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Centenary of the First Sociology Doctorate at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln


Mary Jo Deegan

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, maryjodeegan@yahoo.com

Michael R. Hill

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, michaelhilltemporary1@yahoo.com

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Deegan, Mary Jo and Hill, Michael R., "Centenary of the First Sociology Doctorate at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln" (2005). *Sociology Department, Faculty Publications*. 347.
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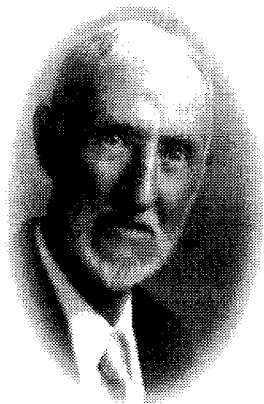
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Deegan, Mary Jo and Michael R. Hill. 2005. "Centenary of the First Sociology Doctorate at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln." *Footnotes* (American Sociological Association) 33 (December): 8.

Centenary of the First Sociology Doctorate at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

As ASA celebrates its centennial in 2005, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln commemorates the centennial of its first sociology doctorate

by Mary Jo Deegan and Michael R. Hill, Department of Sociology,
University of Nebraska-Lincoln



Anderson William Clark

On June 10, 1905, the Faculty of the Graduate School in the University of Nebraska formally recommended that Anderson William Clark "receive the degree of Doctor of Philosophy" in Sociology.¹ Clark, who had completed a dissertation on "State Control and Supervision of Charities and Corrections," was a Baptist minister and the founding Superintendent of Omaha's Child Saving Institute.² Based on extensive firsthand observations, interviews, and examinations of records in Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and other states, Clark concluded, "Immediate state control is demanded in order to save the lives of thousands of infants and small children who are today in the hands of ignorant and sentimental nurses and caretakers, where they suffer from poor ventilation, unsuitable food, and bad sanitary conditions. . . . State control is required to correct such abuses" (pp. 398-

399). Clark's dissertation exemplified the practical applications of sociology emphasized by Amos G. Warner, a former Nebraskan, in his influential 1894 work, *American Charities: A Study in Philanthropy and Economics*.

Other models for Clark's work included Martin Brewer Anderson, the president of Rochester University—where Clark took the AB degree in 1877. Anderson, in 1878, accepted appointment to the New York state board of charities. Years later, Clark successfully agitated for the creation of a state board of charities in Nebraska. Clark's religious training was completed in 1880 at Baptist Union Theological Seminary (now the Divinity School of the University of Chicago).

At Nebraska, Clark embarked on sociological studies at an auspicious moment, during a short, extraordinary period when Edward A. Ross, George Elliott Howard, and Roscoe Pound were all members of the Graduate Faculty and who together promoted a vigorous, interdisciplinary approach to sociology. Ross and Howard later became presidents of the American Sociological Society/Association in 1914 and 1917, respectively, and Pound rose to the deanship of the Harvard Law School. Conceptually, Ross contributed a "social control" perspective (*Social Control*, 1901), Howard (who had been A.G. Warner's mentor) offered the methodology of "institutional history" (*History of Matrimonial Institutions*, 1904) and Pound was then drawing the framework for an American version of "sociological jurisprudence" (*A New School of Jurists*, 1904), combining energetic "hands on" field work with rigorous classificatory logic. In writing his dissertation, Clark drank deeply of this exciting frontier sociological environment.

During the autumn 2005 semester, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Department of Sociology held a colloquium on November 4, 2005, and hosted an exhibit commemorating Clark's landmark accomplishment. The Department will publish an updated bibliography of all the University's sociology theses and dissertations completed since 1905. A copy of Clark's dissertation is available for free download at <www.sociological-origins.com>. Clark was born in Illinois on January 8, 1852, and died in California on April 23, 1938. □

Notes

¹ Graduate College, Faculty Meetings: Minutes, p. 40, RG 6/2/1, Box 1, University of Nebraska Archives.

² Clark, Anderson William. 1905. "State Control and Supervision of Charities and Corrections," *University Studies* 5 (October), pp. 357-400.

Contact author Mary Jo Deegan at maryjodeegan@yahoo.com. Michael Hill is editor of *Sociological Origins* and can be reached at editor@sociological-origins.com.