual casework as more effective than the “wholesale” approach of social reform in a famous dispute with University of Pennsylvania economist Simon Patten, Richmond advocated an approach to casework that was entirely consistent with de Forest and Mrs. Sage’s general, environmental emphasis on “the improvement of social conditions”—and with their emphasis on individual responsibility.

In addition to its contributions to casework, Mary Richmond’s Charity Organization Department (and the Russell Sage Foundation in general) also took the lead in the effort to raise the level of social work as a profession in the United States. Richmond’s department published manuals and texts by many experts on the creation and management of many social service organizations. A few titles and authors indicate the range and auspices of these works: New York COS General Secretary Edward T. Devine’s lengthy Report on the Desirability of Establishing an Employment Bureau in the City of New York (1909), Francis H. McLean’s
handbook on *The Formation of Charity Organization Societies in Smaller Cities* (1910), the classic *Handbook of Settlements* by Boston settlement house leaders Robert A. Woods and Albert J. Kennedy (1911), Alexander Johnson's *The Almshouse* (1911), and Joanna C. Colcord's *Your Community* (1939).

Several other Russell Sage departments worked closely with the Charity Organization Department, and they produced similar manuals on the management of institutions. The Department of Child Hygiene and its successor, the Department of Recreation, produced such characteristic titles as *Community Center Activities* by Clarence A. Perry (1916). The Department of Education published *The Medical Inspection of Schools* by Luther H. Gulick and Leonard P. Ayres (1908). The Department of Child Helping published works on the management of institutions for children, until its increasingly strong emphasis on the management of institutions led to its reorganization, in 1925, as the Department of Delinquency and Penology.

Under Richmond between 1909 and 1929, and then under Colcord until 1945, the Russell Sage Foundation's Charity Organization Department also provided professional training for social workers, consulting advice for social work agencies, and support for the chief national organizations in the field. Richmond accepted her post at Russell Sage only when Glenn assured her that the Foundation would leave caseworkers to organize and control their own national association. "Accordingly," she later wrote, "the task of organizing new societies and reorganizing old ones has been in the hands of a national body known as the American Association for Organizing Family Social Work."

In practice, the Russell Sage Foundation underwrote the tasks of "organizing new societies and reorganizing old ones" in social work. Fred S. Hall, Assistant Director of the Charity Organization Department, produced the voluminous *Social Work Yearbook* for the American Association of Social Workers annually between 1929 and 1945. Under Ayers and his successors the Foundation's Statistics Department provided a national service to professional social workers and their private and public employers by gathering data on the qualifications, activities, and compensation of
social workers. Through its support of the National Conference of Social Work and the National Social Work Council, the Foundation promoted annual gatherings of social workers. The papers of John Glenn and Shelby Harrison are replete with discussions of arrangements for the annual meetings of the social work profession. Glenn, Harrison, Mary Richmond, Joanna Colcord, Fred Hall, Clarence Perry, and several others at the Russell Sage Foundation had earned positions of national leadership through years of hard work and careful judgment, but the Foundation's support for the fledgling national institutions of social work certainly gave their words added force in debates within the field.

In addition to work regularly conducted through its own departments, the Russell Sage Foundation supported the developing social work profession by sponsoring studies of social problems, social phenomena, and legislative initiatives that were of interest to social work leaders across the nation. Such studies dealt with disaster relief, homelessness, household management, the "broken family," unemployment relief, and the standard of living. Typically, the Foundation followed the completion of one of these studies by convening a conference in its facilities and/or a session at an appropriate annual meeting of social workers to discuss the results.

The Foundation also sought to establish high professional standards for social work education through its critical support of the New York School of Social Work, to which it provided use of its library, classrooms, and office space in a new West Wing Building that it built for the school and opened in 1931, and through the contribution of several hundred thousand dollars for the education of social workers from the Charity Organization Society of New York. At various times the Foundation also contributed to fledgling social work schools in St. Louis, Chicago, and Boston, and at Atlanta University in Atlanta.

To make certain that high standards were spread to social workers across the United States, the Foundation also devoted a good deal of its resources to professional associations in the field. It supported the National Conference of Social Work and the National Social Work Council with grants of funds and of space in its building. It enabled the American Association of Social Workers to
undertake studies of the job market and to maintain a placement service. It made similar grants of funds and space to organizations that represented several social work specialties, including the Family Welfare Association of America, the American Association of Hospital Social Workers, the Welfare Council of New York City, and the National Association of Legal Aid Associations. At least two of the specialized national social work associations, the Child Welfare League of America and the Social Work Publicity Council, began as Russell Sage Foundation Departments.47

Aid to the blind was the one field in which Mrs. Sage insisted that the Foundation provide direct assistance to individuals and operating agencies, such as the New York Association for the Blind. But here, too, it pursued the broader Charity Organization Society agenda by supporting campaigns to prevent disability and encourage self-sufficiency, both through agencies devoted specifically to the blind and through the New York and Brooklyn Charity Organization Societies.

Between 1907 and 1940 the Russell Sage Foundation largely failed to support black social work agencies. Allen Eaton and Shelby M. Harrison's *Bibliography of Social Surveys* failed to cite W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Philadelphia Negro* as a precedent for the Pittsburgh Survey (though it did include it in an extensive list of surveys of "Negroes").48 The Foundation did, however, make several small grants to organizations that served the black community. Both through the Foundation and through one of its earliest grants, it supported the Survey magazine studies of the appalling housing conditions in black neighborhoods in Washington, D.C. And its leaders' correspondence included discussions of the problems facing black social workers in the segregated South.49 The Foundation provided somewhat more support for studies of the problems of European immigrants, both through small grants of money and more significant staff contributions to a preliminary study of migration by the National Research Council (1923–1925), and through the long-term work of staff member Allen H. Eaton, exemplified in his book, *Immigrant Gifts to American Life*, published by the Foundation in 1932.50 But in general the Foundation emphasized studies of matters social, economic, and environmental,
ignoring the cultural and the psychological. Its leaders were never in sympathy with the psychiatric turn in social work—and that, no doubt, is another of the reasons why its early program has been little remembered.

One of the Foundation’s most important in-house research efforts now seems quite distinct indeed from the charity organization or social work movements, although it grew directly out of charity organization as the early Russell Sage Foundation leaders understood it. This was the economic and labor research carried out by Mary van Kleeck through what became the Department of Industrial Studies.

Van Kleeck began to examine women’s working conditions in 1905, a year after her graduation from Smith College, as a fellow of the College Settlements Association. She soon had Russell Sage Foundation support, and by 1910 had joined the Foundation.\(^{51}\) One of her earliest studies, of *Women in the Bookbinding Trade*, played an important part both in the passage of legislation prohibiting the employment of women in factories between the hours of 10 P.M. and 6 A.M. When this legislation was challenged, Louis Brandeis and Josephine Goldmark used extensive quotations from van Kleeck’s book in the historic “sociological” brief that persuaded the New York Court of Appeals to reverse an earlier decision “in the light of all the facts and arguments now presented to us... many of which are in addition to those formerly presented... because they have been developed by study and investigation during the years” since that decision was made.\(^{52}\) Van Kleeck continued such studies until World War I, when she took a leave from the Foundation to establish the Women’s Bureau in the Department of Labor.

After 1918 van Kleeck broadened the program of the Industrial Relations Division to include studies of unemployment (she played a significant role in the President’s Conference on Unemployment in 1921), of collective bargaining, and, in the 1930s, of ways to introduce economic planning into the American system. Her work in this field was notable in view of the fact that other foundations (including the various Rockefeller foundations and the Commonwealth Fund) shied away from the controversies inherent in the
field, especially after John D. Rockefeller was severely criticized in Congress for attempting to use his wealth to interfere in industrial relations even as his Colorado mines were in the midst of bloody labor conflict. By the early 1930s van Kleeck was advocating policies and viewpoints that were not acceptable to the Foundation's trustees: they continued to employ her but began to place a disclaimer in every Foundation book stating that the Foundation approved the methods but not necessarily the conclusions of the work. She and her staff continued, however, to run one of the Foundation's most productive departments.

Still another early Russell Sage department undertook economic studies that derived from the broad charity organization outlook. The Department of Remedial Loans, later renamed the Department of Consumer Credit Studies produced, under Arthur H. Ham, Leon Henderson, and Rolf Nugent, a steady stream of books and pamphlets on the abuse of credit and of possible reforms. The wide range of the proposals it offered is indicated by the titles of its publications: The Co-operative People's Bank (1914), A Credit Union Primer (1914, 1923, 1930); The Regulation of Pawnbroking (1924); The Provident Loan Society of New York (1930); and The English Hire-Purchase Act (1940).

**Conclusion**

It is little wonder that a program that operated through such a diverse array of instrumentalities in the service of long-forgotten conceptions of social organization has been poorly understood. The fact is that by 1919, the Russell Sage Foundation had established itself at the center of a broad and ambitious movement of social research, institution building, and political action. Through its position (and through the positions of its leaders) in the charity organization and related movements, through its actions, through other organizations both new and established, through the books it published, and through *The Survey*, it exerted a good deal of influence over discussions of social reform. It identified several matters for investigation: housing; public health;
the conditions of work for men, women, and children in industry; the development of the social work profession; education; consumer credit; and foundations. It identified investigators and institutions whose work on these matters it would support and publish, and publicized their findings. By 1914 it had assembled, in Leonard Ayres, Mary Richmond, Mary van Kleeck, Luther H. Gulick, Lawrence Veiller, and others, perhaps the best group of empirical social researchers in the nation.

By 1914 the Russell Sage Foundation was also playing a significant role in the formulation of social policy. Its method was to gather small groups of imaginative people and encourage them to develop—in close consultation with corporate lawyers like de Forest and Glenn—plans for the voluntary reform of private nonprofit institutions and for the legislative reform of public agencies and of certain kinds of private conduct. Leading policy advocates were eager to participate, and not only because the Foundation might commit significant amounts of money to the study of their ideas. Its position at the center of the broad, national, charity organization and social welfare reform movement also placed it in a favorable position to gain a hearing not only from Congress and the state legislatures, but also from local governments and the courts—and, equally importantly, from the private, nonprofit organizations that carried out so many social policies at the time.

Diverse though they were, the early Russell Sage Foundation studies shared the premise that a great deal of poverty and "dependency" was the result, not of human failings or of God's will, but of bad living and working conditions. De Forest and Veiller had argued that New York City's worst tenement houses bred tuberculosis, and led a successful movement to improve their sanitation, ventilation, and exposure to sunlight. Veiller continued to be one of the most active and effective advocates of housing reform through the teens and twenties.

In other fields, Mary van Kleeck's work and Elizabeth Beardsley Butler's Women and the Trades provided evidence that long hours and harsh working conditions undermined women's health in a successful effort to obtain legislative regulation of women's
hours and working conditions. Ayres contributed, during his brief period at the Foundation, both to the national movement toward compulsory school attendance laws and toward the standardization of the practices of school administration.\footnote{The Foundation's consumer loan reform campaigns were also quite successful. And through Glenn and others, the Foundation played a significant role in the legitimization of private foundations.}

The Pittsburgh Survey volumes made perhaps the greatest contribution. Crystal Eastman's \textit{Work Accidents and the Law} was, according to historian Robert Bremner, "the most eloquent and most effective in promoting reform" of "all the books and articles dealing with the operation of the employers' liability system."\footnote{John Fitch's \textit{Steel Workers} and Margaret F. Byington's \textit{Homestead: Households of a Mill Town} supported the movement to end the steel industry's twelve-hour day and seven-day week.}

Finally, in its early years the Russell Sage Foundation exerted leadership both on the leading institutions of organized private charity in the United States and on the emerging profession of social work. In this effort de Forest, Glenn, Louisa Lee Schuyler, and other trustees lent the prestige of their positions as leaders of some of the nation's most important private charitable boards, while Mary Richmond, Joanna Colcord, and others lent their experience as administrators and analysts for the same organizations.

De Forest and his associates were glad to support the Foundation's social policy research because they thought it better to prevent sickness, injury, or death—or to force employers and landlords to insure against those risks—than to seek private funds for the aid of the sick and crippled and the relief of widows. They supported the professionalization of social work and the encouragement of high administrative standards because they thought available resources ought to be used effectively.

John Ehrenreich and other recent historians have questioned the significance of the legislation the early Russell Sage Foundation studies encouraged as merely the "rationalization and regulation of the society to ward off endemic crisis."\footnote{But whatever value we finally place on the social legislation of the years between 1909 and 1914, it is clear that a remarkably large portion of that legislation}
was developed by the Russell Sage Foundation and its allies in the charity organization movement.


7. Among the letters and papers in this collection are Mrs. Sage's tribute to Mrs. Emma Booth Tucker, which is included with a letter to Mrs. Sage from Alice Lewis Johnson of the Salvation Army, dated December 1, 1903; Salvation Army founder William Booth wrote her a thank-you for her tribute on March 7. Mrs. Sage's article, "Opportunities and Responsibilities of Leisured Women," published in the *North American Review* (November, 1905, pp. 712–721), acknowledges the work of the Salvation Army. In 1913, several years after creating the Russell Sage Foundation, Mrs. Sage gave $5,000 to the Salvation Army but turned down requests for as much as $1,000,000 for a memorial to William Booth. This can be seen from typed notes on an envelope, postmarked March 19, 1913, addressed to Mrs. E.L. Todd; and from a letter from Edward Underwood to Mrs. Sage, dated April 17, 1913; the reply from Mrs. Sage's secretary of April 19, 1913; and a letter from Evangeline Booth to Mrs. Sage, dated October 12, 1914. Memoranda from Robert W. de Forest, dated October 10, 1906, and July 31, 1907, describe her ways of making gifts to individuals, to the Charity Organization Society, and
to a university, Russell Sage Foundation Papers, Rockefeller Archive Center. Professor Ruth Crocker of Auburn University is working on a project entitled Margaret Olivia Sage: A Life.

8. Letters to Mrs. Sage, Russell Sage Foundation Papers, Rockefeller Archive Center.


11. Memorandum, de Forest to Mrs. Sage, December 10, 1906, Russell Sage Foundation Papers, Rockefeller Archive Center.


13. For an account of the way in which business, professional, and institutional leaders like these had worked to influence the study of social problems in the United States in the 1880s and 1890s, see Thomas L. Haskell, The Emergence of Professional Social Science: The American Social Science Association and the Nineteenth-Century Crisis of Authority (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977).


15. Ibid, p. 52.


19. Quoted in Katz, In the Shadow of the Poorhouse, p. 82.

20. Lubove, Trattner, and Katz all, in the books cited in the previous three notes, take for granted the evolution of local charity organization societies into casework-oriented family service societies.


22. David C. Hammack, Power and Society: Greater New York at the Turn of the


24. Typed, unsigned memorandum on de Forest Brothers stationary, headed “Confidential” and dated January 3, 1907, Community Service Society of New York Archives, Columbia University.


26. Ibid.


29. Lagemann, Private Power for the Public Good, chapters 3 and 5.


35. See Chambers, Paul U. Kellogg and the Survey. Kellogg described some aspects of this relationship in a remarkable letter to de Forest on July 23, 1926. “Our philosophies may be different and sometimes we have
broken wholeheartedly in a matter of policy. But we’ve learned
tolerance from you, and your accommodation to what you whimsically
call the ‘conscious development of our consciences’ may, in the long run,
be more to your liking than the mealiness ladled out to a man in your
position, in some other quarters. I think the event has proved that you
were on the wrong tack when you clung to the old employers’ liability
system, but on the right one when your tolerance made it possible for
us to break ground for workmen’s compensation in our first large scale
study of work accidents and the law in Pittsburgh. On the other hand,
our war time experience with public coercions made me, who had been
hot on the scent of social control, see with fresh eyes, the values in con-
serving individual civil rights which you had always stood out for.”
Survey Associates Papers, Social Welfare History Archives, the
University of Minnesota.

36. See Allen Eaton and Shelby M. Harrison, A Bibliography of Social Surveys
(New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1930), and the records of the
Foundation’s Survey Department, Russell Sage Foundation Papers,
Rockefeller Archive Center.

37. Leonard P. Ayres, The Cleveland School Survey (Summary Volume)
(Cleveland: Survey Committee of the Cleveland Foundation, 1917).
Ayres is an interesting figure who has received remarkably little atten-
tion from historians. See Lawrence Cremin, The Transformation of the
University Press, pp. 137, 199–202, 205; and Elwood P. Cubberly, Public

38. Robert W. de Forest and Lawrence Veiller, eds., The Tenement House

papers are widely scattered; many are contained in the Community
Service Society of New York Papers at Columbia University, and a
number of interesting letters are to be found in the George McAneny
Papers at Princeton. The most extensive discussion of Veiller’s career is
to be found in Roy Lubove, The Progressives and the Slums: Tenement House
Reform in New York City, 1890–1917 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh
Press, 1962). The trustees’ gift in lieu of pension is described in minutes
of the Trustees’ Meeting, May 16, 1940; in minutes of the Executive
Committee Meeting June 9, 1948; in letters of Shelby M. Harrison to
Veiller, May 20, 1940; and of Lawson Purdy to Veiller, March 4, 1943.
Russell Sage Foundation Papers, Rockefeller Archive Center.

40. See F. Emerson Andrews’ book of recollections, Foundation Watcher

41. Glenn, Brandt, and Andrews, Russell Sage Foundation, provides a good
extensive statement by Clarence A. Perry for the Neighborhood Planning Committee for Forest Hills and Vicinity, March 10, 1936, containing several long excerpts from a press release dictated by John Glenn on September 4, 1911, provides additional background. This statement is in the Russell Sage Foundation Archives at the Rockefeller Archive Center.

42. Copy, letter of Louisa Lee Schuyler to R. W. de Forest, April 27, 1907. Schuyler did stress in this letter her concern that the Foundation not allow recipient organizations to become dependent on its grants. Trustee Gertrude S. Rice similarly suggested (on the same date) that the Russell Sage Foundation should “assist some of the existing organizations which have inaugurated important work, and could carry forward the work more rapidly, if they were not hampered by lack of funds.” Both letters are in the Russell Sage Foundation Archives, Rockefeller Archive Center.


44. There is no adequate study of the library developed by the Russell Sage Foundation between 1907 and 1947. Based on the library of the Charity Organization Society of New York and carefully developed through the teens, twenties, and thirties, the library provided the initial collection for the Foundation Center and the New York (now Columbia University) School of Social Work and included books that went to the New York Public Library, Columbia University, and the City College of New York when the Foundation reorganized its programs after 1947.

45. Lubove, The Professional Altruist, p. 45.


47. Biographical and departmental details are provided in Glenn, Brandt, and Andrews, Russell Sage Foundation.


There is no adequate study of Mary van Kleeck’s life. The handiest sketch is in Edward J. James, ed., Notable American Women; Guy Alchon provides an interesting account of her work on unemployment in The Invisible Hand of Planning. A very large collection of van Kleeck’s papers, including many of the records of the Russell Sage Foundation’s Industrial Relations Department, is in the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College. The early records of the Commonwealth Fund in the Rockefeller Archive Center contain records of extensive discussions of the pros and cons of pursuing a program of studies of industrial relations at a time when foundation donors were likely to be at odds with labor leaders and many legislators.

Glenn, Brandt, and Andrews, Russell Sage Foundation, p. 156.

Abraham Flexner of the General Education Board told Ayers that the Board was thinking of launching “scientific research: on elementary education ‘because of the work that has been done on it by the Sage Foundation.’” Letter, Ayres to Glenn, June 7, 1915, Russell Sage Foundation Papers, Rockefeller Archive Center.

Bremner, From the Depths, p. 253.

Ehrenreich, The Altruistic Imagination, p. 29. Compare Katz, In the Shadow of the Poorhouse. Bremner described the Pittsburgh Survey as “by far the most important of the prewar social investigations.... To its influence Jane Addams attributed ‘the veritable zeal for reform’ that agitated the United States between 1909 and 1914”; From the Depths, p. 156. John F. McClymer offers an extensive critique of this view: “missionary zeal,” he writes, “did pervade the Survey’s staff, but they borrowed their techniques of investigation from another part of their cultural heritage: industrial capitalism”; War and Welfare: Social Engineering in America, 1890–1925 (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980), p. 32 and chapter 2 passim.
A Road Not Taken:
The Independent Social Research Institute

David C. Hammack

By the time of America's entry into World War I, the Russell Sage Foundation's broadly conceived efforts on behalf of the charity organization movement had made it not only a think tank and organizational nursery for social work and social welfare but also the nation's pioneer independent institute for social research. After the war, the Foundation's trustees might have chosen to use newly available resources to strengthen its social science research program and to offer long-term employment to unusually productive researchers. Such a move might have encouraged other independent social science research institutes and helped establish the institute as an important agency for the prosecution not simply of social research but of social science as a discipline.

A well-endowed independent social science research institute controlled by senior scholars would have given social scientists significant additional authority and autonomy. Instead, the Russell Sage trustees left the social scientists to make their careers in university departments. They continued to call on them only to
carry out specific projects or to provide advice on specific problems. The trustees themselves retained control over the Foundation's funds.

Although they did not do it, the trustees of the Russell Sage Foundation might very well have decided to make a significant commitment to social science in 1921. At that time the institutions of social science were still in formation. The twin processes of specialization and professionalization had only recently fractured the traditional unity of serious, informed discussion about society and politics. As late as the 1890s, many of the best students of society were amateurs who supported themselves on accumulated capital or through legal, government, or clerical employment. But as Edward Shils has noted, the universities were rapidly attracting the most productive scholars. And the scholars were gaining prestige within the universities, where they were dividing themselves into distinct departments. By 1905 all the major social science disciplines had established professional associations and journals to evaluate, by peer review, the work these departments produced. Increasingly, a career in social science was defined by graduate school, academic employment, and refereed publications.²

Thus described, the disciplines appear to have enjoyed autonomy but to have run the risk of isolation and inbreeding. Indeed, recent historians of the social sciences have argued that this emerging pattern reflected the professionalization of social research. According to Thomas Haskell, academic social scientists emphasized the virtues of peer review in their successful effort during these years to gain authority over the creation and certification of social knowledge.³ Yet peer review does not require university dominance, and American universities stress teaching and community service at least as much as they stress scholarship.⁴

In any case, the intellectual dominance of the university was new in 1921. It was also not yet firmly established. In the United States, other institutions—government statistical, economic, education, and labor bureaus; charitable organizations; religious and social reform organizations; museums and libraries; industrial laboratories; and some law firms—all provided employment for social researchers.⁵ In other nations, extra-university institutions long
supported the most advanced social research: government institutes in France and the Soviet Union, the civil service in Great Britain. Between 1900 and the early 1920s it seemed likely that an American equivalent to the European government bureau or state-sponsored institute for advanced study would emerge: the private research institute. The Marine Biological Laboratory, established at Woods Hole in 1888, provided perhaps the first example. By 1900 the American Museum of Natural History and the New York Botanical Garden had become significant research institutions; under the leading scholars Franz Boas and Frederic W. Putnam, for example, the museum was sponsoring several important anthropological expeditions each year. The Rockefeller Institution for Medical Research (1901), the Carnegie Institution in Washington (initially involved in social as well as natural science, 1902), and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1905) carried the institute idea into new fields.

At the outset the Russell Sage Foundation seemed destined to join this group. Within ten years of its creation in 1907, it had become the pioneer independent institute for social research. Foundation-sponsored efforts, such as the Pittsburgh Survey, Shelby Harrison’s Springfield Survey and his leadership in the national survey movement, and Mary van Kleck’s studies of the working conditions of women and children were then at the forefront of social research in the United States. Leonard P. Ayres, Director of the Department of Statistics between 1912 and 1920, was a national leader in the application of statistical methods to social research. Harrison, van Kleck, and Ayres had been permanent members of the Foundation’s staff, enjoying the assurance of long-term if not necessarily life-time employment. No university had a larger or more distinguished group of social researchers.

By the end of World War I, moreover, the Russell Sage Foundation found it necessary to reconsider its program. Mrs. Sage died in 1918, leaving a legacy of $5 million that increased the Foundation’s endowment to $15,000,000. The Foundation’s ill-starred Forest Hills Gardens housing venture was rapidly drawing to an end; although it cost the Foundation about $350,000, its sale in 1922 brought nearly $3,250,000 back into the principal account. Half of
the endowment was now free for the support of new programs. And it was clear that new programs, or at least new people, would be needed if the newly available funds were to be put to effective use. Wartime experiences had persuaded several Foundation workers, including statistician Leonard P. Ayres, consumer loan and pawnshop reformer Arthur H. Ham, and Southern Appalachian specialist John C. Campbell to leave permanently in 1918 and 1919. More generally, the war had brought to an end the "high" Progressive Era that the Foundation's programs had done so much to define. If the Foundation was to continue to play a leading part in American life, it would have to move in new directions.

The Foundation might well have decided to commit its available resources to the expansion of social research activities in 1921. Its in-house research activities had been particularly successful and were bringing increasing recognition and influence. Ayres had become a leader in the American Statistical Association; Harrison had won a place on the original board of the Social Science Research Council; van Kleck had developed a national reputation in the study of unemployment and of women's work in industry. Harrison, van Kleck, and others at the Foundation were to make important contributions to the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. In 1921 the Foundation might well have built on this early record to create a highly influential group of researchers and a model institution in which social research was tied more closely to social policy than to undergraduate and graduate teaching.

Such a move would have been in tune with the times. The late teens and early twenties saw the creation of a number of research institutions not directly under university control. In 1927 the Institute for Government Research (1916) merged with the Institute for Economic Research (1922) to form the Brookings Institution. The National Research Council, created in 1916 "to coordinate the work of American scientists during the war," expanded after the war to support work in psychology and anthropology as well as in the natural sciences. Early in 1920 a six-year effort by Wesley Clair Mitchell and other leading economists led to the establishment of the National Bureau of Economic Research. "A research organization, wholly disconnected from any work of propaganda," the
NBER was designed, its creators proclaimed, "to get at facts which are difficult to obtain and which require scientific research and dispassionate study." In 1923 the Social Science Research Council joined these new organizations; at first it seemed possible that it would develop its own in-house research activities.

As Barry Karl has shown, the people who created these organizations increasingly accepted the proposition that only "the collection of social research information in an environment sufficiently aloof from problems of social reform and politics" could give social research the "neutral comprehensiveness" necessary to render it "universally useful." In the aftermath of the interference of university trustees with faculty during World War I, Thorstein Veblen was by no means the only one who believed that university departments could find it difficult, if not impossible, to be neutral. By 1923 at least fourteen non-university institutes were carrying on important social research.

All this activity suggested that independent social research institutes were about to become more significant in the United States. Businesses and foundations seemed ready to join such individuals as Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, Robert Brookings, Mrs. Sage, and Anna and Edward Harkness in providing the necessary funds. Wartime experience had persuaded many business leaders that such research was of great value to the managers of economic and social affairs. The experience of managing large corporations in an unpredictable economic and political environment drove other business leaders to the same conclusion.

The 1920s, moreover, saw the first great expansion of industrial research laboratories. The General Electric Research Laboratory had nearly 300 employees in 1917; as historian Louis Galambos has noted, by the end of the war GE and DuPont "had demonstrated the value of company investments in 'R and D'; the wartime mobilization program had popularized these efforts and wartime profits gave firms the leeway to experiment with new programs." A considerable number of large business firms (including banks, manufacturers of capital and consumer goods, advertising agencies and distributors of consumer goods, publishers of popular magazines, and providers of financial informa-
tion) also had their own social research bureaus by the early 1920s. But it was becoming widely accepted that social research could most fruitfully be sought through an independent agency like the National Bureau of Economic Research. Two new foundations, the Commonwealth Fund (1918) provided by Anna Harkness and guided by her son, Edward, and the Twentieth Century Fund donated by Edward A. Filene (1919), were just beginning to support their own investigations into questions of social policy.

Edward Shils has suggested that one reason why the private research institutes did not become more important is that "they were simply too few in number." But they were not really so few. In 1923 Laurence K. Frank reported to Beardsley Ruml, who was about to launch a major social research grant-making program for the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund, that there were as many social science research institutes as there were universities offering high-quality graduate programs in the social science fields, and that an even larger number of business firms had set up specialized offices for "conducting social research." Independent research institutes might have become more important for the development of social science in the 1920s if the people who controlled the Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Russell Sage Foundations had decided to place greater emphasis on them, or if other backers had been persuaded to come forward.

Hence, the Russell Sage trustees' 1921 non-decision takes on a larger significance. In 1921 the Russell Sage trustees had the resources to undertake a major new initiative. They might have chosen to strengthen the Foundation's research program and offered long-term employment to unusually productive researchers who had well-established ties to the community of social service administrators and policy analysts. These moves would have built on the Foundation's already considerable research achievements and increased its influence in the social sciences. They might have encouraged other independent research agencies to move in the same direction.

The result might have been a very different early history for sociology and perhaps other social science disciplines. Sociology had been organized as a distinct discipline only in 1905, was not yet
firmly established in independent university departments, and was receiving very little support from the still very small university research budgets. In 1921 universities were providing the discipline with very little support. At this point, a relatively modest sum, strategically placed, might have made a notable difference.

Most significantly, an independently endowed research institute might have enabled a group of social researchers to develop their discipline with more intellectual independence than they actually enjoyed. It is important to recall that social scientists have rarely controlled their own research agendas. Social research has always been expensive. Apart from occasional sabbaticals, time released from teaching, and graduate fellowships, universities did not support it. Until the 1950s most of the funds for social science research, as for academic research in all fields, came from a small number of foundations, notably those set up by Rockefeller and Carnegie.

The social scientists did not enjoy the control over these research funds that was early accorded to their colleagues in the natural sciences. As early as 1919, according to Stanley Coben, "leaders of the major scientific professional associations" persuaded the Rockefeller Foundation to provide $500,000 for postdoctoral fellowships through a National Research Council program "controlled by the academic scientists." Under Wickliffe Rose, the General Education Board contributed even larger sums to individual departments of mathematics and physics. A former professor of philosophy and history, Rose relied heavily on the advice of physicist Augustus Trowbridge and others. Rose himself did stipulate that large grants go to departments with international reputations and to those that emphasized "mathematical and quantitative techniques," but to a remarkable extent he and other foundation managers directed money to purposes identified by the scientists themselves. Such support enabled selected university departments to provide first-class research facilities and to attract concentrations of first-class scientists and students.

The social sciences were less favored. They received much less money from the great foundations than did the natural sciences, and the social scientists themselves had less to say about the money's use. Instead, the foundations placed responsibility for the
allocation of funds for social research in the hands of professional managers, and, with the notable exception of Beardsley Ruml at the Spelman Fund, foundation trustees kept their social research managers under very close watch. Ruml did decide to invest substantial amounts of Spelman dollars in university departments, especially at the University of Chicago. But even Ruml relied on the physicist Robert M. Yerkes, then at the National Research Council, to tell Mary van Kleck and other researchers connected with the social services that only university-based social scientists would be allowed to apply for Spelman Fund grants. In the case of the Russell Sage Foundation, the trustees themselves actually controlled many of the individual grants.

The result was that most large research projects continued to be defined not through an intellectual process internal to one or more of the social science disciplines but through bargaining among scholars, foundation managers, and trustees—each of whom had separate and distinct agendas. No wealthy individual, no foundation, no government agency was willing to end the bargaining process and turn a large sum over to the social scientists themselves. Until the late 1960s most foundation trustees continued to be business executives, lawyers, and charity administrators concerned with the practical solution of immediate problems. Critics have always charged that trustees saw to it that foundation-supported research did not threaten their economic or social interests. It would be more accurate to say that this pattern forced ambitious researchers to persuade laymen and generalists that their specialized, sometimes esoteric research proposals were likely to yield socially useful results.

The assertion that the social sciences had become professional and autonomous by the 1920s describes an important part of their history. Because the scholars were based in university departments and controlled training for the Ph.D. degree, foundation funds influenced their disciplines only indirectly. But the foundations themselves did not insist on the Ph.D., and they enabled researchers from outside the approved academic system to undertake widely influential work. More generally, they successfully insisted that the social science agenda emphasize empirical work
on practical problems rather than abstract work on broad questions of theory. Ruml used his independence at the Spelman Fund to precisely this purpose; as historian Robert Collins put it, Ruml's "hope was that the disciplinary boundaries separating sociology, ethnology, anthropology, psychology, history, political science, biology and economics could be broken down and that a body of knowledge and techniques—a 'social science'—could be created that would lend itself to immediate application in the solution of pressing social problems." The research staff of the Russell Sage Foundation, as it was constituted in 1921, was quite thoroughly devoted to "the solution of pressing social problems." None of its members had earned a Ph.D., and none was likely to undertake a highly abstract quest for systematic social science. Perhaps no group of social scientists was ready to put a large endowment to fruitful scholarly use. Yet a well-endowed independent social science research institute controlled by senior scholars would have given social scientists significant additional authority and autonomy, and made it possible for sociology in particular to develop more rapidly into a mature profession.

Hindsight, and the later history of the Foundation, suggests that the Russell Sage trustees missed an unusual opportunity in 1921. But they did not see it that way at the time. In 1921 the Russell Sage trustees were no more ready than the trustees of other foundations to turn large blocks of money over to social scientists. They did not ask how they could advance the fledgling discipline of sociology. In part, the explanation no doubt lay in the meager record of social scientific achievement. In part, it lay in the fact that other major actors had decided, in the first two or three years following World War I, to concentrate research efforts in universities rather than in free-standing institutes: these actors included Ruml at the Spelman Fund, George E. Vincent of the Rockefeller Foundation, Robert M. Yerkes at the National Research Council, and George Ellery Hale of the National Academy of Sciences. In part, the explanation lay in the preoccupations and preferences of the Russell Sage Foundation's current staff. And a very important part of the explanation lay in the desire of the Russell Sage Foundation's trustees to continue to exert a very direct control over the
Foundation’s activities. The trustees had a practical agenda of their own, and they were determined to use the Foundation’s funds to pursue it.

The Russell Sage Foundation and the “Associative State”

Instead of creating an independent social science research institute in 1921, the Russell Sage Foundation made a significant contribution to what historian Ellis Hawley has called the “Associative State.” As Hawley points out, Herbert Hoover made his reputation as Secretary of Commerce through his vigorous advocacy of the Administrative State. Hoover’s intention was to develop “trade associations, professional societies, and similar organizations among farmers and laborers,” and to encourage these associations to form “a type of private government.” Working through individual units (small as well as large corporations, family farms as well as farm cooperatives, credit unions as well as large banks), these associations would promote economic stability, steady economic growth, and ethical human relations. Hoover thought it essential that private organizations address these tasks voluntarily, before statist movements gathered sufficient political influence to seek similar ends through the coercive power of the federal government.

Throughout the 1920s, Hoover sought to use the Commerce Department and associated federal and private agencies to provide what he called a “general staff,” a “correspondence school,” and a “national coordinator” for the Associationist movement. Under his direction government officials greatly expanded their collection and dissemination of the economic statistics that made it possible for trade associations, manufacturers, municipalities, and others to understand their current situations and to plan for the future. Hoover and his chief associates repeatedly encouraged the associations to take the high ground and the long view. In speech after speech they appealed “to science, community, and morality to bridge the gap between the public interest” and self interest.

Hoover’s considerable success made him the obvious candidate for president in 1928; the 700 national associations of 1919, for
example, had tripled to more than 2,000 under his encouragement during the 1920s, and were active in nearly every corner of American life. The Great Depression discredited Hoover’s Association-alism and destroyed many of the private associations upon which it had been based. But the association experience trained many of the leaders who emerged in the New Deal, provided the model for the National Recovery Administration and many other New Deal initiatives, and gave a lasting definition to the rhetoric if not the activities of chambers of commerce and professional associations. The experience also left a substantial legacy of charitable organizations, including the organizations of the Community Chest/United Way movement, many religious and welfare federations, and many consolidated medical centers. Hawley, Barry Karl, and other recent historians of the 1920s and 1930s insist that Associationalism was part of the twisting path that has led to our modern mixed economy, not a dead end. In any case, Associationism dominated the 1920s.

Herbert Hoover was by no means the only one to suffer from the failure of Associationalism in the 1930s. In many respects Hoover had drawn his inspiration from the spirit of the Charity Organization Societies, and the Depression destroyed them too. Deprived by the Great Depression of funds just when they were most needed, private charities found many of their functions supplemented and even taken over by federal agencies. During the teens and twenties private charities across the United States had become accustomed to looking, more or less voluntarily, to the Russell Sage Foundation for leadership. Under the New Deal, the state agencies that took over many of the functions formerly handled by private agencies were required to look to federal agencies for explicit direction as well as for financing. In fact, most private agencies survived and many grew rapidly in later years, especially under the forced draft of the Great Society programs. But by 1940 the Russell Sage Foundation seemed to be a fading remnant of a world that no longer existed.\(^\text{32}\)

Foundations and research institutes played a central part in the private/public system of government Hoover sought to create. At the conclusion of the president's Conference on Unemployment in
1921, Hoover appointed the Committee on Unemployment and the Business Cycle and asked that committee to undertake securing the mass of technical information needed for the rational consideration of policies to manage the business cycle. As Guy Alchon has shown, the secretary of commerce insisted that the project must not be "dominated by pedantic economics" and must not be funded by the government. To influence corporate managers, it was "extremely critical that the matter should be carried out as a private undertaking under the guidance of... leading manufacturing and industrial leaders." Accordingly, Owen Young, president of General Electric, was made chairman of the Committee; the National Bureau of Economic Research was selected to gather the data; the Carnegie Corporation was persuaded to grant $50,000; and the Russell Sage Foundation contributed staff and facilities.33 Similarly, when Hoover became president in 1929 he turned to the Social Science Research Council for aid in securing the information needed to form social policies. The result was the private President's Research Committee on Recent Social Trends, supported by a grant of $560,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation and by people and facilities of the Russell Sage Foundation.34

It was not surprising that Hoover turned to the Russell Sage Foundation so frequently in his effort to gather the information necessary for rational public policy. By 1921 the Foundation was already playing a prominent role in the Associative State. Indeed, as a product of the private, voluntary charitable associations that had provided almost all welfare services in the United States, the Foundation had long anticipated Hoover's emphasis on cooperation among private organizations, based on what its leaders conceived to be mutual good will, rationality, and reliable, shared information.

The aims of the Charity Organization Society movement were so similar to those of Hoover's Associative State that it must be seen as one of his chief models. As its creators had intended, the Russell Sage Foundation had quickly taken on the role, within the COS movement, that Hoover sought in the nation as a whole. By 1921 Russell Sage was the nation's chief supporter and coordinator of research, program development, and management training
in the fields covered by private charity—and for many related policy areas, including housing, zoning, city planning, and labor relations; it was also a significant center for the analysis of measures concerning public health and the management of private welfare organizations. Its Departments of Charity Organization, Recreation, Child-Helping, Surveys and Exhibits, and Delinquency and Penology set standards for a wide variety of charitable activities, supported the chief national organizations in their fields, and published the standard texts.

The titles of the Foundation’s publications reflected its role in the private organized charity movement. One of the first, *The Formation of Charity Organization Societies in Smaller Cities* (1910), promoted private charitable associations to serve many of the same purposes that Hoover advocated for private trade associations. Subsequent titles considered the management of charitable institutions and practices, ranging from *Cottage and Congregate Institutions for Children* (1910), *Sources of Information on Play and Recreation* (1914), and *Elements of Record-Keeping for Child-Helping Organizations* (1915), to *Plans and Illustrations of Prisons and Reformatories* (1922). Mary Richmond’s text, *Social Diagnosis* (1917), was for twenty years the standard in its field and the Foundation’s best seller. The Foundation continued to promote cooperation and uniform standards among charities through the 1930s and into the 1940s. In 1929 it launched the annual *Social Work Yearbook*; during the Great Depression it issued manuals on *Emergency Work Relief* (1932) and *Cash Relief* as well as reports on *Work Relief in Germany* (1934) and *The WPA and Federal Relief Policy* (1943).

By the late teens the Russell Sage Foundation was contributing to the Associative State in a second way, by encouraging the reform of economic abuses. Its activities under this head were also closely allied with Hoover’s initiatives. Although the Foundation did not shrink from legislative intervention where that seemed necessary, it always sought first to promote its goals through voluntary actions by private organizations. In the long run, the Foundation hoped that “the main responsibility for protecting and promoting the interests of small borrowers and guarding against the return of the loan shark would be assumed by... the recent
organization of licensed lenders"—a government-induced trade association.\textsuperscript{35} Between 1917 and 1924 the Foundation's agents worked with the American Industrial Licensed Lenders Association to promote the adoption of the Uniform Small Loan Law by state legislatures; by 1925 eighteen states had enacted "fairly satisfactory legislation."\textsuperscript{36} Meanwhile the Foundation also encouraged the formation of credit unions as competitors to pawnshops by publishing three editions of a \textit{Credit Union Primer} (1914, 1923, and 1930) and by cooperating with the Credit Union National Extension Bureau created by E. A. Filene in 1922.

Mary van Kleeck also promoted economic reforms through her work in the Department of Industrial Studies. Her study of working conditions for women in the bookbinding trade was used in the brief, mentioned earlier, by Louis Brandeis and Josephine Goldmark that persuaded the New York Court of Appeals to uphold a law limiting the hours of work for women; her study provided, in fact, "the only information available about the occupation and the locality from which the test case had been taken."\textsuperscript{37} In 1917 munitions manufacturers had voluntarily asked her advice about conditions for women employees. In 1918 she went to Washington to establish the Women in Industry Service, the predecessor of the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor, and to promote voluntary improvement of living and working conditions for women employed in war industries.

The experience of mobilization during World War I ranked with the example of the charity organization movement as a source of inspiration to the advocates of voluntary planning and cooperation between government and private associations during the 1920s. Hoover developed his vision of the Associative State during his wartime service, first as head of the effort to maximize American farm output, then as manager of the postwar American relief effort in Belgium. In these activities he found himself working with people from Russell Sage. Mary van Kleeck was by no means the only figure from the Foundation to join the mobilization. John Glenn made a systematic effort to place Foundation personnel in war service; his most notable success was Leonard Ayres, who established and managed the army's statistical effort. Trustee
Charles Dyer Norton, one of the five members of the Red Cross War Council, worked to expand that organization during the war. Frederic A. Delano, soon to become a Russell Sage trustee, served on the Federal Reserve Board (the very model of the sort of association that Hoover promoted for every part of the American economy) during the war years; from that vantage point he participated in the economic management of the war, and he also watched with informed interest the effort to sort out the railroad traffic jam that wartime shipping arrangements created at the Port of New York. By the war’s end all these people shared Hoover’s enthusiasm for cooperative planning, and they were ready to expand the Foundation’s already well established commitment to that task.

In 1921 the Russell Sage Foundation was not only ready and able to emphasize policy analysis: it was willing and eager to join in the effort to remake the policies and the policymaking institutions of the United States. Certainly the Foundation’s staff was more inclined to stress policy analysis than pure research. At the war’s end only three members of the staff—Mary E. Richmond of the Charity Organization Department, Shelby M. Harrison of the Department of Surveys and Exhibits, and Mary van Kleeck of the Department of Industrial Studies—had the standing to offer serious proposals for new programs. Of these members, Richmond was too ill and too preoccupied with social work tasks already laid down to propose a new initiative. Harrison was preoccupied with the publication of the Springfield Survey, his three-volume successor to the Pittsburgh Survey, and was already moving toward administrative duties; he received the official title of Vice-General Director in 1924.

Van Kleeck was ready to suggest new projects. Indeed, her wartime experiences and her alarm at the labor conflict that swept the nation within a few months of the Armistice left her impatient to promote efficient, socially responsible management. On her return to the Foundation in the autumn of 1919 she prepared an extraordinary memorandum for John Glenn on “The immediate task of the Russell Sage Foundation in the improvement of industrial relations and conditions.”38 She stressed Russell Sage’s ability
to influence policy as well as its research accomplishments:

It is true that all Foundations must meet the criticism that, as they represent the benefactions of the rich, they are expected to be defenders of the present order and therefore cannot speak with the disinterestedness of an official public agency or the incisiveness of an organization supported by the workers only or by the employers.

The fact is, however, that a public institution, dependent upon funds appropriated by legislative action, is less free to express the minds of its staff on controversial questions than a private agency. In the case of the Foundation, the actual procedure in carrying our investigations and publishing reports, and the policy of the trustees in leaving to the staff the responsibility for facts and conclusions insure a statement and analysis as true, unprejudiced, and accurate as it is possible to attain through a trained staff, concerned only in describing truly the results of their observations.

The unique opportunity of the Foundation in the present industrial crisis is in its reputation for accuracy; its predominantly social point of view which leads its workers to center attention upon social effects in terms especially of the welfare of the less favorably situated groups in society; and its emphasis upon constructive efforts and methods of improvement.

Van Kleeck went on to propose a comprehensive program of research in the field of industrial relations. Persuaded of the reality of "the present industrial crisis," she emphasized research designed to solve immediate practical problems. Her arm of the Foundation, she wrote, ought to study such subjects as

1. Participation of workers in determining conditions of employment.
2. Employment management, or the organization of the company to represent it in all its relations with the workers.
3. Wage determination, especially methods of setting wages, and methods of determining changes in the cost of living as a factor in wage setting.
4. Methods of regularizing employment, including not only measures for dealing with unemployment in its more conspicuous out-of-work aspects, but methods of eliminating intermittency of employment.
5. Constructive measures for dealing with problems of racial groups in industry, including the economic status of Negroes and the problems of immigration.
6. Improvement of conditions directly affecting health.
7. Effect on output of reduction in hours of labor.
8. Desirable changes in conditions affecting women in industry.
Despite her enthusiasm for this new program, van Kleeck urged that the Foundation continue to support research in her field only at about the prewar level. And new expenditure of funds, she argued, ought to go instead to efforts to deal with immediate policy problems. "In view of rapid changes and the urgency of the present crisis," she argued, "publications should be issued more promptly in the form of pamphlets and articles rather than [as books]." The Foundation ought to establish a Bureau of Information "to help employers who wished to make progress in solving their problems; and who would be benefitted by access to the recorded experience of other plants." If the Foundation were to expand its activities, van Kleeck preferred to see it add new policy analysis and especially policy-advising and policy-coordinating functions.

In the next ten years van Kleeck emphasized the practical sort of projects she had described in 1919. At the same time, she played a leading part in Hoover's effort to create an Associative State. Her first series of studies evaluated company union and employee representation schemes introduced by John D. Rockefeller in the coal mines and the steel works operated by his Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. Later works in this series examined management-employee relations in the experimental Dutchess Bleachery, and in Edward A. and A. Lincoln Filene's Boston department store.

Van Kleeck's second body of work was a direct part of Hoover's effort to persuade business firms to provide steady, stable employment. As early as 1914–1915 she had sought to develop a system of employment statistics for New York State. In 1921 she served on the President's Conference on Unemployment, which Hoover chaired and controlled. As a member of the Committee on Unemployment and Business Cycles that Hoover appointed to carry on the work of the conference, van Kleeck played a leading part in the effort to develop a plan for the collection and publication of employment statistics for the United States. It was always her intention to use employment data to persuade business firms to pursue counter-cyclical hiring practices, to increase employment during recessions so as to reinforce buying power.
Shortly after van Kleeck submitted her memorandum the Foundation set up a staff committee chaired by Mary Richmond and including Glenn, Harrison, and recreation specialist Lee Hanmer to review its program and methods of work. This committee did not specifically support van Kleeck's proposed program, but it did endorse the Foundation's existing departmental organization as possessing "marked advantages over any other system yet adopted by similar bodies." The committee also restated the Foundation's commitment to research and policy analysis: "it is the duty of a foundation to bear truthful witness to the facts as it sees them, and to the needs of its time as it sees them, though, in so doing, it should strive always to demonstrate a spirit of quiet, thorough, and fair-minded inquiry."40

The Richmond committee did not suggest any particular research initiatives that might have utilized the Foundation's unassigned resources and strengthened the research work of its departments. Instead, it largely confined its attention to what it saw as the needs of social work. It did second van Kleeck's call for better diffusion of knowledge and coordination of activities. "A large part of the Foundation's energy might well be devoted," it concluded in somewhat Delphic phrases, "to helping the leading groups interested in one or another form of social advance to discover, step by step, the 'means whereby,' and then make these means better known."41 This was hardly a clarion call to a particular course of action. Yet the time was ripe for a new initiative.

1. The most thoughtful discussion of the quest for authority by professional social scientists is Thomas L. Haskell, The Emergence of Professional Social Science: The American Social Science Association and the Nineteenth-Century Crisis of Authority (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977). James Douglas and Aaron Wildavsky suggested, perhaps a bit wistfully, that "older foundations were essentially a body of people committed to some particular charitable service, and their financial resources were a necessary incidental that enabled them to live and pursue their vocation." "The Knowledgeable Foundation in the Era of Big Government, or, If Foundations Are Supposed to Do What Government Doesn't, What's Left?" in Russell Sage Foundation: The Future and the Past: Essays on Programs and the Annual Report,

3. Haskell, The Emergence of Professional Social Science.


5. Edward Shils has pointed out that the U.S. federal government did not follow the European example of significant government support for research in "The Order of Learning in the United States: The Ascendancy of the University," in Oleson and Voss, The Organization of Knowledge in Modern America, p. 22. Shils and Dorothy Ross, in "The Development of the Social Sciences," (Ibid., pp. 107–138), both argue for the inevitability of the rise of the university as the primary locus of scholarly research in the United States. But neither of these scholars pays much attention to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the U.S. Office of Education, or the Bureaus of Education and Labor in Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, and other states in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. On the U.S. Census see Margo J. Anderson, The American Census: A Social History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988). In 1923 Laurence K. Frank noted that "a considerable amount of first class scientific work is being done in government bureaus," including the Federal Reserve Board, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, Census Bureau, Tariff Commission, Interstate Commerce Commission,


21. Laurence K. Frank, "The Status of Social Science in the United States," Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund Papers, Rockefeller Archive Center. Frank listed the following independent social research institutes in this order: the Russell Sage Foundation; the Harvard Committee on Economic Research; the National Bureau of Economic Research; the National Industrial Conference Board; the Labor Bureau, Inc.; the Bureau of Industrial Research; the Institute for Food Research; the Workers Health Bureau; the Institute of Research in Land Economics and Public Utilities; the Economic Institute; the Bureau of Municipal Research; the Institute of Government Research and its associated Bureau of Public Personnel Administration; the Bureau of Social Hygiene; the Commonwealth Fund, then supporting the National Association for Mental Hygiene; the Public Education Association; the School for Social Work; and the Child Health Association.

York: Harper & Row, 1972). Writing from within the tradition of "professional" and "objective" social science, Bulmer draws a sharp distinction between the social research carried out within the charity organization framework and "social science." Oberschall, by contrast, emphasizes sociology's "link with the secular reform movement of the turn of the century: "without the active social support of various reform groups and favorable Progressive opinion, it is very doubtful that sociology as an autonomous academic discipline would have would have been established," (p. 204). Oberschall does agree with Bulmer that "because of this alliance" sociology "threatened to become no more than an applied professional discipline of the order of social work" (p. 204).


24. Former Russell Sage Foundation President Marshall Robinson showed that in 1939 foundations provided 20 percent and universities 80 percent of social science research funds; in 1956 foundations provided 22 percent, universities 47 percent, and the U.S. federal government 31 percent; in 1964 foundations provided 16 percent, universities 24 percent, the U.S. federal government 60 percent; and in 1980 foundations provided just 5 percent, universities 34 percent, and the U.S. federal government 61 percent; "The Role of Private Foundations," *Items* (published by the Social Science Research Council) 37 (September, 1983), p. 36.

25. The fullest account of Ruml's support of work at the University of Chicago, and of the general social science research program of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund, is Bulmer, *The Chicago School of Sociology*, chapter 8.

26. Letter, Robert M. Yerkes to Beardsley Ruml, December 5, 1923, Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund Papers, Rockefeller Archive Center. Yerkes had conveyed this message at a conference in which he told van Kleek and other researchers "from the side of social service" that "academic workers" would henceforth "assume leadership and in effect... take control of research in the social sciences," and that the National Research Council, which had previously included social science research carried out by van Kleek and others "from the side of social service" in its program would henceforth "attend strictly to the natural sciences!"


32. The death of the private charity in the New Deal was exaggerated, however. The Russell Sage Foundation’s studies of foundations survived after 1947 to become the Foundation Center, and by the late 1960s the leaders of private philanthropy were moving to create, in Independent Sector, Inc., an organization that could carry out some of the studies of private, nonprofit organizations and their employees that the Russell Sage Foundation had pioneered in the 1910s and 1920s.


38. Memorandum, Mary van Kleeck to John Glenn, October 25, 1919, Mary van Kleeck Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College.

39. Historian Guy Alchon is working on a biographical study of van Kleeck; he notes aspects of her career in his book, The Invisible Hand of Planning. Van Kleeck’s papers are divided among the Russell Sage Foundation Papers at the Rockefeller Archive Center, the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College, and the Walter Reuther Labor History Archives at Wayne State University.


41. The committee’s substantive recommendations were equally vague. Proposals covered “…(1) concentration on tasks for which the Foundation was especially equipped; (2) review at stated intervals of results achieved by grants; (3) an outside limit of five years for any new grant.” (Glenn, Brandt, and Andrews, Russell Sage Foundation, p. 275).
3

The Regional Plan of New York and Environs: A Plan and a Planning Service

David C. Hammack

On February 4, 1921, the trustees of the Russell Sage Foundation approved a proposal by Charles Dyer Norton, one of their own number, to create “a Plan of New York bold enough to visualize the commercial, the industrial, the social and the artistic values and possibilities of our glorious harbor and of all [its] broad and varied environs.” This plan, the trustees agreed, was to be prepared “through the agency of a Committee to be appointed and financed by the Foundation.” As the Foundation’s official history notes, “for the next ten years this was its single largest object of expenditure.” It was the object, as well, of the largest share of trustee and staff attention. Eventually it produced the ten volumes of the *Regional Survey of New York and Environs* (1928–32), a two-volume *Regional Plan of New York* (1932), and a living legacy, the Regional Plan Association of New York. Planners and historians recognize the Regional Plan as a major landmark in the history of city planning and of urban development.

The Regional Plan also reinforced the new American pattern in
the making of social policy. At the end of the nineteenth century, social policies in the United States were typically worked out at the local level, through a process of bargaining among competing elites who worked through political parties, state governments, and state courts. In New York and other large cities local economic elites exerted by far the most influence on social policy, but distinct economic groups often disagreed with one another and had to deal with effective political, ethnic, and religious groups as well. Lawy-ers and other specialists also played important policymaking roles, usually as advisers to wealthy individuals and groups.

In the first third of the twentieth century, the Progressive Movement, the national efficiency campaigns of Herbert Hoover, and the New Deal all helped shift control over social policy to the state and then the national level. At the same time, specialists gained more and more influence. Increasingly working out of private charities, universities, and government agencies, as well as law firms, they became more numerous and more independent of economic elites. Many of them adopted a cosmopolitan outlook and sought, sometimes with success, to apply what they took to be an objective, “scientific” method to social problems.

A small number of leading private foundations played a leading part in this transformation of the policymaking process. By the 1920s these leading foundations were employing many of the most active policy analysts. And several foundations were “supporting research and thereby influencing the choice of social policies,” intentionally shaping the actions of government.

The Russell Sage Foundation helped define this foundation program. Conceived as an overhead agency to the then large and expanding world of private charity, the Foundation sought from the outset to enable charity administrators and researchers to devise policies for local and state governments as well as for their own institutions. Within a few years specialists supported by Russell Sage were studying working and living conditions in New York City and Pittsburgh, and promoting legislation to use public power to regulate the new industrial environment. The Foundation supported the research of outside investigators, but it also acted as an operating foundation, creating departments to carry
out research and develop policy proposals in such fields as social surveys, industrial studies, consumer credit, and child care. The Foundation did not set out to promote social science as such, although some of the research it supported, most notably the work of its social surveys, did contribute to such emerging fields as urban sociology. It clearly did seek to bring more systematic, businesslike, even "scientific" methods to the administration of charity.

Even as it helped to diversify the process of making social policy, the Russell Sage Foundation itself continued the older trustee-dominated policymaking traditions characteristic of the private charities it had been established to serve. The Foundation always left investigators to do their own work and report their own conclusions. But its trustees themselves selected the fields of research and reform in which their institution would be most active. Indeed, the trustees themselves, in effect, received and directed between a third and a half of the Foundation's expenditures between 1907 and 1947.

During the 1920s the Regional Plan exemplified this pattern of trustee management. The Regional Plan was a research- and policy-analysis project directed to the solution of practical, immediate problems that the Foundation's most active trustees viewed as significant. The Plan itself was developed by a Committee on Regional Plan, all of whose initial members (and always a majority) were also trustees of the Foundation. The trustees did not particularly intend to perpetuate the pattern of detailed trustee management when they decided to support the Regional Plan in 1921. They did intend to continue their established policy of using their foundation's resources to shape research along lines that they themselves believed important. The decision to develop the Regional Plan reinforced this control exercised by Foundation trustees over the expenditure of funds in fields relevant to social policy, and it thus affected the status and emerging organization of the social sciences—an influence considered at some length in the previous chapter. With their control, the trustees also retained the freedom to shift the Foundation's funds from one activity to another, as they thought best. In 1947 they would choose to shift decisively to the support of social science.
Origins of the Regional Plan: Charles Dyer Norton and the Chicago Connection

The Regional Plan of New York was in every way a project of the Russell Sage Foundation’s Board of Trustees—specifically of Alfred Treadway White, Charles Dyer Norton, and Frederic A. Delano. For Norton the Regional Plan of New York began “in 1901, on the porch of Augustus Saint Gaudens’ house at Cornish, New Hampshire.” The sculptor, he later recalled, “entranced us all by his glowing vision of what he and [Daniel H.] Burnham, [Charles F.] McKim and [Frederick Law] Olmsted [Jr.] hoped to accomplish in restoring and developing L’Enfant’s Plan of Washington.” Norton, who was then general agent for the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company in Chicago, promised to do what he could to secure the support of Chicago’s Congressional delegation. Congress did adopt the updated version of L’Enfant’s plan, Washington began to assume its modern form, and Norton was hooked on the aesthetic possibilities of city planning.

Back in Chicago, Norton began to discuss city planning with his lifelong friend, Frederic A. Delano. Delano had made a successful career in railroads; in 1901 he was general manager of the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad. He had become preoccupied with the problem of coordinating railroad tracks, terminals, and railyards, and his preoccupation increased as he became president of several railroads, including the Wabash, in the Great Lakes region over the next half-dozen years. Delano began to see city planning as a way to encourage rival railroads to cooperate in the name of efficiency. In the next few years Norton and Delano led other members of Chicago’s prestigious Merchants Club in persuading architect Daniel H. Burnham to expand his 1895 proposal for a lakefront park into a comprehensive plan for parks, civic buildings, and transportation in “the great Waukegan, Elgin, Aurora, Gary, Michigan City circle” that embraced the Chicago metropolitan area. Burnham agreed, and rhetorically celebrated the idea of comprehensive planning in lines that have served as the ambitious planner’s motto ever since:
Make no little plans: they have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with growing intensity.

Norton believed that this was “the beginning of correct thinking.” When Burnham’s Chicago Plan was unveiled on July 4, 1909, it drew praise from far and wide. Kaiser Wilhelm appointed a commission to prepare a similar plan for Berlin; New York banker James Speyer asked “How does it happen that you men of Chicago can get together and do such things? We cannot in New York.” Contemporaries noted that the Chicago Plan combined Burnham’s enthusiasm for formal Beaux Arts grandeur with Delano’s desire to promote the efficient development of railroad and other transportation systems. Settlement House leader Jane Addams approved its provision of a large lakeside park accessible to the poor; it appears that she was not asked to comment on the fact that it almost entirely ignored housing conditions in the slums. More surprisingly, the Chicago Plan took no account of Chicago’s magnificent, monolithic skyscrapers, even though Burnham was himself one of the most successful of their designers.

Two years after the Chicago Plan was completed, Norton moved to New York City as vice president, and later president, of the First National Bank of New York. Buoyed up by the enthusiastic reception of the Chicago Plan and by his own Washington experience as assistant secretary of the treasury and secretary to President Taft, he sought at once to prove that Speyer’s pessimism had been misplaced, to demonstrate that New York could develop a City Plan. By 1914 Norton had struck up a close association with George McAneny, president of the Board of Aldermen during the administration of Mayor John Purroy Mitchell; in 1915, McAneny made Norton the chairman of an Advisory Committee on City Plan. But after a few months, Norton concluded that McAneny’s interest lay “more in transit and zoning and limiting the heights of buildings than in the sweeping Dan Burnham notions,” and that the highly fragmented and contentious politics of New York City and its region made it impossible for an official advisory body to
have the necessary impact.\textsuperscript{11}

Norton then sought to persuade private business associations to support his idea. Toward the end of 1915 he asserted that a private voluntary association composed of “men and women whose names would be recognized from Maine to California as being especially expert in the subject of City Planning” could easily be assembled in New York. Such an association could project a Plan “on a scale vast enough to capture the interest and imagination of the group of cities, towns and villages which is New York.” It ought to engage “some Daniel H. Burnham” to do very much what Burnham himself had done for Chicago:

to show how the isolated Pallisades Park with its thirty square miles of wilderness and the East Side of New York only six miles away, with its million and a half of tenement dwellers, may be brought nearer together; how the commuters of small incomes in Jersey or the Bronx may more easily reach the beaches; how the merchants and the railroads and the public authorities may combine to reduce the cost of handling goods and maintain the supremacy of this Port; where markets and parks may be created...where the civic centres of this vast population really are, and how they should be developed and embellished.\textsuperscript{12}

The vision of such a plan would be its own most effective propaganda: again echoing Burnham, Norton proposed that a planner should be encouraged to “make a big daring imaginative plan such as George Washington and his French engineer L’Enfant had the courage to make for the city of Washington 115 years ago, —and New York will not fail to recognize and adopt her City Plan.”\textsuperscript{13}

Norton recognized that a plan on the scale he envisioned would be expensive; he suggested that it would be necessary to raise $200,000 “in voluntary contributions,” and proposed that the Chamber of Commerce, the Merchants Association, and “every local body” should be approached and “invited to cooperate and criticise.” “Tax-ridden citizens,” he argued, should be happy to contribute such a sum: Chicagoans had found that their city had spent “between 1871 and 1908 no less than $225,000,000 upon public improvements, wrongly planned because no one had looked ahead, and which were later destroyed and replaced.”\textsuperscript{14}

Several developers, artists, and housing reformers enthusiasti-
cally endorsed Norton's idea in 1915, but those who most influ-
enced the Chamber of Commerce found it too bold. To John B.
Pine, a venerable attorney and Columbia University trustee, Burn-
ham's example was far from decisive. "It does not seem to me wise
to include so wide an area in your City Plan," he wrote, "espe-
cially as so much of the territory is beyond New York jurisdiction.
I do not myself see the connection between Princeton, Tuxedo, and
Stamford, and our immediate problem.... I think we should
remember the danger of overplanning; that is, of going too far
beyond public opinion as demonstrated by Burnham's plan for
San Francisco." In the end, neither the Chamber of Commerce
nor any other business group came forward with the money to
make a plan. Nor was it possible again to seek the support of pub-
lic officials: McAneny had left the Borough presidency in 1916 to
become executive manager of the New York Times, and Mayor
Mitchell was replaced in 1917 by John Hylan, a Tammany Demo-
crat who bore a constitutional hostility to prosperous, cultivated
civic leaders. Norton had to give up hope of selling his idea to
either local government or business.

At this point Norton turned to the Russell Sage Foundation, of
which he had become a trustee in 1918; he replaced Mrs. Sage,
who had died that November. Here at last he found the prospect
of support. Just at this time the Foundation had a large fund of
resources that were not committed to current projects—the endow-
ment had just been increased by Mrs. Sage's legacy of $5 million—
and it was actively seeking new fields of activity. Norton's
proposal offered one way to put those resources to work. His pro-
posal was, moreover, very much in line with the Foundation's
early commitments. The Chicago Plan had neglected the problems
of low-income housing and public health. Norton now empha-
sized those problems. He gradually revised his Regional Plan pro-
posal to begin with these words:

Since its organization the Sage Foundation has been interested in
problems of housing and congestion. In an effort to solve one of the
many aspects of this problem, which in New York grows ever more
acute and pressing, the Foundation has invested nearly four million
dollars in the development of Forest Hills, Long Island. But no one local
improvement, however beneficent, affords relief from the deep-seated structural defects which congest our vital growth and leave masses of our people in an environment ill suited for human happiness and welfare. It is upon the poor that the heaviest burdens fall; they are least able to mitigate the discomforts of bad housing.\textsuperscript{16}

To be successful, Norton had to win the support of the Foundation’s trustees. In this he was immeasurably helped by Trustee Alfred T. White, who had long worked to bring improved low-cost housing to Brooklyn and Manhattan. Robert W. de Forest, who had always exerted a dominant influence over Foundation policy, had just become president of the trustees on Mrs. Sage’s death. He feared that the Regional Plan was “too vast and complicated a project for the Sage Foundation to undertake.”\textsuperscript{17} White disagreed. He continued to favor the plan even after Norton exclaimed to him in frustration, in the Spring of 1919, that “Robert de Forest knew more about City Planning than I did, knew his New York as no one of us did, knew the Sage Foundation tradition and commitments,” and must be conceded the final word.

Toward the end of 1920 White raised the matter once more, suggesting that the Foundation begin simply by engaging his “old friend, Nelson P. Lewis, former City Engineer of Manhattan,” to make a preliminary survey of public works. By the middle of December, 1920, Norton and White had persuaded de Forest and Glenn that the Foundation ought to explore the idea of a Regional Plan.\textsuperscript{18} Still skeptical, de Forest believed that Norton, White, Lewis, and Delano might well succeed in an effort to collate “facts and information on which state or city authorities or some representative body of citizens with ample resources could proceed.”\textsuperscript{19} Norton, White, de Forest, and Glenn were the most active of the eight current trustees; once they agreed on a course of action, there was no doubt that it would be adopted by the Board as a whole.

By January 31 John Glenn was ready to recommend to Norton a procedure that strikingly underlined the trustees’ role in the project. Once Norton had read his memorandum, Glenn wrote, he himself would “move that the proposal be referred to a special committee consisting of de Forest, you and me for thorough consideration, with power to spend, say, $25,000 in preliminary con-
ferences and inquiries and in such other ways as may seem desir-
able in their discretion." Going far beyond that initial authoriza-
tion, Glenn added that he "would be glad also to have given the
committee full power to commit the Foundation to the adoption
of your plan and to the expenditure of, say, $300,000 over a peri-
od of three or four years."20

White drowned in an ice-skating accident before the Board
could act, but on February 4, 1921, it approved Norton's plan and
created a Committee on Regional Plan chaired by Norton and
including de Forest, Glenn, Frederic A. Delano, and Dwight W.
Morrow (a J.P. Morgan partner who had helped New York City
avoid fiscal crisis in 1914) to carry it out. Trustees Helen Gould
Shepard and Louisa Lee Schuyler wrote independently to assure
Norton of their support. As though to emphasize its confidence in
Norton and its commitment to his program, the Board acted on
February 7 to elect Delano to fill the trusteeship left by White and
to elect Morrow to fill another vacancy.21

Trustees, Policy, and the Regional Plan

More perhaps than their counterparts at the Carnegie and Rocke-
feller Foundations, the Russell Sage trustees took an active part in
selecting and managing the projects to which they devoted the
Foundation's funds. From the outset, the Russell Sage trustees
carefully maintained the close, direct control over research and
policy analysis that most of them had long exercised in their roles
as the leaders of private charities in New York and Baltimore. Their
charity organization experience also led the trustees to stress an
environmental approach to the alleviation of social problems. Nor-
ton was able to persuade them to support the Regional Plan not
only because he was extraordinarily persistent and persuasive but
also because the scheme conformed so well to procedures and poli-
cies the trustees already favored.

In 1907, Robert W. de Forest, by far the most influential of the
trustees, proposed a policy that was followed very closely for the
next forty years: that grants should be made not only "where the
purpose is clearly desirable” but also “where the institution or persons...are so thoroughly known to the trustees that there can be no doubt about their efficiency and effectiveness.” De Forest himself took the lead in directing grants to institutions and persons he knew especially well. More than $1 million in Russell Sage money went to the Charity Organization Society of New York, of which he was president during the entire time of his association with the Foundation; within the COS, much of this went to the Tenement and Criminal Courts Committee run by his long-standing associate, Lawrence Veiller. In addition, $295,000 in Foundation funds went to Veiller’s National Housing Association. Other grants went to bring “good art into the homes of the people and to communities that now have little access to it”: de Forest was also a long-time president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and this was another of his favorite projects. Well over $100,000 went to efforts to help the blind, a concern of Mrs. Sage; nearly $900,000 to the State Charities Aid Association of New York, headed by Trustee Louisa Lee Schuyler; and $350,000 to the Brooklyn Bureau of Charities, with which Trustee Alfred T. White was closely identified.

In the case of the charity societies, the Foundation followed de Forest’s recommendation by making grants to well-established organizations. In case of the social survey, housing, and city planning, the Foundation’s trustees created new organizations. De Forest again took the lead, serving between 1905 and 1920 as chairman of the Charities Publication Committee and its successor, Survey Associates, Inc., which received more than $350,000 from the Foundation for the Pittsburgh Survey and the support of Survey magazine. De Forest and Glenn served as the chief officers of Veiller’s National Housing Association. A subcommittee of the trustees, incorporated as the Sage Foundation Homes Company, was established to build Forest Hills Gardens; by 1921 this committee had devoted about $1,400,000 of the Foundation’s funds to its venture in subdivision planning and house construction.

De Forest also took the lead in determining the Foundation’s fields of work. As president of the Charity Organization Society, he had spent much of the 1890s in personal investigations of living conditions in New York City’s tenement houses. He had served
for two years as the city’s tenement house commissioner under Mayor Seth Low. He contributed significantly to the four volumes on New York City’s tenement house problem that were published under his name. Under his guidance, the Foundation always made housing reform and urban planning one of its top priorities.

The Foundation’s budget clearly reflected de Forest’s emphasis on housing and planning. Between 1907 and 1946 it spent about $20,000,000; just over half of this sum, about $10,400,000, went for grants and other external expenditures. More than 37 percent of the external expenditures went to ventures in housing and urban planning. No other category of expenditure received so much. About 35 percent of the external expenditures went to charity organization societies in New York State: much of this was for antituberculosis campaigns (campaigns that often emphasized housing, sanitation, and other environmental reforms closely related to urban planning), the rest for a variety of purposes ranging from lobbying the New York State Legislature to providing home teachers for blind women in Brooklyn. Eight percent went to schools of social work in St. Louis, Chicago, Boston, and particularly New York City. Just under 10 percent went to social science and policy research projects and to the Social Science Research Council and related agencies.

Glenn and de Forest made sure that the Regional Plan proposal fit into this pattern. By the time they approved it in 1921, Norton was not only a trustee of the Foundation but had become de Forest’s “good friend” as a ten-year associate on the COS Central Council; at least one close observer thought that de Forest was grooming Norton to succeed him. At Glenn’s suggestion, Norton launched the project with a conference involving people de Forest respected: Lawrence Veiller; the Foundation’s Shelby M. Harrison; George McAneny; Edward M. Bassett, originator of New York City’s pioneering zoning ordinance; Lawson Purdy, general director of de Forest’s Charity Organization Society; and Frederick B. Pratt of Brooklyn, a man who been strongly recommended by Alfred T. White. Glenn urged that Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and John Nolen, national leaders in the landscape architecture and city planning professions, and Thomas Adams, a British town planner
with extensive experience in the design of "garden cities," also be included. Norton suggested that Delano's railroad and Chicago Plan experience made him the ideal person to "collect and analyze for the Committee existing data on harbor and railroad terminal problems and the solutions for such problems that have already been proposed," and that Charles Moore, chairman of the Fine Arts Commission of Washington, D.C. and author of much of the prose of the Chicago Plan, could also contribute much.

Thus, from the very beginning, Russell Sage trustees controlled both the fields of work and the personnel involved in the Regional Plan. They continued to exercise control in a remarkably detailed fashion. In February de Forest wrote Norton, "Please understand that you have the initiative in the City Planning matter; that as between you and me you are in a position to go straight ahead and that I will back up anything you do...." Norton immediately engaged Nelson P. Lewis, White's old friend, to survey public works projects and plans in "every municipality within the Plan area."

By midsummer, Norton was certain that he ought to proceed "very much as Senator Aldrich approached the problem of monetary reform," by organizing "a series of well defined fundamental inquiries, deliberately undertaken, staffed by the ablest men and women, their results carefully edited for brevity and clarity, and published in attractive form." Intending to retain direct control of the operation, he determined not to place the investigations directly in the hands of a professional planner, but to set up "an executive office in charge of a competent secretary—Frederick P. Keppel if possible." De Forest concurred, intervening only to insist that Norton emphasize the social reform aspects of the Regional Plan. "Keep art and artists and the city beautiful distinctly in the background," de Forest wrote. "They are associated in the lay mind with impracticable schemes of the 'blue sky sort.'" The Regional Plan should instead emphasize "the city wholesome, the city of homes...and let the artistic quality largely take care of itself."

Norton himself took the lead in selecting the people to carry out the fundamental inquiries of the economic, physical, legal, and social conditions that would necessarily "guide the future city planners." By May, 1922, Frederick P. Keppel had agreed to take
the job of executive secretary—and Norton promptly went off to Paris to join him in a study of planning operations in Paris and London.\textsuperscript{32}

Norton relished his role as managing director of the Regional Plan. "Keppel and I have been traveling together for a fortnight in and near Paris and London," he wrote Delano in August, 1922,

and now he has, at my request, gone on to Antwerp, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Essen, Berlin, and possibly even Stockholm—so valuable did we find it to see the British and French schemes and to meet their best men....I saw the best men who were in or near London during the holiday season. But Keppel was far more diligent than that: met everybody, learned who’s who and where offices and maps and schemes are, and as you might expect, dug in deeply, so that we shall have for the asking the future cooperation of groups of friends everywhere in Europe, for Keppel has a talent for making friends. You can imagine the difficulty I had in restraining myself from plunging in with him.\textsuperscript{33}

In Keppel’s view, Norton found it far too difficult to restrain himself. Back in New York several months later, Norton was writing with enthusiasm that "the ‘command’ must for the present rest in our Committee, and in our Executive Secretary." It was Norton who developed an elaborate plan to persuade "architects, planners, engineers" to "attack the Regional Plan problem" without pay, "just as similar groups cooperated in the creation of the World’s Fair in Chicago." Norton also insisted that the chief task of the Executive Secretary was "to create a widespread public interest in Regional Planning." It was his vision that "we shall be raising an army of volunteers ready to obey our ‘master minds’ when we discover them."\textsuperscript{34} A few days later he was urging that the Committee recommend legislation to require the builders of skyscrapers to "buy and dedicate to the public use a certain amount of land adjacent," and to "compel provision for park areas between suburban towns."\textsuperscript{35} Norton consistently stressed the search for a "master mind" and chided the Plan’s staff for its lack of boldness. The "city plan crowd," he lamented, was "about as tame a bunch of animals as exists. Why aren’t they yelling and howling for specific reforms?"\textsuperscript{36}
Keppel favored a different approach. His experience as a Columbia University dean, assistant secretary of war, and executive director of the American Chamber of Commerce in Paris had already made him a modern manager, accustomed to assigning specialized tasks to experts and to working out collective decisions. This approach, together with Keppel's remarkable personal abilities, persuaded the trustees of the Carnegie Corporation to offer him the post of director; he agreed to move in September, 1923. When Norton died suddenly in March, 1923, Keppel was able to speak with extraordinary freedom about the direction of the Regional Plan provided by both Norton and Frederic A. Delano, who seemed to Glenn and de Forest to be the obvious man to succeed Norton as chairman. Keppel urged that Delano not be given the position. Delano "does not," Keppel wrote, "really understand what the Committee is for.... While the members of the Committee may of course suggest local improvements they should not press these forward without reference to the orderly evolution of the Plan as a whole. This is precisely what Mr. Delano, in his enthusiasm and his very great personal interest in certain projects, is constantly tempted to do.... Charles Norton did it too."37

Keppel insisted that a clear line ought to be drawn between the responsibilities of the professional experts and the lay committee. "If we are to profit by experience elsewhere," he argued, "we must regard the Committee as charged primarily with financing the enterprise, organizing a group of experts who shall, under a direction which is general and not specific, formulate a Regional Plan and educate the public to accept it." Professionals ought to prepare the plan. The committee ought to provide advice, "checking the technical proposals of the staff from the point of view of the intelligent layman.... Even more important," he concluded, the committee "should bear specific responsibility for the relations of the Plan to the public, the selection of the Committee members both local and general, policies as to publicity, etc."38

"Experience elsewhere" did not appeal to the Russell Sage trustees. Delano duly succeeded Norton as Chairman of the Committee on Regional Plan. Signaling his intention to control the operation, he proposed staff reorganization "without asking the opinion
of any of the men who have devoted themselves to the work up to the present time," as one complained, and suggested that the professional planner hired to direct the staff be given the title of "Deputy Chairman."  

Delano defended his approach in an address in Chicago the following November. "The advantage of having men put in their own money and time in an enterprise," he asserted, recalling his work with Norton and others on the Chicago Plan of 1909, "is that we never had any trouble getting earnest and efficient work from the men on the committee. There was not any disposition to sit back and 'let George do it.'" Delano suggested that the New York project suffered from an excessive reliance on its professional staff. "We are finding," he said, "that the same amount of money does not go nearly so far as it did when the men who were interested in the work contributed to it. Seemingly it is a good deal like Government work."  

With John Glenn and Frederick P. Keppel acting as mediators, Delano did reluctantly agree to turn much of the Regional Plan work over to a professional staff headed by Thomas Adams, who successfully insisted on the title "Director of Plans and Surveys." Yet Delano remained a dominant figure. At the time of Norton's death he was largely responsible for persuading de Forest that the project should be continued. Thereafter he devoted considerable attention to the problem of securing publicity for the Regional Plan, but he never accepted Keppel's stricture that a committee chairman ought to confine himself to that role. Time and again he proposed specific, far-reaching schemes on such matters as railroads, rapid transit, regional and city highways, bridges, and tunnels. After 1923 he was increasingly preoccupied with his obligations in Washington, D.C., where he became chairman of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission in 1926 (he was already a trustee of the Brookings Institution), but he continued to work on highway and rail schemes for the Hudson and East River waterfronts, to debate the merits of various possible circumferential railroad routes with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, to prepare extensive statements on such matters as "public safety and traffic in great cities" and "the distribution of freight in
New York City,” and to publish an article advocating strict limitations on the heights of buildings.\textsuperscript{41}

Above all, it was Delano who successfully insisted that the Regional Plan develop not just a collection of information and a master plan for the region but organize a continuing “planning service” as well. Recalling Daniel H. Burnham’s example, Norton had hoped that a “master mind,” assisted by “professional groups expert in planning matters,” would develop a Plan of New York so compelling as to persuade all citizens of the region to “discover their common interests and a common ambition to make each community a better place in which to live and work.”

Delano shifted the emphasis. “Our work,” he asserted in late 1923, “might better be described by a sub-title of ‘Planning Service for the City of New York and the Surrounding Territory...,’ a bureau of planning service which the City of New York and the cities and towns outside, of which there are four hundred in three different states, can avail themselves of. We shall act as advisors and coordinators of their suggestions.” Officials of these towns would come to the Committee on Regional Plan, Delano argued, because it was developing “a body of what might be called human knowledge on these questions.”\textsuperscript{42} Although he had never pushed the planning service idea, Norton had anticipated it when he stressed that within the area of the Regional Plan, “we are the only group with offices, with a highly competent staff, with funds; the only group which represents the whole region; which realizes that New York is really all that you see from the Woolworth tower; that no official body has jurisdiction in this area.”\textsuperscript{43} To Norton, as to Delano, in this situation a private, nonprofit, independent organization might hope to achieve results that no government agency could expect.

It was because Norton and Delano wished to influence policy directly, if often behind the scenes, that they insisted that experienced businessmen like themselves, not professional planners or academic experts, must control the Regional Plan. Delano emphasized the point in mid-1923. “We must have a live, personal contact,” he argued, “with the organizations within the 50 mile radius which are interested and willing to work on the subject of a better plan for New York and its environs. We must be the clearing
house for the city planning effort of 400 cities, towns, and villages. We will supply them with data, and in a word help them to help themselves, letting every borough, city, county, town, village, or individual citizen even, have the glory and credit for what it has done, or proposes to do. We will shine by their reflected light, and it will be enough."44

When the Foundation's trustees reconsidered their program in 1921, they made it clear that they were determined to control the Foundation's activities in detail. As attorneys, businessmen, and leaders of the charity organization movement, the Russell Sage trustees believed they could make particularly significant contributions to the management of social agencies and to the process by which social policies were made. In part, they tried to improve the policymaking process by insisting that the relevant social research be conducted and taken into account. But they were not very interested in basic social research for its own sake. And they did not even consider any policies, such as placing large research funds in the hands of the social researchers themselves for allocation to the problems they deemed most interesting to social science, that would reduce their control over the Foundation's resources.

The Russell Sage trustees were more willing to support social research than most of their contemporaries, but they had no intention, in 1921, of devoting their institution primarily to social research, and they certainly did not intend to allow social researchers to take control. Like those who controlled the other leading foundations and research institutes, the Russell Sage trustees left the social scientists to make their careers in university departments, and drew on them only from time to time to assist in the solution of immediate practical problems defined by the trustees themselves.

1. Memorandum from Charles D. Norton, re Regional Plan of New York, presented to the Board of Trustees of the Russell Sage Foundation, February 4, 1921, Russell Sage Foundation Archives, Rockefeller Archive


9. Norton, "THE PLAN OF CHICAGO."


material deleted from the version that Delano printed in an edition of 500 copies in May, 1923. McAneny's emphasis on rapid transit, zoning, and height limitations is apparent in his proposed redraft of Norton's January, 1921, memorandum to the trustees of the Russell Sage Foundation; a copy is appended to a letter from McAneny to Norton, January 26, 1921, in the George McAneny Papers, Princeton University Library.


13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.


16. Charles D. Norton, "Memorandum" proposing the creation of a Plan of New York City, dated January 31, 1921, submitted to the trustees of the Russell Sage Foundation on February 4, 1921, Russell Sage Foundation Archives. The sentence beginning "It is upon the poor" appears neither in the February, 1919, version of this proposal included in the typescript letter, Norton to Delano, November 24, 1921, nor in the version as redrafted by McAneny and returned to Norton, January 26, 1921.

17. Memorandum, de Forest to Frederic A. Delano and John M. Glenn, January 22, 1926, Russell Sage Foundation Archives, Rockefeller Archive Center.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.


24. De Forest also kept up a very friendly correspondence with Paul U.
Kellogg, editor of the *Survey*, even when the Foundation was not supporting that periodical during the 1930s; see the relevant correspondence in the Kellogg Papers in the Social Welfare History Collection at the University of Minnesota.

25. Trustee minutes, Russell Sage Foundation Archives, Rockefeller Archive Center.


27. Robert W. de Forest Memorandum on Regional Plan, January 22, 1926, Russell Sage Foundation Archives, Rockefeller Archive Center.


31. Memorandum, de Forest to Norton, October 27, 1921, Regional Plan Association of New York Papers, Cornell University.

32. *Plan of New York and its Environs, The Meeting of May 10, 1922* (New York: Committee on the Regional Plan, 1922), pp. 6–7; letters, Norton to various consultants, summer, 1921; and Norton to Delano, November 24, 1921, p. 14, Regional Plan Association of New York Papers, Cornell University. All memos concerning the plan were addressed to "cdn" in 1921.


38. Ibid.


42. "Address of Frederic A. Delano at the Inauguration of the Chicago Regional Plan Association, November 11, 1923."

43. Norton, Memo of December 19, 1922, to de Forest and others; Committee on Regional Plan, Plan of New York and Environs, May 10, 1922.

The Commitment to Social Science: A Case Study of Organizational Innovation

Stanton Wheeler

From 1907 to 1948, the Russell Sage Foundation fulfilled its charter as the first general-purpose foundation in the United States by pursuing its general and activist interests in social welfare and domestic social reform. It created a special and important niche in philanthropy through its commitment to the developing profession of social work and to what was then known as the charity organization movement. In this role it exerted leadership in many ways, including housing the major social work organizations of the time.

As it developed its programs, the Russell Sage Foundation made use of the newly emerging social sciences. It was committed to basing its practical projects on accurately recorded data and therefore engaged in pioneering projects such as the multivolume Pittsburgh Survey. It developed its own department of statistics and, through its publication program, brought social research to the attention of a wider audience. But its primary commitment was to ameliorative action pursued through the charity organization movement.
After World War II, the Foundation changed its course. It emerged as one of the handful of organizations specifically committed to social and behavioral sciences. It is certainly one of the few nationally based nonprofit organizations (along with the Social Science Research Council, the social science divisions of the National Science Foundation, the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences, and the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences), whose interests and resources are committed generally to the development of the behavioral sciences and their application to human problems.

In pursuing its new mission, the Foundation retained some continuity with its past. It continued with an interest in social work and an interest in broad social trends that had begun in the Hoover administration, and it continued to develop the use of statistics and social surveys as means of understanding social problems. Its primary mission, however, became the application of social and behavioral sciences to new terrain. It introduced behavioral scientists to medical schools, hospitals, and law schools. It applied social science to the study of military organization, to the mass media, to the field of biology. It examined education and human resources. And it began the systematic gathering of data on philanthropic foundations. If there was a common core to these activities, it was the application of behavioral science knowledge and techniques to a wide range of other disciplines, institutions, and problems.

The Russell Sage Foundation was not developing in a vacuum during this period. The quarter of a century following World War II saw massive changes in academic disciplines, in national needs and priorities, in social policies, and in funding for social research. Most of the infrastructure of modern social science and its use by society was put in place during this period. Russell Sage policies were in part a response to these massive changes, perhaps particularly to the other organizations with a primacy of commitment to the social and behavioral sciences.

In working out its response and in developing its substantive programs, the Foundation created a number of innovations in foundation organization and management. These innovations may turn out to be as valuable a part of the Foundation’s efforts as the
substantive programs themselves. Most foundations, for example, are grant-making organizations whose professional staff are "program officers" who oversee substantive programs but do not engage directly in the research or other central activities of the foundation. Some foundations are not grant-making at all, but are institutes whose own staff conduct the foundation’s programs. From its inception, Russell Sage was an operating foundation with its own staff and programs as well as a grant-making organization. During the period considered here, the Russell Sage Foundation pioneered in combining, in nearly equal measure, the functions of the research institute and the grant-making organization.

The Foundation did so with a staff of combined scholar-administrators. It took social science scholars out of academic positions and allowed them to develop programs around their own interests and specialties. It broke down the distinction between researcher and grant administrator. It also weakened the boundary between university and foundation by inviting faculty, as Visiting Scholars, to continue their scholarly work for a semester or a year while also discussing Foundation programs, and by inviting graduate students or postdoctoral fellows to work at and with the Foundation.

In effect, the Foundation created an interstitial role for itself between the academy, other foundations, and policymakers. It provided a place for people to meet, discuss problems of mutual interest, and share visions of the changing shape of the behavioral sciences. It created mini-institutions, like the monthly tea, sherry, or cocktail hour that served as a meeting place for behavioral scientists spread around the various departments and organizations of New York City, or the daily informal lunch where guests could discuss their pet projects.

The Foundation was one of the first to create a mix of inside and outside support. Although it had its own endowment, it often applied for and received grants from other agencies, which enabled it to expand its own programs. It also maintained a publications program that brought the results of its projects into print, with staff functioning in the role of editors and exercising quality control over manuscripts.
Finally, the Foundation was an organizational innovator in the special relationship it developed between its board and its staff, and in the character of the Board itself. The Board that made decisions in the early years was composed of well-placed citizens with a genuine concern for the problems confronting the nation, but with little professional training in the social sciences. From 1945 to 1970, the composition of the Board changed to include leading social scientists among its members. These organizational innovations combined with the substantive programs of Russell Sage to give it a special place in the recent history of social science and social policy.

This essay is an effort to portray the transformation of the Russell Sage Foundation, largely through the experiences of the people primarily responsible for taking it from the concerns of social work to the developing social and behavioral sciences. I have not attempted to survey the literature on foundations, nor have I engaged in systematic studies of the Foundation’s operations from the point of view of either the applicants or the recipients of its support. Most of what follows is based on Foundation documents and interviews with its chief personnel. I also draw upon my own past association with the Foundation as a full-time and part-time staff member, thus precluding me from the lofty assertions of detachment and objectivity that often accompany social science inquiry. But if one wishes to provide a map of a particular locale, and do it in short compass, it helps to have covered the terrain.¹

The Pre-Donald Young Years: 1945–1948

At the end of World War II, the Russell Sage Foundation was functioning much as it had been for at least a decade prior to the war. In 1932 its first general director, the only one the Foundation had since its founding in 1907, retired. But the retirement of John Glenn did not signal the end of his influence. He remained a strong force in Foundation activities, coming to the office frequently and giving advice to the director who replaced him, Shelby M. Harrison. Throughout the administration of these two men, the Russell Sage
Foundation exerted a strong force on social work. Its dominant interests over the years had shifted from a focus on physical health and medical problems and on schools during its early years to a primary focus on working conditions, particularly during the 1920s, with some attention to women's problems and issues, housing, and to people in trouble. During the Depression years it focused on money matters, including importantly the development of small-loan legislation to protect the consumer against usury.

The Foundation had had a strong concern for the emerging profession of social work at least since its publication of Mary Richmond's *Social Diagnosis* in 1917. That interest continued to be reflected in the Foundation's activities up to the mid-1940s. Some indication of the dominant position of social work among the Foundation's activities is suggested in the statement of grants for the year ending September 30, 1945. In that year the Foundation supported a number of social service activities in New York City and beyond. It supported the Welfare Council of New York City, the New York School of Social Work, the New York Adult Education Council, and the Brooklyn Bureau of Social Service Housing Committee. But the bulk of its expenditures supported a variety of national organizations in the social work and social welfare field: the American Association of Medical Social Workers, the American Association of Schools of Social Work, the American Planning and Civic Association, the Child Welfare League of America, the Family Welfare Association of America, the National Social Work Council, and the Social Work Vocational Bureau were only some of its principal recipients.

These activities received backing in a variety of forms, not the least of which was housing for their national offices. The Foundation's two buildings at Twenty-second Street and Lexington Avenue served as headquarters for many of the major social work associations. The organizations were thus receiving indirect subsidies in the form of housing accommodations as well as direct grants. This activity of course necessitated other expenses for the Foundation, including a staff of well over a hundred employees to maintain the two buildings and the large library needed to serve the variety of social work organizations and interests. The
Foundation had grown over the years, and its activities were reflected in a series of separate departments whose deeds were recorded faithfully in each year’s annual report: the Department of Industrial Studies, the Department of Social Work Administration (formerly known as the Department of Charity Organization), the Department of the Social Work Yearbook, and the Department of Statistics.

The Foundation had made a number of significant achievements during the 1930s, but by 1945 it was showing signs of going stale. Only one new department had been initiated during the decade prior to 1945: the Department of Studies in the Professions under the direction of Esther Lucille Brown. For the most part, however, the Foundation was continuing along a path that had been set early in its existence. Furthermore, the internal condition of Russell Sage Foundation was troubling. The Foundation weathered the Depression, but its conservative investment policy from the mid-1930s to the mid-1940s meant that its endowment had not risen with inflation. Coupled with its heavy investment in buildings and staff, this meant that the Foundation for many years was running in the red, spending more on its buildings, upkeep, and overhead, along with its traditional program, than it was raising in revenues. There was nothing left for new or innovative efforts.

Since its inception the Foundation had been under the leadership of only two men, with little change in principle or organizing structure, and it was faced with a situation that can often attack organizations: the aging of personnel. Shelby Harrison’s mandatory retirement (at age 65) was just around the corner (1947), and with an aging board, an aging staff, and an aging director, there was added incentive to reexamine the Foundation’s operation and to consider taking it in a new direction.

Interviews with those who remember both the Board and the staff at that time confirm the impression that is given from reading the annual reports: a rather tired sameness, a lack of a sense of fresh vision or input (with rare exceptions), and a generally unexciting program. Whether this condition can be traced to the changed economic circumstance, the general aging of Foundation personnel, or the joint disruptions of the Depression and World
War II, it seemed clear to some of the younger and more energetic members of the Board that something had to be done, and the transition to a new general director occasioned by the impending retirement of Dr. Harrison provided the appropriate opportunity.

The Transition

The actual transformation of the Russell Sage Foundation might be said to have begun, not in 1948 when a new president was named, but three years earlier, when Eli Whitney Debevoise was added to the Board. The President of the Board in 1945, Morris Hadley, was aware of the need for change. He was planning to step down himself when a new general director was named, and actively sought “new blood” for membership on the board. Precisely how he got to Whitney Debevoise, senior partner of the then young but rapidly growing firm of Debevoise, Plimpton and McLean (rather than the Debevoise, Plimpton, Lyons and Gates of later years, or the Debevoise, Plimpton of today) is unclear. Debevoise had graduated from Yale University and Harvard Law School, had been active in bar association matters, and had shown a special interest in some parts of social welfare. He was president of the New York Association for Blind, and active in the State Charity Aid Association as well as the New York Legal Aid Society. Debevoise was appointed to the Board in May 1945.

Debevoise had talks with President Hadley about the possible directions for the Foundation, about the need for change in personnel, and about the heavy drain on Foundation resources from their underwriting of the principal agencies of social work. They also discussed an important part of the process of organizational transition: that the difficult tasks that lay ahead should be done, insofar as possible, to make it easy for a new general director to start with a clean slate. With this in mind, the Board apparently agreed in principle, even before the selection of a new general director, that the continued underwriting of the social work agencies had to cease, that the buildings had to be sold, that the Library had to be relocated, and in general that the enormous overhead
the Foundation was running had to be reduced to a minimum. With these changes in mind the Board set about finding a new purchaser for the building, and began to notify the agencies that had received largesse on a regular yearly basis for the remembered past—making clear that neither the space nor the underwriting was going to continue.

These changes did not take place immediately. Indeed, discussions occurred over a number of months while the Foundation continued in its normal pattern. Two examples from the minutes of the Board of Trustees of May 16, 1946, suffice to indicate how some plans and positions got caught in the middle. First, the Foundation purchased a vacant lot at the southeast corner of Lexington Avenue and Twenty-second Street, for the purpose of assuring the opportunity for unhurried consideration of the question of erecting a new building for the Foundation Library or for the New York School of Social Work and the Library together on that site. Within two years, in the process of getting out of the business of social work, the Foundation would sell the lot.

Second, the Foundation had long had a program under the title of the “Charity Organization Department,” first under the direction of Mary Richmond and later Joanne Colcord, who had been appointed in 1929 and was retired in 1945. Donald S. Howard, who had been assistant director of the department but who was on leave of absence during the war, had returned and was proposed as the new director of the department. The argument was made that the work of the department continued to be important, but that its name should be changed to “Department of Social Work Administration” in order to describe more accurately its widened scope. The Board agreed to appoint Dr. Howard and to make a search for two new research assistants for the department. Three years later, the department, like plans for the building, would be gone, and Dr. Howard would be on his way to an academic post on the West Coast.

As part of the transition, at its November, 1946, meeting, President Hadley, reporting for the Executive Committee, submitted a list of seven possible candidates for the position of general director. The Board was clearly zeroing in on its choice, for a
special meeting was held on January 9, 1947, in the offices of the Foundation. The minutes tell us the meeting “was devoted entirely to consideration of the qualifications of men who had been suggested as candidates for the position of general director.” (It is interesting that no women were apparently under consideration, as the Russell Sage Board at one time had a number of women among its members.)

By June of 1947, the Foundation began breaking its ties to current programs. Although the Foundation did provide one-year renewals for grants to the New York School of Social Work, the American Association of Schools of Social Work, and the National Association of School Social Workers, they declined six requests for new grants, “since it does not seem desirable to draw further on income reserve balances at this time.” Rejected applicants included the American Committee on International Exchange of Social Workers, the Campfire Girls, the World Youth Fund of the YMCA, and a special grant for a twenty-fifth anniversary booklet for the Regional Plan Association of New York. These same minutes announce the appointment of staff member Ralph G. Hurlin as Acting General Director of the Foundation beginning July 1, 1947, until the new general director could assume his position some time in 1948.

Previous grantees continued to be informed that, at least so far as Russell Sage was concerned, the past was not a guide to their future. Publishers of the Social Work Yearbook were informed that 1949 would be the last year the Foundation could underwrite the enterprise. Even the Regional Plan Association, although a major long-term recipient of Russell Sage support, had to swallow the bad news. One motion of the Board, on November 25, 1947, stated “The Acting General Director was requested to write to the Regional Plan Association expressing the regret of the Board, that not-withstanding its recognition of the importance of the work of the Association, it felt that it was inexpedient to make any exception to the Board’s previous action terminating on a uniform basis all present grants.”

This is perhaps enough to give a flavor of the institutional housecleaning that was going on. Soon to follow were the sale of
the Foundation's buildings to the Catholic Diocese, and the removal of the New York School of Social Work and the Library. Some of this work could be completed only after the new general director was in position, but much of it preceded his arrival and undoubtedly eased his burden, as the Foundation cut back from its huge staff (some estimates put it as high as 200) down to the handful that would begin the new generation of Russell Sage.

Whitney Debevoise had been appointed to the Executive Committee of the Russell Sage Foundation shortly after his appointment to the Board, and following that had been one of three persons appointed to the committee to search for a new general director. It seems apparent that he, more than others, was an active force in the search for a successor. It is not entirely clear from the records how extensive the search was (after the aforementioned preliminary list had been worked through). Nor is the precise timing clear between Donald Young's selection as the new General Director and Whitney Debevoise's election as the Chairman of the Board of Russell Sage. The formal timing is clear enough—Young was appointed well before Debevoise—but Debevoise clearly seemed the most likely candidate to replace Morris Hadley upon his resignation. And Debevoise made it clear that he would only serve if he felt that he could work well with the new General Director. His meetings with Young convinced him that that would be possible.

Donald R. (for Ramsey) Young was a natural choice for the Russell Sage Foundation. He had academic respectability, having been a professor of sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. During World War II he had been actively involved in helping organize the research branch of the U.S. Army, an activity that led to one of the major research achievements of the era, the four-volume *American Soldier Series*. But most importantly, he had been on the staff of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) since 1932, and had been named its executive director in 1945. The Social Science Research Council had been the recipient of small grants from the Russell Sage Foundation for many years, and it was not unnatural to think of SSRC as containing the more dispassionate and detached social science thought that might be useful for a
foundation that had long concerned itself with social welfare. Young thus combined an academic background, work on applied research problems, and the interdisciplinary framework of the SSRC with executive and managerial experience. And, of course, he was known to Foundation people in New York City.

As if these traits weren’t enough, he had two others that might well have marked him even further for a post like that of the General Director of the Russell Sage Foundation. On the personal side, he was known to be sharp and tough-minded, and also tight-fisted. He was not one to spend a dollar easily or loosely, and he expected value in return. These traits must have seemed particularly important for an organization that had been routinely spending beyond its budget and that clearly needed someone who could drive a hard bargain with prospective Foundation grantees.

A second trait was his commitment to the objective, harder, more quantitative side of the social science disciplines. His training at Pennsylvania had apparently made him somewhat leery of more clinical and Freudian explanations of social behavior, and he was not terribly sympathetic toward the softer side of the field of social work. How much either of these traits were perceived as relevant at the time of his selection is difficult to discern. His general tendencies were known, but he clearly did not have a set program at the time he agreed to become the Foundation’s General Director, and it is unclear what precise combination of his attributes made him especially attractive to the Russell Sage Board and to Whitney Debevoise.

So why this choice instead of other possibilities? It seems apparent that even an organization with the enormous freedom of a general-purpose foundation does not feel unconstrained in its choice for leadership. In theory, the Russell Sage Foundation could have aided the betterment of social and living conditions in the United States through a variety of other routes, some more radical, some much more limited and focused on a specific social problem. That it chose an academic conservative with major experience in a sister organization in the same city, even at a time when it was clearly searching for new blood and a new direction, suggests some organizational limits on the process of succession.
A board of laymen, themselves relatively conservative, would have had to make a commitment to truly radical transformation if it were to seek leadership from outside its familiar social and intellectual network. In any event, Donald Young was by all accounts an ideal choice. He was a choice that would indeed lead the Foundation in a new direction, but one that maintained substantial continuity with its past.

By the time Donald R. Young was fully aboard as the new General Director of the Russell Sage Foundation, the major hardships of the transition were about over. The old building was sold, the Library moved, large numbers of employees let go, and new quarters found (at 505 Park Avenue), with just enough space to hold a handful of professional staff and related personnel. The tale is told dramatically by comparing the masthead of the annual report of the Foundation for the years 1947–1948 with that for 1949–1950. Under “Professional Staff” the former lists all the five departments, the Library, and a total of twenty-three named personnel. Two years later, there are seven named staff.

The transition had not been without its hardships, for both organizations and individuals. The pain of organizational resettlement had to be acute for some of the social work organizations that had learned to count on Russell Sage for support. It was undoubtedly even more agonizing for some individuals, who had to reorganize their lives because of the change. Fortunately, a great number of them were very near retirement—a result of the lack of turnover at Russell Sage for two or three decades and the lack of addition of new staff. But for some the problems were acute. Suggestions of the difficulties appear in various minutes of the meetings, where concern was devoted to the pensions to be arranged for early retirees. This burden was born heavily by the Board, thus letting the new general director begin with a virtually free slate.

And that he did. Donald Young kept two parts of the program of the old Russell Sage Foundation that were closest to the center of his interests: the work of Ralph Hurlin, who had been in charge of the Department of Statistics and who had served as Acting General Director; and that of Esther Lucille Brown, a prolific writer and student of the practicing professions. Virtually all the other
programs were shut down, including the industrial organization program of the controversial Mary van Kleeck.

Having wiped the slate relatively clean, Donald R. Young then faced the real challenge of replacing it with a program of his own. Here it seems clear from all the interviews that Young himself did not have a firm and clear vision of what he wanted the Foundation to be. There is evidence that he sought advice from a variety of quarters about possible new directions, and that there was a bit of floundering at first, until he received almost by accident the kind of suggestion that gave direction and focus to his own somewhat inchoate ideas. It came from Professor Fred Stephan, a Princeton statistician, during a train ride. There are risks, of course, in assigning one perhaps casual conversation a substantial weight in directing the ultimate program of an organization, but when three reliable sources tell substantially the same story, it gains an air of credibility.

The accounts differ only in nuance and detail. Stephan told Young that what he should do, in essence, is to bring the social sciences to bear on the study of social practice, by which he meant largely the arena of the practicing professions: medicine, nursing, law, and perhaps education, in addition to the past staple of the Foundation, social work. Some accounts put the emphasis on the professions, others on the idea of social practice in all of its forms, but the main theme remains the same: knowledge of the social sciences should be brought to bear on the arts of social practice. A slightly different account had Stephan urging Young to address the "problems of the society" but defining those as primarily the problems dealt with by the fields of medicine, education, and social work.

Whatever Stephan provided, he certainly did not set Dr. Young off on a totally new or different path, one for which his own training had not prepared him. It was not so much a new direction as a crystallization of what Young had been groping for all along. Indeed, he reported to Leonard S. (Slats) Cottrell, Jr., his first major new appointment to the staff of Russell Sage, that precisely what Stephan had done was to "crystallize" his thinking.

Dr. Young was committed to the social sciences and to the
possibility of their rigorous development as an objective science. He had been involved in practical applications in the military and elsewhere. He had worked in the interdisciplinary terrain of the Social Science Research Council. He was also enough of an organization man to sense the need for some continuity in the operation of the Foundation, despite a great change in structure. Thus, the idea of bringing the advances of the social sciences, including their methodological advances, to bear upon social problems in the form of studies of social practice and its effects does not seem to be an unusual direction for Young to have taken the Foundation.

A number of observers have noted that although he had an appreciation for the promise of social work, he had little but scorn for many of its practitioners, who seemed uncertain about their purpose and direction. In any event, Donald Young had found the formula for his new enterprise. The next step was to put it into motion.

The New Regime

The substantive programs of the Russell Sage Foundation during the Donald Young era can be divided into social science and the professions (medicine and social work), philanthropy, social science and the military, and a variety of other efforts.

Social Science and the Professions

The general program toward which Donald Young was groping centered on the application of social science to the practicing professions. Nothing about that commitment dictated which particular profession or professions would become dominant in the program of the Foundation, but it is evident from the record that medicine received primary attention during the early years. Although social work did receive its due, it did not receive primary or first attention. The reasons seem to be a combination of Dr. Young’s own values, his strategic thinking about impact, and the available talent pool.

Although Dr. Young had respect for some practitioners in the
field of social work, he thought the field as a whole was rather soft and poorly developed. Perhaps even more important, in the prestige ranking of the professions, social work fell far below medicine. If the Russell Sage Foundation could bring social science to bear in an important way on medical practice, the world of practitioners and scholars would sit up and listen. The same effect in social work would not be seen as such an accomplishment. And among the professions of a status higher than that of social work, medicine, unlike law, had a research tradition. There was also reason to believe that Dr. Young had a personal interest in medicine as a result of health problems in his family.

On the human resources side, there was the presence of Esther Lucille Brown, the first woman to receive a Ph.D. in anthropology/sociology from Yale University. Esther Lucille Brown had been actively working to get more of the cultural sciences into medical settings, if not into doctor’s offices, then into nursing and hospitals. She also had a broad interest in the professions, having studied engineers and having made initial forays into the world of law. It is significant that she was the single Russell Sage staff member (in addition to acting director Ralph Hurlin) who was retained in the new regime. Also, important work was beginning at Columbia in social science and the professions, with a special focus on medicine, under the direction of Professor Robert K. Merton. One of the earliest Foundation grants in Young’s regime was to Columbia University to develop a major book that would apply social science perspectives to the professions.

**Medicine**

The very first steps were to get anthropologists and sociologists connected to medical schools, where they might learn something about medicine and also develop a cultural approach to medical practice. To accomplish this aim, the Foundation gave grants to medical schools for the employment of anthropologists and sociologists. This may sound easy, but at the time many hospital administrators were unfamiliar with the idea and not ready to embrace the presence of social and behavioral scientists in their
 midst. They had to be persuaded. Money helped.

One of the very first appointments was of Leo Simmons, an anthropologist, to the Cornell Medical School. Another appointment was that of sociologist Lyle Saunders to the University of Colorado Medical School faculty, which needed to gain insight into the Hispanic culture, since Hispanics were a majority of their patient population. And sociologist Ed Volkart established a program in the Medical School at Stanford, where anthropologist Benjamin Paul would be attached to the School of Public Health.

The Foundation also established a residency program to place postdoctoral candidates from anthropology, sociology, or social psychology in medical or health settings. The first such appointment was that of Albert Wessen, a Yale sociologist, to the Department of Pediatrics at Yale Medical School, to examine the institutionalized relations among medical personnel and to observe the effects of those relationships on children and their parents.

This movement marked the beginnings of medical sociology. A strong basis was laid for the development of studies of cultural factors in disease, of the relationship of one’s social and ethnic background to the handling of illness, of the role of organizational factors in medical care and the like. These interests are reflected in publications of the Foundation (after a time lag of four or five years) beginning in 1954, when Saunders’ Cultural Differences in Medical Care was published, along with Simmons and Wolff’s Social Science in Medicine. These were followed in 1955 by Greenblatt, York, and Brown’s From Custodial to Therapeutic Patient Care in Mental Hospitals; Paul’s Health, Culture and Community, which became one of the Foundation’s best-selling books; and the more technical Fraenkel and Erhardt’s Morbidity in the Municipal Hospitals in the City of New York. Later in the decade there was Schwartz and Shockley’s The Nurse and the Mental Patient and Von Mering and King’s Remotivating the Mental Patient.

Important as the publications may have been, the heart of the program was in its influence on young careers. In a field just getting established, the training and institutional support provided by the Russell Sage Foundation enabled people to make a career of medical sociology. Many of the active participants—Professor
Hollingshead at Yale, Bloom at Baylor Medical School, and others—helped introduce and sell the Russell Sage training model to the National Institute of Mental Health as it began its own program in the late 1950s.

**Social Work**

Although the Foundation was moving away from social work practice, and although social work was not its first choice as a focus for the application of social science, social work, especially in the broader conception that would include social and community welfare, did receive attention from the Foundation. Roland Warren's *Studying Your Community*, published in 1955, continued earlier Russell Sage efforts to apply community concepts to the development of social welfare, and in 1958 the Foundation published an influential book by Wilensky and Lebeaux, *Industrial Society and Social Welfare*.

In 1955, the Foundation added to its staff a social psychologist, Edgar F. Borgatta, primarily to bring more rigorous empirical and experimental methods to the field of social work. This led to such publications as the 1959 Meyer and Borgatta's *An Experiment in Mental Patient Rehabilitation*, and a year later Borgatta, Fanshel, and Meyer's *Social Workers' Perceptions of Clients*. An experimental study started at this time, though published just after Dr. Young's regime, was Meyer, Borgatta, and Jones' *Girls at Vocational High*, an experiment (which failed) in the rehabilitation of troubled families.

Just as the Foundation had placed social scientists in medical faculties, so it helped place them in schools of social work. Henry Meyer at the University of Michigan School of Social Work and Lloyd Ohlin at Columbia School of Social Work were both social scientists appointed to help bring the concepts of social science to the training of social workers. Sociologist Joseph Eaton joined the School of Applied Social Science at Western Reserve University to apply social science to social work practice.

On occasion, special opportunities would present themselves. Professor Peggy Rosenheim of the Department of Social Science Administration at the University of Chicago wanted to prepare
a casebook on law for social workers, and received Foundation support for the enterprise. The Foundation also on occasion took professional social workers and gave them a year or more in a graduate social science program, so that the interdisciplinary influence could work the other way around as well.

The medical and social work programs were the first of what became a kind of Russell Sage model for the merging of social science and the professions. It was a model that would be amplified and extended to other disciplines in later years: the placement of social scientists on professional school faculties, the training of professionals in social science, the letting of research grants to do specific studies of the professions, and the search for other, related ways of promoting interdisciplinary work. The aim was to understand and to improve the workings and effects of the professions by applying the tools and concepts of the developing social and behavioral sciences.

**Philanthropy**

The Russell Sage Foundation had a history of involvement with philanthropy. The Foundation had begun an association with one of the more prolific students of philanthropy, F. Emerson Andrews, long before Donald Young became the Director. But Young shared Andrews’ interest in philanthropy, and it became one of the areas of program commitment for the Russell Sage Foundation during the 1950s. Indeed, in the eyes of one observer, the three major reference groups for Dr. Young during his tenure as president were sociologists, philanthropists, and people in medicine. Thus, throughout Young’s regime there were studies of philanthropy, including Andrews’ own *Philanthropic Giving* (1950), *Corporation Giving* (1952), *Attitudes Towards Giving* (1953), *Philanthropic Foundations* (1956), and *Legal Instruments of Foundations* (1958). Emerging from this trend was one of the Foundation’s most important practical services, the publication of the *Foundation Directory*, a guide used by innumerable people in search of funding. In later years the Foundation would play a leading role in establishing the Foundation Center Library, a central resource for any who use or
study foundations.

It would take an independent inquiry to discern the impact of all this work on the actual doing of philanthropy. It is probably difficult to be a student of the subject without confronting some of the Foundation's publications. But quite apart from its impact, it serves as a nice example of "niche-picking" in the foundation world. The work in philanthropy became a basis for a distinctive contribution of the Russell Sage Foundation, even though it had no direct tie to the master program of bringing social science to social practice. It established a special niche for the Foundation in the competitive world of other foundations. Throughout this period, Russell Sage was a prominent member of the Council on Foundations, and participated actively in many of its monthly programs. In short, it had a presence in the foundation world through its studies of philanthropy.

The Military

Both Donald Young and Slats Cottrell had served in the research branch of the military during World War II, a period that saw one of the most extensive applications of social science to policy problems. Thus it is not surprising that, when they were approached in the late 1950s by Morris Janowitz of the University of Chicago Sociology Department about possible support for continued application of social science to the military, the idea met with a positive response.

The need as Janowitz saw it was for the support of an inter-university seminar on sociology and the military establishment that would bring together persons working at different universities (though mostly in the Midwest) to help the development of this field by giving papers, supporting modest research efforts, and the like. The program was judged to be quite successful in its initial years, and was refunded on a more substantial basis three years later. The initial support led to a variety of contributions, not the least of which were three books published by the Russell Sage Foundation in the following decade: Morris Janowitz's *The New Military* (1964), Roger Little's *Selective Service in American*

The work on the military provides one example of a style that characterized at least a portion of Russell Sage's research interests throughout this period. There was nothing in the original charter that proclaimed work on the military as important for the Foundation to pursue, nor was there any indication when Donald Young changed the direction of the Foundation by focusing on the professions that the military would become an object of attention. One has to understand it largely as the product of situational elements: a proposal from a prominent and well-established sociologist to do work on a major social institution that was not currently being examined (outside the military) in a systematic way by other groups, and a topic for which the prime decisionmakers at Russell Sage were prepared by their past experience to have an interest. The topic did not emerge as a result of detailed and lengthy planning sessions, or critical strategic decisions by either the staff or the Board that this is where the primary intellectual payoff in the application of social science would be. Rather, the program emerged for more casual and serendipitous reasons, largely as a result of staff contacts with a circle of social scientists who were in the Foundation's orbit.

Other Projects

Although the professions, philanthropy, and the military became distinctive components of the Russell Sage program during the 1950s, the Foundation was by no means restricted to these arenas. Sometimes program areas that would blossom later began when a new staff member was added, for it was one of the distinctive features of the Russell Sage Foundation, and a valuable tool in recruiting staff, that program areas were often the expressions of the research interests of individual staff members, who did their own research and also supervised the development of a research program. On other occasions, a "target of opportunity" presented itself that the Foundation felt it could not turn down. The only common thread among the program areas was a broad concern for
the application of social science.

An example of a program forming around a staff appointment was the arrival of Orville G. Brim in 1957. Dr. Brim had a Ph.D. in sociology from Yale, and a strong interest in the social factors affecting personality development. His first work for the Foundation had to do with parent education, and in 1959 the Foundation published his *Education for Child Rearing*, the first of what would turn out to be a series of works relating to the developing capacities and self images of children, adolescents, and adults. His addition to the Foundation brought the number of professional staff up to six, with President Young and his first two appointments, Leonard S. Cottrell and Edgar Borgatta, and the two holdovers from the earlier era, the statistician Ralph G. Hurlin, who also served in important administrative capacities for the Foundation, and Esther Lucille Brown. Brim’s work was expanded when, in the last years of Donald Young’s presidency, another young Yale Ph.D., David A. Goslin, joined the Foundation’s staff to work on Dr. Brim’s project on ability testing, an interest that grew into a major program effort in later years.

Another body of work that came to be reflected in a staff appointment was demography. The Foundation had a long history of work employing social surveys, a specialty of Young’s predecessor as president, Shelby M. Harrison, and it had published a series of works using some of the tools of demography to analyze labor force participation and other broad social patterns under the direction of Ralph Hurlin. Dr. Eleanor Bernert Sheldon, who had worked briefly at the beginning of the 1950s on a series of volumes sponsored by the Social Science Research Council to take advantage of the 1950 census, joined the staff of the Russell Sage Foundation in 1960. Trained in population studies at the University of Chicago, Dr. Sheldon represented some continuity with an earlier tradition, and became responsible for many of the administrative tasks of the Foundation. But the primary substantive import of her presence was to be felt more visibly in later years.

Just as the Foundation in its earlier years had been captured by the field of social work, so when Donald Young became president
and appointed new staff, they tended to be sociologists by formal training, and there emerged at the Foundation another substantive interest: the development of the discipline of sociology. When interest developed in assessing the discipline there was concern that such an assessment not be carried out at any particular university, for fear that the sociological perspective at that university might color the resulting assessment. So it was natural to turn to the Russell Sage Foundation not only for funding but for sponsorship as well, and to its sister organization, the Social Science Research Council, to find a senior staff member, Elbridge Sibley, to conduct the study. The results of these labors are reported in a Russell Sage Foundation book, *The Education of Sociologists in the United States* (1963). The Foundation also agreed to publish a series of short monographs commissioned by the American Sociological Association to show the application of sociology in a variety of different practice settings, including corrections, public health, education, and a number of others. Thus did the Foundation establish another niche for itself: application of the discipline of sociology to a widening variety of social problems.

There were other Foundation activities that did not add up to a viable program but still made a lasting contribution. For example, the Foundation staff had considered programs in government, and its annual reports typically used “government” as a heading for various projects. But the work seemed to lack coherence and unity. Occasional discussions at board meetings reflected the lack of clarity about a distinctive thrust for the Russell Sage Foundation in studies of government, and the area, at least during this period, was allowed to recede into the background of Foundation interests. But that did not stop the Foundation from supporting what came to be one of its most influential works, Wallace Sayre and Herbert Kauffman’s *Governing New York City* (1960), an examination of the relationship of politics to government.

If one examines the last two or three years of Donald Young’s sixteen-year period as President of the Russell Sage Foundation from the list of publications over the period, the centrality of the Foundation’s commitment to medicine and related professions on one hand and to philanthropy on the other becomes clear, and one
can see what was perhaps the most important legacy of Young's presidency. In medicine, for example, the year 1961 saw the publication of Elliot Friedson's *Patients' Views of Medical Practice*, followed in 1962 by King's *Perceptions of Illness and Medical Practice* and in 1963 by Samuel Bloom's *Doctor and His Patient*. In the related field of nursing, Esther Lucille Brown's *Newer Dimensions of Patient Care, Vols. I and II* came out in 1961 and 1962, one year prior to her retirement; they were preceded by MacGregor's *Social Science in Nursing* in 1960. And as part of its mark in the world of philanthropy, the first edition of the *Foundation Directory* was published in 1960, with the second edition forthcoming in 1964 as Donald Young retired.

A different picture, one more closely heralding what was to come rather than what had been, is obtained by focusing not on publications, which necessarily reflect granting decisions made years earlier, but on new grants themselves. Here the evolution of the Foundation's interests becomes quite evident. In 1960 to 1963, the last few years of Donald Young's presidency, the Foundation had clearly changed its focus on the professions from medicine to law. The federal government, through the National Institute of Health, began to provide funding for the application of behavioral sciences to health programs. Now, largely under the direction of Leonard S. Cottrell, the Foundation's interests shifted to law, which would occupy the largest portion of the Foundation's monetary commitments in the decade of the 1960s. Grants to the University of California at Berkeley and to the University of Wisconsin initiated this trend during the Young regime.

Similarly, the interests of Brim and Goslin in ability testing were taking shape. In 1962 the publication of Goslin's *Search For Ability* led to a proposal for research on the social consequences of ability that was funded jointly by the Russell Sage Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation. Thus was set in motion the evolution of the Foundation's programs as it began to prepare for the retirement of Dr. Young and the appointment of his successor.
Presidential Succession:  
The Transition to Orville G. Brim, Jr.

The appointment of Orville G. ("Bert") Brim stands in sharp contrast to the events surrounding Young's replacement of Shelby Harrison. Young's appointment coincided with a massive organizational cutback, including the termination of staff and the sale of the building, and a substantial re-direction of programs away from social work and toward a more scientific orientation. Whereas Young's appointment signaled a shift in Foundation policies, the selection of Dr. Brim signaled continuity. Although a physical move from one location to another was present on both occasions, that similarity is more apparent than real: in 1963, the Foundation needed somewhat larger quarters than those it had inhabited at 505 Park Avenue, and it found them in the "New York General Building" at 230 Park Avenue, where it rented part of the 31st floor along with a neighboring social science organization, the Population Council.

Both transitions took place on the occasion of the retirement of the President at age 65, and in that sense they were both orderly transitions. Adding to their orderliness was the fact that both presidents had an important hand in the selection of their replacements. Shelby Harrison had been active in the Social Science Research Council, and helped convince Donald Young that he was the right man for the job in 1947. Although the Board of Trustees' committee to select Donald Young's replacement first offered the presidency to two board members, when they were unable to accept, the Board moved to the choice of Dr. Brim, whose appointment was formally endorsed in November of 1963 and who took over as President in January of 1964.

One final similarity between the earlier and the later succession is that a change in the Chairman of the Board of Trustees accompanied the shift to a new executive officer. The timing was not quite the same. In the late 1940s, Whitney Debovoise participated actively in the selection of Donald Young and made sure he felt that he could work with Young before agreeing to be the new Chairman of the Board. In the 1960s, Debevoise remained the Chairman of
the Board as the move to 230 Park Avenue took place and as a new President took office. But in September of 1964, Oscar M. Ruebhausen, also a lawyer and a member of the firm of Debevoise, Plimpton, Lyons and Gates (as it was then known), was appointed to the Board. Less than two years into the Brim presidency, Mr. Ruebhausen replaced Debevoise as Chairman of the Board and the Foundation was under new leadership in both of its key positions.

The importance of the working relationship between the Chairman of the Board of Trustees and the President at Russell Sage Foundation would be hard to overestimate. It had long been the practice at Russell Sage for the President to consult with the Chairman of the Board on the agendas for each of the three yearly board meetings. The Chairman was in very close touch with matters of substance, matters of personnel, and matters of administration. Other board members were typically brought into play only with regard to specific committees, of which the finance committee and the personnel committee were probably the most important.

The quality of the relationship between the persons in these two critical positions is probably difficult to program in advance, and depends in large part on what transpires between them over time. In the case of Young and Debevoise, all accounts suggest that the relationship was easy and comfortable, and that their years together passed relatively quietly. Young was very much in charge, and Debevoise was the prudent lawyer and quiet ally who helped Young present his program to the Board. When Oscar Ruebhausen replaced Debevoise early in Brim’s tenure, he immediately became a more activist Chair. His legal interest in privacy, combined with Brim’s interest in personality, led to a joint article on the right to a private personality that later appeared in the Columbia Law Review.

Beginning with Ruebhausen, the Board took a more active role in Foundation affairs. This was in part a result of the general strengthening of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation. In an earlier style of philanthropy, some board members had been able and well-meaning private citizens, often well established in business and elite circles, who gave their time but who had neither a burning substantive interest nor expertise in the programmatic concerns of the Foundation. Coupled with the absence of any
mandatory retirement, the Board tended to be both older (and therefore perhaps less vigorous) and less knowledgeable. It was a natural situation for a rubber-stamp orientation, with the President and the Chairman of the Board presenting matters for relatively routine board adoption. Mr. Debevoise was aware of the problem. One of his gifts to Dr. Brim was to put through a new resolution that prevented the re-election of a board member beyond age 70. In time, a more vigorous group of trustees emerged, and the Board became younger and more actively involved in Foundation programs. Furthermore, more members of the Board were persons of national rank and prestige in the scholarly community.

The increased vigor in both staff and board is suggested by a comparison of the early agendas during the administration of Brim with those over the last few months of Young’s tenure. A typical Young board meeting would have three or four proposals up for discussion—sometimes as many as five but rarely more than six. When the Brim administration got rolling, there were as many as sixteen or seventeen substantive proposals presented at each board meeting, and there were signs of very active program planning and development. Sections of board meetings would be set aside to discuss plans for the future, and a variety of major policy issues were put before the Board for their consideration.

This more expansive regime was possible because more dollars were flowing into the Foundation, and because of its physical aspect as well. Less than three years after assuming the presidency, Brim expanded the Foundation offices from half to about three-quarters of the 31st floor at 230 Park Avenue. The expansion made it possible to accommodate a slight increase in professional staff, an increase in the research support for staff projects, and space for residents and Visiting Scholars who were contributing to Foundation discussions and programs.

Brim’s initial additions to the staff were modest in number but significant. His first appointment was Wilbert E. Moore, a senior sociologist of wide reputation who gave up tenure at Princeton to join the Foundation’s staff. Dr. Moore was a well-established sociological theorist and student of the professions. That a relatively small foundation could attract a senior person of stature to leave
academia helped solidify an image of the Foundation as a research institute. This added to its capacity to attract other personnel and to awake an interest among prospective grantees. A series of other appointments who were at various stages in their careers enabled Brim to bring, by 1967, the number of full-time staff to eight. In addition to Brim, Cottrell (soon to retire), Goslin, Sheldon, and Moore, there were sociologist Stanton Wheeler, who had joined the staff from the University of Washington; David C. Glass, a psychologist who had been at Ohio State; Hugh F. Cline of the sociology faculty at University of California, Santa Barbara; and Lindsey Churchill, sociologist from Cornell. At the same time a new Visiting Scholars program got off to an auspicious start with the appointments of Alex Inkeles of Stanford University and Robert K. Merton of Columbia.

The staff continued to get along without formal meetings, following a tradition begun by Donald Young of collecting for lunch periodically in the President's office, sometimes to hear a staff member, but usually with an interesting guest, and with no set agenda. The visitors were likely to include many of those who had been participants in Foundation programs, and who were actively concerned with the growth of the social and behavioral sciences. Donald Young would join these gatherings on occasion. Familiar figures at Foundation lunches included Morris Janowitz from the University of Chicago, Phillip Selznick of Berkeley, and Amatai Etzioni and Daniel Bell of Columbia.

The personality and personal style of President Brim was a dominant influence on the life of the Foundation during these years. There was a restless search for new ideas, an effort to anticipate emerging problems rather than merely to respond to existing ones. As a matter of style, Brim was more of a risk taker than Young, and he often waxed enthusiastic over novel ideas, seeing in them the potential his fellow staff members sometimes missed.

Although it is difficult to trace specific projects or ideas to particular sources, there is agreement among those who served on his staff that President Brim's life beyond the confines of the Foundation added much to life within it. Unlike his predecessor, whose
reference groups were formed very largely from medicine, the university, and the world of philanthropy. Dr. Brim had well-established ties to the business and communications communities, and he would occasionally get ideas for the Foundation from his friends who rode the commuter train to Fairfield County, Connecticut, where he and they resided.

In short, the expansion of social scientists on the staff, the addition of visiting scholars, and the generation of many more project proposals were only part of the sense of growth and excitement that characterized the Foundation during these years. A large additional part of this sense was owed to the combination of informality, creativity, and new ideas that were brought into the daily life of the institution by its new president.

Substantive Programs during the Brim Years

The environment in which the Foundation was carrying out its mandate was far different for Dr. Brim than it was for Donald Young. The 1950–1970 period was an extraordinary era for the social sciences. By the mid 1960s a whole series of institutions had arisen that had been absent when Young took over in 1948. There was growing financial support through the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Science Foundation, optimism in the use of social science for Great Society programs, the rise of contract research in Washington, the establishment of the Ford Foundation and its many contributions, including its support for the Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Science in Palo Alto. This changed context meant that any small foundation had to work hard to maintain its own identity and make a distinctive contribution. Russell Sage programs can be seen as an effort to find this distinctive place while maintaining continuity with its broad commitments to behavioral science and to interdisciplinary activity.

Any attempt to summarize risks giving the impression of an immutable set of program categories; the reality is that the programs were subject to change and re-constitution over the years. In this brief review, I try to highlight major program efforts,
and save until later any discussion of process or impact.

The various projects were diverse and not easily cabined, but eight major areas of foundation activity emerge clearly. Some, like philanthropy, have a strong anchoring in the years preceding Brim’s presidency, and others, like social indicators, have roots in the years preceding Donald Young. For the most part, however, these programs are the initiative of the new regime. I begin with those programs that had strong roots in the Foundation’s past, and then move to the newer areas.

**Philanthropy**

Within the first year of his presidency, Brim pressed on the Board the importance of Russell Sage’s role in studies of philanthropy, and received a major commitment of funds to expand the Foundation’s program. This long-standing interest had been supported by Dr. Young, and early in Brim’s presidency the Foundation published some of the fruits of that support. The Foundation published Marion Freemont-Smith’s important book on *Foundations and Government: State and Federal Law and Supervision* in 1965, and supported her later work, *Philanthropy and the Business Corporation* (1972). It also supported and published Ralph Nelson’s *Investment Policies of Foundations* (1967).

Later in his presidency, the Foundation published Zurcher and Dustan’s *Foundation Administrator*, the first detailed descriptive study of philanthropoids—those who make their own money by giving away that of others. The Foundation also published work by its staff member who was in charge of important parts of the philanthropy program, Wilbert E. Moore, in collaboration with former president Donald Young, *Trusteeship and the Management of Foundations* (1969). Nor were its activities limited to publication. When sociologist Alvin Gouldner spent time in Western Europe, he helped inform the Foundation about European practices in philanthropy, including those of the East European nations.

But of all the Foundation’s work in the area of philanthropy, clearly the most visible was the Foundation’s publication of the *Foundation Directory*. Revised volumes were in preparation soon
after their predecessors were being distributed. Indeed, publication of the *Foundation Directory* probably did more to make the Russell Sage Foundation a familiar name in the public sector than any of its other accomplishments. The public relations importance of the Foundation’s philanthropy program was very clear to President Brim: it was a way of signaling leadership in the field despite the Foundation’s relatively small size.

The Foundation was also active in supporting those institutions that later became the center of foundation publication and activity. One of these was the Foundation Center Library, whose first director was the former Russell Sage staff member F. Emerson Andrews. The Council on Foundations also developed during this period, and with its development came the enormous growth of foundations in other parts of the nation. Slowly the center of gravity for foundation thought and study was moving out of Russell Sage and in some respects out of New York City. But during the 1960s the Foundation’s role was well recognized and important.

**The Development of Social Indicators**

Throughout the Foundation’s history some portion of its energies had been directed to systematic social measurement. It had a long-standing concern for the development of social surveys, and through Ralph Hurlin and the Department of Statistics, a concern for the appropriate use of statistical data. The sociologist William Fielding Ogburn’s *Recent Social Trends* was a path-breaking study published in the New Deal era, and had support from Russell Sage and the SSRC. The Foundation had contributed to the studies based on United States census data in 1950 and again in 1960. Thus, it was natural for the Russell Sage Foundation to push the idea of developing systematic indicators of the social state of the nation as efforts at national planning increased during the early part of the 1960s.

The idea of time-series measurements, so that changes could be systematically observed in the basic social facts of the nation, lay at the heart of the development of a program variously known as “measuring social change,” or “developing social indicators,” or
"developing a social report for the nation." The analogy, of course, was to the widespread use of data on the economic state of the nation available through measures of the GNP, labor-force participation, and the like. There was no parallel body of data, systematically gathered, that could be used to chart changes in the nature of the family, of education, of health or other measures of well-being. The Foundation helped launch a serious interest in work on this topic, under the direction of staff members Eleanor Bern- ert Sheldon and Wilbert Moore.

They began in a familiar academic mode, by commissioning a series of papers and conferences on the development of social indicators. A year later (in 1966) a Washington office was opened so that the Foundation could fully exploit the body of national data systematically gathered by federal agencies. (This work was continued and expanded by the SSRC following Dr. Sheldon's moving to the Council in the early 1970s.) The following year saw the commissioning of work to produce measures of the social psychological health of the nation by drawing on the rich data resources of the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan.

The result of these and other efforts became evident near the end of the decade. In 1968, Sheldon and Moore's Indicators of Social Change: Measurements and Concepts was published. The volume comprised original contributions by fifteen social scientists who had participated in the earlier conferences. The following year the first of Abbot L. Ferriss's series of detailed monographs on social indicators was published: Indicators of Trends in American Education. He would subsequently publish similar volumes on indicators of trends in the status of the family and of American women. And by 1972, the work by Angus Campbell and Philip Converse of the University of Michigan on human perceptions of the quality of life was published, under the title, The Human Meaning of Social Change.

These efforts were coupled with other strategies, both pure and applied. In the former category belongs a seminar on models and measurement of social change conducted at Johns Hopkins University by James S. Coleman and Peter Rossi. In an effort to help popularize and sell the idea of social indicators, the Foundation published an essay by Dudley Duncan, Toward Social Reporting:
Next Steps (1969) in its Social Science Frontiers series, an effort to make important new breakthroughs in social science available to a wider audience. The Foundation also made efforts to apply these ideas more generally, by sponsoring a joint Anglo-American conference on social indicators held in England in 1971; and more narrowly, by applying the concept of social indicators to much smaller regions—the Los Angeles area, for example.

The idea of social indicators, once launched, is much too large for an organization of Russell Sage’s size to support on a continuing basis. But the work that followed in the 1970s, including the important further contribution by Campbell and Converse (joined by Rodgers) and published by the Russell Sage Foundation in 1976 as the Quality of American Life, owes much to the nurturance given the idea of social indicators at Russell Sage during the 1960s.

Law and Social Sciences

The law program had its conceptual beginnings when Donald Young made a commitment to study the practicing professions. But during the early years of his presidency, it appeared that medicine, public health, and social work were inviting targets for the application of social science, and were more ready than law to welcome an expanded role for social science in their curricula, their training, and their research. The Foundation had actually made contacts with a number of law schools many years before Donald Young’s presidency, when Esther Lucille Brown was first developing her program on the professions. She visited Chicago, Berkeley, Harvard, Yale, Northwestern, and other institutions, some of whom were receptive to her ideas. But she was already heavily invested in medicine and nursing, and that, coupled with a good deal of reticence on the part of a number of the leading law schools, meant that the law program did not really get under way at the Foundation until Leonard S. Cottrell pushed for it during the final years of Donald Young’s administration.

During that period, law grew quickly to be the number one consumer of the Foundation’s largesse. Even as the presidency changed hands, the law provided a direct continuity of purpose.
At its last board meeting before Brim assumed the presidency, the Foundation committed almost half a million dollars to law and social science. The law program under the Brim presidency continued to receive the largest portion of Foundation funds of any of its programs. As a case study within a case study, it may profit us to explore this programmatic effort in more detail.

The movement into law was a natural evolution. The National Institutes of Health began to take up the work in medicine that the Foundation had initiated in the prior decade, but no one was supporting social science studies of law and legal institutions. Of course, there had been a flurry of interest in such studies since the days of legal realism in the 1930s, but the law schools were primarily centers for the professional training of lawyers, and despite occasional exceptions, social scientists, if present at all, hovered uneasily at the periphery.

Into that world marched Russell Sage, largely through the person of staff member Leonard S. Cottrell, whose own background provided little basis for a commitment to law studies but who was thoroughly imbued with the Russell Sage philosophy of interdisciplinary applications. Beginning near the end of Donald Young’s regime and continuing under Dr. Brim, Cottrell established a new interdisciplinary field where none had existed before. He accomplished this by providing support to academic institutions, establishing a residency program, helping to establish a new organization and journal, and supporting individual research projects.

**Institutional Support.** Cottrell made initial forays at a number of institutions, including Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Berkeley, Columbia, and Wisconsin. Their response was mixed at best. As he remembers it, many of the leading institutions, including Harvard and Yale, were perfectly happy to take the Foundation’s money, but did not care for instructions about how to spend it. The most receptive responses he received were from Berkeley and Wisconsin, which of course is why the Foundation’s institutional grants began with those two institutions. These were later extended to Northwestern and to the University of Denver Law School. By 1970, a number of other institutions had received major
programmatic support, including some who had been unreceptive when Cottrell began the program a decade earlier. Harvard, Pennsylvania, Stanford, and Yale all had programs of varying types, and brought to eight the number of academic institutions that were receiving support for interdisciplinary training and research.

The programs were as varied as the campuses on which they were located and the personalities of their principal figures. The mix varied between disciplines, between training and research, and in the amount of support that went directly for faculty salaries. Although some of the energy flowing into law and social science at these institutions would have continued without foundation support, it seems evident that much of it would not.

**Interdisciplinary Residencies.** A second major effort was in interdisciplinary training. The Foundation provided funds for training over a two-year period, to be undertaken at institutions that made a commitment to law and social science. The residencies allowed social scientists to learn enough about law to incorporate that learning in their research, or alternatively exposed lawyers to basic training in social science.

The operation of a training program took on major proportions at Russell Sage, where an external review committee consisting of leaders of the law and social science movement met with Foundation staff each year to select candidates from among a large number of applicants. This was a program nurtured and advertised by Russell Sage during the mid-1960s. In its first year or two, the total number of applicants was not more than two dozen, but it quickly rose to well over a hundred for some five or six residencies each year. Over a two-year period these residencies cost the Foundation about $20,000 each, but the training they provided enabled individuals to convert their careers into law and social science research and teaching, thus creating a new interdisciplinary field.

**Launching a Society and a Journal.** The law and social science movement was comprised in these early years of core faculty from institutions supported by Russell Sage and other foundations, the newly trained interdisciplinary scholars, and other young people
who were interested in applying their training as anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, political scientists, economists, or historians to the examination of legal institutions. In this context, it was natural that a law-and-society movement might form, and it was natural for that movement to turn to the Russell Sage Foundation for support. The Foundation provided seed money for the Law and Society Association, and especially money to help launch the initial journal in the field, The Law and Society Review. These were seen as institution-building activities as important in their own modest way as the direct support to individual scholars and to institutions of higher learning.


The argument in support of these studies was that if the field is to move forward, it must not only train scholars but also provide support for their research. Over the decade of the 1960s, despite expanded support for the social sciences in Washington, there were no programs specifically devoted to the field of law and social science. Thus research funding and publication complemented interdisciplinary training and institutional support in the Foundation's efforts to create a new field.

**The Social Sciences and Biology**

By the mid-1960s, two facts relating to the biomedical fields and
to the Russell Sage Foundation were evident. First, the Foundation's investments in understanding the sociocultural basis of health and illness were no longer vitally necessary, given the great increase in funding provided by the National Institutes of Health, the Public Health Service, and other sources. Second, a virtual revolution was under way in biology, with new breakthroughs in behavior genetics and other related areas. Although the Foundation did not turn entirely away from problems of health and illness, it did focus more of its energies on the problems created by the new advances of biology.

Part of these efforts focused directly on interdisciplinary training and research. When Donald Young retired as President of Russell Sage, he assumed a position at the Rockefeller Institute and helped develop the relations between biology and the social sciences, and in 1966 David Glass of the Foundation staff accepted a joint appointment at Rockefeller to further these ends. A part of the problem was the need for personnel who were trained in both disciplines, a rare combination. One of the efforts at Rockefeller was to select persons for joint training in biology and the social sciences. A product of the Glass appointment was the three-volume Biology and Behavior Series published jointly by Russell Sage and The Rockefeller University.

Another major effort was made at the University of Texas, where psychologist Gardner Lindzey launched an interdisciplinary seminar on genetics and the social sciences that evolved by 1969 into the Center for Behavior Genetics and Evolution. In addition to these institution-based efforts, there were a number of conferences on behavior-genetics and the new biology, there was an SSRC committee established on the biological bases of social behavior, and a committee on life sciences and social policy established through the division of behavioral sciences at the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences. The primary concern of this committee was with the social implications of advances in the life sciences. Although many of these efforts did not lead to specific written products, some of them, such as Dr. Glass's work on type A personalities and their physiological correlates, provided major advances in our understanding.
The principal tie to the earlier program of studies in health and illness can be seen in a series of studies relating to the prolongation and termination of life and to medical care. Sociologist Diana Crane prepared a Social Science Frontiers paper, Social Aspects of the Prolongation of Life (1968), and the Foundation published Duffy’s History of Public Health in New York City (1968). Dr. Brim and colleagues produced an edited volume on a variety of issues that had to do with The Dying Patient (1970). Other inquiries looked into public attitudes about death, into medical care in Vietnam, and into “death dips”—the measurable decline in the death rate just prior to major life events such as birthdays or religious holidays. At the most macro-theoretical level, a new Russell Sage Foundation staff member, Walter L. Wallace, set about examining the uniformities in social behavior across species in an effort to put the findings of ethology together with study of human societies in a common analytic framework.

Education and Human Resources

Dr. Brim was brought to the Russell Sage Foundation when he was working on a review of American programs to educate parents about the nature of child development. One of his early assignments at the Foundation was to prepare a monograph on sociology and the field of education. Since the Foundation under Donald Young had a special interest in the professions, it was natural for the Russell Sage leadership to think of Brim as the developer of that terrain. But his own interests were broadly in personality and human development throughout the life span, and more in the social psychology of human development than in the sociology of organizations such as schools. Much of the Foundation’s work in education and human resources can be seen as an effort on the part of Brim and his colleague David A. Goslin to shed the earlier program definitions and to broaden the scope of Russell Sage interest in studies in human development. The work falls largely into three categories.

Ability Testing and Its Consequences. The first (and most impor-
tant as measured by commitment of staff time and Foundation resources) is comprised of efforts to understand ability and its measurement through standardized tests, and to understand beliefs and attitudes about intelligence. The rise of standardized testing was one of the great accomplishments of behavioral science, and study of its effects became a major subject for the Foundation. It is this area that brought David Goslin to the Foundation staff, and that led to the publication of his *Search for Ability* in 1963. As the work in this area progressed, we began to learn systematically about testing, about those who do it and who use it, and about how those who are subjected to testing may feel about it. Representative works following Goslin’s original effort include his own *Teachers and Testing* (1967), Brim et al.’s *American Beliefs and Attitudes about Intelligence* (1969), and David Armor’s *American School Counselor* (1969).

Far more staff effort went into this area than can be reviewed in this brief summary, and included attempts to use the theories of George Herbert Mead to guide the data collection for large surveys of the relationship between students’ measured intelligence levels and their self-images. If one wants to understand large-scale testing and all of its ramifications, the Russell Sage studies must be consulted.

**Child Development and Aging in Life-Span Development.** Work developed on either side of the adolescent age range, which earlier had served as the primary focus for the assessment of abilities and self images. Child development research since World War II had produced a substantial body of new knowledge that was not yet incorporated into the professional practice of those working with children. In a highly successful effort to improve the communication and utilization of child development knowledge, the Foundation commissioned a number of review essays of special fields within child development, prepared by research scientists in collaboration with practitioners in the field. The result was the publication of the two volumes, in 1964 and 1966, of *Review of Child Development Research*, edited by Martin Leon Hoffman and Lois Norma Wladis Hoffman.
The Foundation took the opportunity of Urie Bronfenbrenner’s special interests and experiences to encourage him to produce a book (rather than articles) about child development in the Soviet Union. The result was *Two Worlds of Childhood* (1970), a widely influential work in the comparative study of child development and in the effects of peer groups and communities on the behavior of children.

In the areas of adulthood and aging, the Foundation supported the work of demographer Abraham Jaffe on the demography of the middle years, where labor-force participation was examined among men 40 and 50 years of age. And with the help of a substantial grant from the Ford Foundation, Russell Sage launched a series of works on aging that led to the publication of three volumes on *Aging and Society* under the direction of Matilda White Riley. These volumes helped define the field of research on aging for the next decade.

**The Socialization of Special Groups.** The final interest reflected in the grants and publications of the period came to be called “socialization of special groups.” This category became a resting place for a variety of diverse studies reflecting some of the changing interests of the Foundation and of the society as the world entered the late 1960s, and also for an occasional target of opportunity that arose within the Foundation.

Part of this program was Wilbert E. Moore’s work, *The Professions*, published in 1970. This work could be seen as a basic volume for programs designed to study the professions, and also as part of the study of the socialization of special groups such as professionals. Joining the study of the professions was an effort (abortive as it turns out) to examine black executives and studies of the socialization of black school children. There were also the beginnings of studies of women: Astin’s *The Woman Doctor in America*, Carden’s *The New Feminist Movement* (1974), and Rossi’s *Academic Women on the Move*.

Scott’s influential study of the blind (*The Making of Blind Men*, 1969) evolved during the early 1960s as a result of board chairman Eli Whitney Debevoise’s position on the board of the Lighthouse for the Blind. Institutions for the blind had treated these people as
highly dependent and childlike, ways that were coming under increasing criticism in a face of newer concepts of development. Debevoise saw to it that the study was commissioned, but he wanted to ensure that it be done objectively and not under the direct control of the sponsoring organization. Robert Scott, a young sociologist, was found to conduct the study, which he did at Russell Sage offices. Here is another instance where Foundation work resulted from the outside interests of Foundation personnel. It is one of the few instances throughout this period when a project was initiated *primarily* as a result of the interests of a member of the Board of Trustees.

Foundation publications alone do not give full indication of the work and commitments of the Foundation's staff. This was particularly true of education and human resources. The interest in socialization that was shared by a number of staff led to two often-cited publications by staff members. One of these was the important volume edited by David Goslin, *The Handbook of Socialization Theory and Research* (Rand McNally, 1970). The second was a volume of two essays by Brim and Wheeler, *Socialization After Childhood* (Wiley, 1966). And although it was not reflected primarily in writing, Leonard S. Cottrell was extremely active in applying his ideas about socialization in the context of the newly developing war on poverty, as part of the Mobilization for Youth program in New York City.

**Social Science and the Mass Media**

In the latter years of Donald Young's presidency, an interest developed in applying social science to yet another field—the professional world of journalism. Here the interest was in getting the professionals to apply the ideas, and through them getting better exposure to social science by the consumers of mass media. The critical links are those who prepare what the consumer later reads, hears, or sees. This development was initiated, in the year immediately preceding Brim's presidency, by a grant to the University of Wisconsin to help prepare journalists in understanding social science, but by far the major push came after Brim
assumed the presidency. It become a major focus of interest for staff member David Goslin, and later for Hugh F. Cline.

Journalism and the mass media proved more difficult to infiltrate and influence than had been the case for medicine, social work, and law, and the Foundation was never confident that it had made a really significant impact in the form of improved use of social science findings by the media. But it was certainly not for want of trying. A review of the record reveals attempts in many ways more diverse than those in the other fields. Like the other programs, there was a natural turning to the professional schools themselves as a basis for training and placement. The major program in addition to that at the University of Wisconsin was at Columbia, where over a period of eight years the school of journalism, in primary collaboration with the sociology department, ran a program designed to train journalists in social science and social scientists in journalism.

As in the law program, there were fellows in residence and seminars especially designed for them. One of the first people supported was Philip Meyer, who spent two years at the Foundation while preparing Precision Journalism, which helped reporters understand how to conduct surveys. A former Nieman Fellow and Pulitzer prize winner, he helped shape the Foundation's program. Beyond these efforts were a variety of others, some more and some less conventional. Consider the following:

A conference on social science and the mass media that produced the first book on the subject, Behavioral Sciences in the Mass Media, edited by Frederick T.C. Yu (1968).

Work-study fellowships with Transaction Magazine, where graduate students would edit social science articles for a magazine aimed at a broader lay audience, while they also pursued graduate study in social science and journalism.

The hiring of a former journalist, Dorothy Barclay Thompson, to gather data from reporters about the problems and prospects in the use of behavioral science in their stories.

Briefings for writers and editors, where leading social scientists would give presentations on the latest theories and data in their fields to major newspaper and magazine people.

The granting of small subsidies to writers, organized through the Society of Magazine Writers, to convert social science findings into articles for national magazines.
A summer internship program where social science graduate students would spend ten weeks in various positions on the staff of the newspaper.

Efforts to examine the potentials for the use of social science methods in the daily workings of reporters.

A final indication of the Foundation’s concern for the relation of social science to the mass media was the appointment of a number of persons as visiting scholars who were either students of the mass media or were themselves major practitioners. The list includes Paul Weaver, a political scientist who was completing a book on the New York Times; Daniel Bell, a distinguished social scientist and former Fortune Magazine staffer; the futurist Alvin Toffler, who did much to popularize the new technologies and their potential; and Irving Kristol, editor of the Public Interest. In its efforts to think big about the possibilities, the Foundation considered establishing a social science information center that would collect and organize social science findings and help journalists and others to interpret them. It even considered at one point buying the former Huntington Hartford Museum at Columbus Circle and converting it into a social science museum, where the latest data might be found about topics ranging from the nature of the world’s population to the social and ethnic distribution of residents of New York City.

Given this commitment, it is interesting that the Foundation’s efforts were confined very largely to the print media, perhaps the natural medium for scholars, and were less developed when it came to television even though television had by this time emerged as a powerful force in daily life. Aside from the summer intern program and a small grant to the Rand Corporation to explore the consequences of new communications technology, there was little in the program that was aimed specifically at radio or television.

The Methodology of Applied Social Research

Social science methods improved markedly in their strength and
sophistication during the mid-twentieth century. One of the benefits Donald Young thought social science could bring to fields such as social work practice was a sophisticated methodology that could help discern what types of practice had real and lasting effects, and what types did not. When he added Edgar F. Borgatta to his staff in the mid-1950s, it was in part with an eye to developing systematic evaluation studies. This interest expanded during the Brim regime. In addition to evaluation research per se, a broadened interest was also given to survey research methodology and particularly to growing applications for the computer, which was revolutionizing quantitative analysis in the social sciences.

These trends were reflected in staff appointments. Sociologist Lindsey Churchill joined the Foundation from Cornell University, where he had shown a long-term interest in statistics and in social research methods. Sociologist Hugh F. Cline joined the Foundation from the University of California at Santa Barbara. His extensive experience in the use of computers led him to undertake a survey of computer uses in the social sciences, and to establish a time-sharing system for data processing and analysis on the part of members of the Russell Sage staff. Howard E. Freeman, who had extensive experience in social research and had been director of research for the Florence Heller School of Social Welfare at Brandeis, later joined the staff on a part-time basis to help develop the program in evaluation research.

These Russell Sage efforts led to a variety of products. Among the earliest was Charles Glock's Survey Research in the Social Sciences (1967), in which different authors assessed the quality of survey research in each of a variety of separate fields. Among the most important was Edward A. Suchman's Evaluative Research: Principles and Practice in Public Service and Social Action Programs (1968). This was perhaps the first book-length volume to devote itself specifically to methods of research designed for the evaluation of social programs. Three years later the Foundation also published Readings in Evaluation Research (1971) by Francis G. Caro.

During the latter years of Brim's presidency, evaluation research assumed a large place in the Foundation's program. In addition to the evaluation research volumes, the Foundation helped spon-
sor a conference on evaluation research in England, and worked actively with White House staff on the concerns of the executive branch with program assessment and evaluation. This was part of a Foundation effort to stimulate the use of evaluation research by government agencies. Because federal support for action programs had grown greatly during the 1960s and there had been a number of assessment efforts, the Foundation sponsored its own study reviewing federally supported programs characterized as evaluation research.

The Foundation also commissioned evaluations of the evaluations. For example, the Educational Testing Service had evaluated the children’s program Sesame Street for its capacity to stimulate the learning of young children, and the ETS evaluation was itself evaluated later under a Russell Sage grant to Professor Thomas D. Cook of Northwestern University.

The development of an applied research tradition, with standards of evaluation and assessment, owed much to the Russell Sage initiative. Those who would evaluate social programs now have models in front of them that simply were unavailable in earlier years. Perhaps as important, the tradition of evaluating the evaluations may serve to help emphasize and make visible the importance of maintaining high standards in the conduct of such research.

**Developing the Social Sciences**

Since the success of Russell Sage’s program efforts depended on the strength of the social sciences, it obviously had an interest in nurturing the basic social science institutions. Throughout the Young and Brim eras, occasional grants were made and programs undertaken not to further any specific substantive interest, but to help the growth of the social sciences in a more general way. One reflection of this interest, early on, was the Foundation’s support of the aforementioned Elbridge Sibley study, *The Education of Sociologists* (1964), an effort to assess the quality of the training of people in the discipline and to make recommendations for its improvement.
In later years the generic concern for developing the social sciences took other forms. One important project was to support the establishment of a social science program at the Institute for Advanced Study. Under the guidance of then-director Carl Kaysen the Institute began a program in the study of social change that brought the skills of social scientists into play—either those on the permanent staff such as Clifford Geertz, or visiting scholars who helped pursue this line of work.

In a rather different vein, under the direction of Walter L. Wallace, a visiting fellow from Northwestern University's department of sociology who became a staff member, Russell Sage developed a program to examine career development of black social scientists. In connection with this and other Foundation programs, the Foundation appointed a group of black social scientists as advisors with representatives from each region of the nation. A final example of these kinds of activities was the support of Harold Orlans, a senior fellow of the Brookings Institution, to complete a study of the organizational characteristics of the major social science research institutes in the United States. These studies were designed to parallel similar surveys of social research organizations in Western Europe.

Another contribution of Russell Sage to the growth and development of the behavioral sciences was in its informal role as one of the institutions that bridged a variety of social science disciplines and through its important place in the network of communication among social scientists. I have referred to the occasional individual scholars who visited the Foundation from time to time. It should also be noted that frequent among the visitors were representatives of some of the other major non-university-based institutions of social science: the Social Science Research Council, the Brookings Institution, the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences, active participants in the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto, and others. In a city where social scientists were spread out over a variety of campuses, the Foundation also served as a mechanism for persons in diverse locales to get together, and many of them would appear from time to time at formal or informal gatherings.
held with this social network function very much in mind.

**Other Programs: Privacy and National Service**

This review is meant to cover major substantive highlights of the Russell Sage program during the years in question. It necessarily omits mention of a variety of problems and topics that were of great concern to the Foundation, but that did not assume formal programmatic significance. One example was a strong interest in privacy, which pervaded many Foundation activities. In addition to the aforementioned interest of Brim and Ruebhausen, there was a strong concern for humans as subjects of research, reflected in such publications as Jay Katz's *Experimentation with Human Beings* (1972) and work by Bernard Barber and his colleagues, *Research on Human Subjects* (1973). The Foundation also supported Alan Westin's work on privacy.

Concern for privacy and recordkeeping was reflected in the work of Russell Sage staff. It led to the publication of Wheeler's edited volume *On Record: Files and Dossiers in American Life* (1969). This volume included works by Goslin and Border on recordkeeping in elementary and secondary schools, which later figured importantly in state and national efforts to protect the privacy of school records.

Similarly, there was interest in the idea of national service, growing in part out of earlier Foundation work on the military, initiated by Janowitz and represented by Eberly's book *National Service* (1968) and by Moskos's *The American Enlisted Man* (1970).

These are only two examples of substantive areas furthered by Russell Sage work that are not fully reflected in the above review. As concerns for privacy and for national service re-emerge on the social agenda for the 1990s, those who wish to trace their earlier development will need to consult these Russell Sage efforts.

**Process and Impact**

For a foundation with limited resources, spending at most
several million dollars a year, Russell Sage's efforts seem to have paid off. In philanthropy, not only was there a handy guide to foundations, but also a Foundation Center Library and the stimulation of research on foundation giving. In social indicators, the whole indicators movement was stimulated and reinforced by Russell Sage. In the field of law and society, a field virtually non-existent a third of a century ago, international meetings were held recently in Amsterdam attended by upwards of a thousand people; there is a law and social science division at the National Science Foundation, and there are respected scholarly journals devoted to the field, with former Russell Sage residents among their leading contributors. The Foundation of this period helped develop high standards for evaluation studies, and helped strengthen all those areas of interdisciplinary research that engaged its substantive interests.

It would take an in-depth follow-up study to trace the impact of Foundation projects, and even then much might be left in doubt. I return later to how the Foundation went about assessing its own work, but here I will assume, as the staff at the time did, that the organization was creative, imaginative, and developed fresh and productive programs, and proceed to consider the process by which the Foundation's work got done. If the ideas and programs were fresh and innovative, what was it about the Foundation's operations and procedures that made them so? Four areas of activity provided much that distinguished Russell Sage from other foundations.

1. The Internal/External Balance. In the years before Donald Young assumed the presidency of Russell Sage, the Foundation had a large number of departments, each of which generated its own research and action programs. To the extent that the Foundation gave grants, it gave them largely to its own personnel, or to agencies housed in its own quarters. That abruptly shifted when President Young took over. In his first three or four years of operation, aside from the long-standing work of Esther Lucille Brown, the Foundation staff themselves spent their time generating grants from outside, locating people, and initiating and admin-
istering programs. But they were not doing their own research. Early in Young's presidency and throughout that of his successor, the Foundation increased the number of staff who were doing at least some of their own research as well as administering Foundation projects that were being conducted elsewhere around the nation.

The range was clear: at one extreme was a small staff serving as full-time administrators and monitors of others' work; at the other extreme was a totally in-house operation in which the staff members themselves were the researchers or theorists or scholars—an Institute for Advanced Study model. The Foundation wrestled constantly with the appropriate balance between these two extremes, settling for most of this period with a variation somewhere between one-third and two-thirds inside or out. At one board meeting where the matter was explicitly put to the Board by Dr. Brim, it was suggested that the most appropriate model would be 60 percent outside and 40 percent inside, provided the administrative overhead costs did not have to count against the inside budget.

There was no magic to the answer, but the underlying question was which balance would net the greatest results in terms both of work accomplished and of a setting most conducive to accomplishing it. The dangers of a totally in-house operation are fairly obvious: unless one can provide for the assurance of turnover, along the lines, say, of a Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, where scholars come and go each year, there is a danger of an ingrown quality, of persons becoming increasingly involved in their own theories and models and out of touch with the broader world. The risk is especially great if tenure appointments are made.

On the other hand, to have an organization where virtually all the creative work is done by persons outside the organization, and where the staff members themselves are mere intermediaries, is to create a dual set of problems. First is the question of talent. It may be hard to recruit top-notch people if their own creative scholarly contributions are either nonexistent or clearly secondary to their grant administration duties. Second, without external criteria for
assessing their progress (as in the standard academic modes of scholarly research and publication) the organization may have a tendency to collapse in on itself, with staff members vying for the biggest piece of the pie rather than for excellence. The idea of the combined research institute and foundation was the Russell Sage Foundation’s solution.

2. The Scholar-Administrator. The Foundation could have agreed on an internal-external mix without combining research and the administrative function in the same person. Two groups of staff members, one a group of researchers and the other a group of administrators, could have developed. Russell Sage fought any tendency in that direction by expecting its staff to do both. Its personnel were largely professionally trained social scientists (mostly sociologists) who had held academic positions in reputable universities. While at the Foundation they were expected to continue to do research as well as to develop and monitor a research program in one or another of the program areas.

This was the best-of-both-worlds solution for the Foundation. It could not become totally ingrown, because staff members had to get out and learn what was going on around the nation in their respective fields, had to develop and monitor proposals for research, and the like. At the same time, they did not have to abandon scholarship when they joined the Foundation—indeed they couldn’t—for the assessment of their value would depend in part on how well their scholarly work was progressing.

One of the advantages of this model is the elimination of the pure foundation type—the one whose time is consumed by grant administration. Whatever loss in administrative efficiency is more than made up for by having individuals closer to the research frontier in question making key funding decisions. This also made for a closer relationship between the staff and the Board, especially as the Board itself became increasingly comprised of scholars. In any event, whatever natural distance there may be between those funding research or other programs and those actually conducting the programs is reduced by having both roles represented in the same person.
3. Negotiating Boundaries with the University World. Successful Foundation programs required good working relationships with scholars and their universities. As in the scholar-administrator case, the Foundation attempted to break the natural separation between foundation and university. It allowed its staff up to one day a week to teach at universities in the greater New York area, thus maintaining members’ ties to graduate students and faculties.

More importantly for its programs, it brought the university world to the Foundation by employing Visiting Scholars. It was an important part of Dr. Brim’s program to bring in visitors who could do their own work, but who could also contribute to Foundation staff discussions in their various program areas. This was another way of having one’s cake and eating it too—maintaining contact with leading scholars by bringing them to the Foundation, while getting the scholar’s input to Foundation programs.

An alternative was urged upon the Foundation from time to time: to affiliate with a larger enterprise in the same general arena. President Kingman Brewster of Yale sought to bring the Russell Sage Foundation to Yale, and the Rockefeller Institute (now Rockefeller University) proposed that the Russell Sage Foundation be its social science institute. In the view of both staff and Board, whatever advantages might have accrued from such affiliations would have been more than offset by the loss of freedom.

Finally, through its residency programs and a graduate student intern program, the Foundation attempted to maintain its ties to younger scholars. Some of these scholars were pursuing graduate programs elsewhere; others were participating in the daily life of the Foundation.

4. Publications. Throughout its earlier history, Russell Sage maintained its own publications program, with in-house staff who edited books and arranged for their publication. It continued to do so, though not without a searching examination of the wisdom of the choice and of the best way to make use of a publication program. Should it be just scholarly books, competing with the university presses? Should authors surrender royalties in return for Foundation grants? How can the Foundation use its publications
to promote the issues and programs it is pushing?

Answers to these questions varied over the years. At times the Foundation aligned itself with commercial presses such as Basic Books; at other times, it did all of its own publishing. Under Brim it developed a *Social Science Frontiers* series to bring new issues into public awareness and discussion. The constancy of having to wrestle with a publications policy meant that the Foundation was continually assessing and re-thinking its role in selling and promoting its programs as well as in funding them.

In addition to these four areas of foundation practice, the Foundation worried about two related issues, one directed more externally: how to define the kind of contribution it was seeking to make; and one directed more internally: how to evaluate its own programs.

**Pure Versus Applied Research**

The legacy that Donald Young inherited while presiding over the fortunes of the Russell Sage Foundation was by no means modeled on the early philanthropic tradition of charitable giving. The Russell Sage Foundation had been in the business of doing studies from the beginning, and it had a long tradition of publishing the results. Thus the Foundation was rarely in the position of debating the wisdom of "research" versus "direct action" as a mode of doing philanthropy. But the charter of the Foundation still read "for the betterment of social and living conditions...," and the question arose frequently in the post-World War II era of just how that charter should be interpreted, and whether or not it required at least some measure of direct application of social science for human betterment.

Yet Donald Young and others of the staff he accumulated had been trained in the idea of sociology as a basic science, and in the value of basic or pure research. Many of Young's social ties to those in the social sciences were with people known more for their basic theoretical contributions than for their concerns for social action. Indeed, at a time when the more activist members of the American Sociological Society were forming a new organization,
the Society for the Study of Social Problems, the Russell Sage Foundation was thought of as a conservative, establishment foundation. In its earlier period, the Foundation had been involved in controversial programs and policies, particularly through the department of industrial organization and the work of Mary van Kleeck. But that sort of interest was not represented in the Donald Young era.

Nevertheless, concerns arose frequently for the precise location, on a range from pure to applied, that the Foundation's interests should be focused. The Foundation did not, for example, support a particular interpretation of social work theory as it was to be applied in the field (although one of its staff members, Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., was very active in the development of the policies of Mobilization for Youth, the delinquency prevention program that loomed large in New York City in the era of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.)

At the other extreme, the Foundation never saw itself as a primary supporter of basic theory within any particular discipline such as sociology. Yet on occasion it did what would have to be regarded as basic work in theory or methodology. These were typically instances, as in the social indicators and the evaluation research programs, where improvements in basic methodology or theory had to be made in order for advances to take place in practical application. To some extent this also characterized work in the social sciences and biology.

The language that developed to characterize the appropriate position was based on a military analogy. Russell Sage would not be in the front line, but it would occupy "the second trench" doing the research that could be used by those in the front line, and it would be closer to its application than the "base camp" well to the rear. The notion of "the second trench" would be raised whenever the question arose whether something we were working on was really too remote from immediate social action or too close to it. It is close to the related concepts of "policy-relevant research" or "mission-oriented basic research."
Evaluation

In some organizational contexts, there is little ambiguity about how well the organization is doing. Competitive sports leagues probably provide the clearest example, with precise won and lost records and rankings indicating where one falls relative to others in the same enterprise. The general-purpose foundation lacks anything remotely approaching that kind of visible, objective indicator. But the lack of an objective standard does not remove the felt need to evaluate. Indeed, if anything, the absence of standards creates a kind of systematic anxiety, though enveloped in a sea of vagueness, about how the organization is doing.

In the Donald Young era, it is not clear whether these matters were ever addressed systematically and openly in meetings of the Board and staff. Nor did President Young comment to others on his staff about how the Foundation was doing. There is no evidence that the staff and Board spent time assessing their progress or comparing their work to that of other foundations. At the same time, Young himself was very sensitive to how the Foundation was viewed. He was known to praise his staff publicly even though he might privately have reservations about some of their work or ideas. Underneath his relatively stolid exterior lay a sensitive person, and although the subject was never openly discussed, he was certainly sensitive to how the Foundation was regarded by others. Leonard S. Cottrell remembers Young's pride when he received a letter from the president of a much larger foundation who, after reading Russell Sage's annual report, wrote back to tell President Young that "you guys are getting more for your dollar than the rest of us."

Evaluation and assessment was a more self-conscious part of the regime of Young's successor, but it was still very difficult to assess the quality of the Foundation's product. After six years of operation, Brim conducted an internal audit of all Foundation projects in an effort to discern which ones had produced what. In this instance, as in many others, the findings were not clear. Although many projects had succeeded, a number had not paid off. Among those that had, in general the larger the amount spent
the more the return, though the correlation was far from perfect. But even with the Foundation spending a couple of million dollars a year over a period of several years, the actual number of projects in any given area was typically too small to allow a real assessment of the end result. Thus, despite a rather long and searching effort at an objective assessment, the results left one still in doubt about how to judge the Foundation's work.

But Dr. Brim did not shy away from assessments, even from quarters that might not have been expected to be sympathetic to the Russell Sage mission. During the latter part of the 1960s, when each of the major social science disciplines were under pressure from the New Left, President Brim opened his offices and Foundation files to a group of radical sociologists to make their own assessment of the Foundation activities. Their results were controversial, to be sure, but they were hardly buried. The annual report for the years 1970–1971 faithfully records the results of their examination of Foundation records: "Criticisms in their final report include the Foundation's lack of attention to powerless groups of American society; the restrictive range of the Foundation's constituency and consultants, primarily high-level members of established institutions in contrast to the leaders of insurgent groups in our society; and the emphasis of the Foundation on applied social research rather than support of direct action programs."

Thus did the Foundation make continuing efforts to deal with the evaluation problem. This experience was the stimulus for Brim's essay on evaluating foundations, "Do We Know What We Are Doing," written for the American Assembly on the Future of Foundations. It remains a critical question for organizations like Russell Sage, without the normal business bottom lines, to get an effective appraisal of their work and its consequences. The agreement on goals is an essentially political and philosophical problem. If one accepts the Foundation's definition of its mission—the combination of internal and external research; working the applied, but not "too" applied, arena; working on a limited number of problems that others may not yet be pushing; and working broadly within the arena of traditional social science—then per-
haps the most that one could ask is that the work the Foundation is doing be highly regarded among the social science community in question. From this point of view, when a foundation chooses its president and its direction, it also is choosing a social network that will provide it with its most relevant community of evaluators.

Examined from this point of view, the most impressive thing the Russell Sage Foundation Board did, back in 1947, was to select as a director a person whose own reference groups, though not entirely removed from those of his predecessor, were different enough to set the Foundation off in a new direction. It was not simply that the building was sold, the agencies cut away, and a fresh start made, but that in the process Donald Young looked less to the social work community and more to the community of social scientists, medicine, and the leading philanthropic foundations as the appropriate reference points from which to view his own success as a Foundation administrator. The same can be said for Dr. Brim, though here success was measured perhaps even more through the behavioral and social science community, and somewhat less through the community of medicine or philanthropy. In any event, in the absence of hard, cold, visible criteria, the esteem of one's peers may be a worthy substitute. Indeed, even if one had nice objective criteria, were they to disagree with the judgment of reputational leaders in the community, the Foundation would be likely to accept the latter as the more valid measure, or at least to wonder long and hard why the two were not in agreement.

**Conclusion**

As I write some twenty years after the end of the period under review, I am struck by the themes of change and continuity. Having rid itself of a building and all its attendant costs in the late 1940s, the Foundation acquired another one in the early 1980s, albeit a trimmer and sleeker model. But the differences remain remarkable. The old building not only housed a great variety of social service agencies, but it was surrounded in its area of the city
by other related organizations: the Family Court was across the street, and both Protestant and Catholic charities (the latter would come to occupy the building when Russell Sage left) were nearby, as were the trainees at the School of Social Work.

On recent visit to the Florentine building I could still see the Russell Sage motto embedded in the dusty stone: “For the Betterment of Social and Living Conditions,” and crests identifying major areas of foundation concern—the family, work, recreation, health—remain visible portions of its exterior. Most current residents (it is now an East Side townhouse condominium, with sauna) may be unaware of its origins in the philanthropy of the early twentieth century.

The new building, a modern glass-skinned structure between Park and Lexington Avenues in the East 60s, continues the trend begun in 1948 when Russell Sage moved to smaller quarters on Park Avenue. The new building is far removed from its own clientele, who tend to be spread around the nation in various universities. Ecologically, it is closer to the established institutions of the upper East Side than to the Family Court.

The shift in emphasis is also represented, naturally enough, on the Board of Trustees. Still present are a small number of leaders from the business and financial world. Largely absent are those whose passions were the same as those of Margaret Olivia Sage when the Foundation got started—wealthy concerned citizens who wanted to rid New York of squalor. They have been replaced for the most part by professional scholars of national and international reputation.

The Russell Sage Foundation remains concerned, however, with some of the same issues that engaged it during its earliest years. The largest single program under the current regime is the social analysis of poverty, and a recent program examines the new wave of immigrants and how their offspring are faring in today’s world. These are in some ways closer to Olivia Sage’s original interests than the programs initiated after World War II.

Other efforts begun in the Young-Brim era have continued. There remains an emphasis on the “second trench,” on social and behavioral science, on research methods in the applied arena. The Foun-
dation of the 1990s has commissioned a series of studies based on the 1990 federal census, as its predecessor had done in the 1950s.

Many of the staff that Brim had assembled moved on to major administrative posts, often in related social science organizations: Cline to Russell Sage itself; Goslin to the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences and later to the American Institute of Research; Sheldon to the Social Science Research Council; and (many years later) Wheeler to the largest private sports foundation in the country, the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles.

With respect to working style, again there is continuity and change: continuity, for example, in publications and the use of Visiting Scholars, but change in the extent to which the Foundation relies somewhat more on Visiting Scholars to help shape Foundation programs, and somewhat less on full-time staff.

These shifts have occurred gradually, as the mission of the Foundation becomes re-defined in response both to changing leadership and changing social conditions, the most important perhaps being the growth of state and federal welfare bureaucracies that so changed the scope of private philanthropy. This new path was charted by Russell Sage during the presidency of Donald Young and greatly expanded under his successor, Orville G. Brim. It continues today. The changes were unsettling for the organizational world of social work, which had to adapt to the withdrawal of support from its long-term underwriter; they have been especially important and enriching for the behavioral and social sciences.

The Foundation remains committed, as current President Eric Wanner has put it, "to the premise that strengthening the scientific core of social research... and continually refocusing scientific attention on social problems will, slowly and haltingly, provide a useful resource for the improvement of social life." It is a vision that got much of its growth and development during the Young-Brim years.

Note on Sources

The primary written materials for this project are Foundation
records. These include the minutes of Board meetings, typically held quarterly, and the Foundation annual reports. The reports indicate what programs were given major attention, report all grants made, and list the Visiting Scholars housed at the Foundation during the year. The two-volume history of the Russell Sage Foundation, written by John M. Glenn, Lilian Brandt, and F. Emerson Andrews and published in 1947, provides an official account of Foundation activities leading up to the massive changes in the late 1940s. And, of course, I was informed by David Hammack's essays in this volume.

But Foundation records, helpful as they are in tracing major grants, programs, and publications, do not help us understand the working philosophies and operating styles of the Foundation during the period under review. Most helpful here were interviews with some of the chief staff members, the chairmen and other members of the Board of Trustees, and knowledgeable outsiders who worked closely with the Foundation. These were supplemented by detailed comments on an early draft of the essay.

Some of the interviews dealt primarily with the Young presidency, some with the Brim presidency, and some with both. For the Donald Young period I had very helpful interviews with Eli Whitney Debevoise, the Chairman of the Board during Young's regime; with Esther Lucille Brown, who was on the staff long before the Young regime and who continued for some time during his presidency; and with Edgar F. Borgatta, a staff member under Donald Young. Also very helpful were interviews with Robert K. Merton, who had been a grantee and who later became a consultant to the Foundation; with board member Dale Wolfe; Elbridge Sibley of the Social Science Research Council; and two recipients of Russell Sage grants, Nat Cohen and Lloyd Ohlin.

For the Brim presidency, I profited especially from talks with Oscar Ruebhausen, the Board Chair who replaced Whitney Debevoise, and from critical readings of a preliminary draft by Board members Robert McCormick Adams and Frederick Mosteller, and by my fellow staff members, Tony Cline, Howard E. Feeman, and Walter L. Wallace.

For both presidencies, and for thoughtful commentaries on
changes at the Russell Sage Foundation over the years, I learned more from the four staffers who bridged the two periods than from any other source. These included Leonard S. (Slats) Cottrell, a senior staff member in both regimes; Eleanor Bernert Sheldon and David A. Goslin, who not only could comment on Russell Sage over the years but had the additional comparative experience of running two sister organizations in the behavioral sciences; and of course Dr. Brim.

Finally, I received helpful comments from a presentation to Yale’s PONPO, the Program on Non-Profit Organizations, and particularly from its then director, Paul Dimaggio.

1. I was a full-time staff member at the Russell Sage Foundation from 1964 to 1968, and a part-time consultant from 1968 to 1982. My past association provided an entrée to a number of people, both inside and outside Russell Sage, who contributed to this enterprise and who have my heartfelt thanks for their help. All who were interviewed or who read an earlier version of this manuscript are listed in the Note on Sources at the end of this chapter.

2. Dr. Young’s appointment of Esther Lucille Brown is some indication of his commitment to productivity and the written word. Since her appointment at the Foundation in the early 1930s, Esther Lucille Brown had been responsible for more books than any other single person at the Foundation: in 1936, Nursing As A Profession, The Professional Engineer, Social Work as a Profession; in 1937, Positions in Medical Care; in 1938, Lawyers and the Promotion of Justice; in 1942, Social Work as a Profession (a completely revised edition), and in 1948, Lawyers, Law Schools and the Public Service, and Nursing for the Future.
# Trustees and Chief Operating Officers of the Russell Sage Foundation

## Trustees

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<td>May, 1907</td>
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<td>Shelby M. Harrison</td>
<td>September, 1931</td>
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<td>Donald R. Young</td>
<td>December, 1948</td>
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<td>Orville G. Brim, Jr</td>
<td>November, 1963</td>
<td>to August, 1972</td>
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<td>Hugh F. Cline</td>
<td>September, 1972</td>
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<td>Aaron Wildavsky</td>
<td>July, 1977</td>
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<td>David B. Truman</td>
<td>July, 1978</td>
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<td>Marshall A. Robinson</td>
<td>June, 1979</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eric Wanner</td>
<td>October, 1986</td>
<td>to present</td>
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* Before 1955 the title of the chief operating officer was general director; in 1955 it was changed to president.
About the Authors

David C. Hammack is professor of history and director of the social policy history Ph.D. program at Case Western Reserve University. He is the author of *Power and Society: Greater New York at the Turn of the Century* (1982; paperback edition, 1987), co-editor of *Nonprofit Organizations in a Market Economy* (1993), and author of numerous journal articles on the history of urban politics, foundations and other nonprofit organizations, and education. He holds degrees from Harvard University, Reed College, and Columbia University, and has taught at Princeton, the University of Houston, and the City University of New York. Hammack has been a John Simon Guggenheim Fellow, and his work has also been supported by the American Council of Learned Societies, the International Research and Exchange Program, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Aspen Institute Nonprofit Sector Research Program, as well as by the Russell Sage Foundation.

Stanton Wheeler is Ford Foundation Professor of Law and the Social Sciences at Yale Law School, where he has taught since 1968. After teaching at Harvard and the University of Washington, Wheeler joined the Russell Sage Foundation as a full-time staff member in 1964 and was a consultant to the Foundation from 1968 until 1982. He has been a Fulbright Research Fellow at the Institute of Criminology and Criminal Law at the University of Oslo, a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto, and, in 1985, took a two-year leave of absence from Yale to become the first director of the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles. Wheeler is the co-author of two volumes in the Yale Studies in White Collar Crime series, *Sitting in Judgment: The Sentencing of White Collar Criminals* (1988) and *Crimes of the Middle Classes* (1991). Wheeler is currently working on issues involving intercollegiate athletics and on a cultural history of brass music. He has a B.A. degree from Pomona College and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Washington.
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