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NOTES ON A FORGOTTEN BLACK SOCIAL WORKER
AND SOCIOLOGIST: GEORGE EDMUND HAYNES

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ABSTRACT

This paper highlights the career of Dr. George Edmund Haynes, a pioneer sociologist and social worker. It places Haynes in a historical context examining his professional contributions during the early 1900s. Haynes' professional activities reflected the Progressive Era's emphasis on scientific research and social justice. Although he received some recognition as a sociologist and social worker, his contributions were relegated generally to the periphery of both the discipline of sociology and the field of social work.

George Edmund Haynes is best known as the co-founder and first executive director of the National Urban League. That he was a trained social worker and sociologist has been forgotten except by a very few. Yet for nearly two decades, from the time he received his Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1912 until shortly after World War I, Haynes was responsible for some impressive pioneering research on American Blacks. He must also be given credit for establishing the first recruiting and training program for Black social workers in the U.S. In both his training, the quality of his published scholarship, and his contributions to the social work profession, Haynes compares favorably with other social workers and sociologists of his time. But, because of the racial prejudice among early professional social workers and sociologists his work was relegated to a minor status.

The field of social work was just emerging as a profession at the turn of the century. Similarly the discipline of sociology was taking on an identity as an academic specialty. Both social work and sociology were embedded in the general field of social science—including economics, the study of politics and social problems and history (Bernard and Bernard, 1943:559-644). The first school of social work was not organized until 1898 when the New York School of Philanthropy opened, and the second was Chicago's School of Civics and Philanthropy established in 1903 (Meier, 1954:6; Wisner, 1958:4). Only a few years earlier in 1892, the University of Chicago organized a department of sociology, and in 1894 Columbia's sociology department was developed (Bernard and Bernard, 1943:657). In 1905, the American Sociological Society was founded while the first professional organization for social workers did not begin until 1918 when medical social workers solidified their ranks in favor of association. It was the founding of the American Association of Social Workers in 1921, however, which played the major role in formulating professional goals and standards for the social work profession (Bernard and Bernard, 1943:559; Lubove, 1977:127).

In the early years of the twentieth century, the field of social work and the discipline of sociology were closely intertwined and students studying social work at the New York School of Philanthropy, for example, were encouraged and expected to study sociology and/or economics at Columbia (Haynes, 1960:4). These students of social science were often interested in using their knowledge to uplift man's lot in society by solving social problems. They were not usually radical but reformist in their pursuits of planned change. In fact, many of the significant studies of Blacks during the early twentieth century done by Haynes' contemporaries like Mary White Ovington (1911), R.R. Wright, Jr. (1908) and Sophonisba Breckenridge (1913) were all intended to provide knowledge for social work practice.

Haynes, like many of these early social scientists, shared the faith that a broader sociological knowledge would lead to the amelioration of social problems. He strongly believed that social problems could be subjected to study and methods of treatment and that a theory for prevention could be formulated. He contended that "conditions of segregation and opposition due to race prejudice" were caused by a lack of co-operation and ignorance and that "grounding in the social sciences" would provide the necessary knowledge (Haynes, 1912:33; 1960:4).

By the time Haynes enrolled in the New York School of Philanthropy in 1908, the school's curriculum enthusiastically supported the need for social research as an integral part of the educational program. Haynes had developed a strong interest in social science while studying for his masters degree at Yale. Among the subjects he took at Yale was a course in sociology, or "societology" as it was termed by the professor, William Graham Sumner (Roberts, 1974:56). Haynes remembered distinctly how Sumner "taught us to subject any notions to rigorous tests of facts" (Roberts, 1974:58). He received additional inspiration as he listened to Professor John R. Commons of the University of Wisconsin, deliver the opening session address at the New York School of Philanthropy in 1908. Commons urged the entering students to engage in constructive research for the cure and prevention of social ills, and further stated that such research should awaken the public mind and carry the conviction that something must be done (Devine, 1908:82). The practical nature of constructive research coincided with the motives which drove Haynes to seek further education in sociology and social work—the need to address, through scientific inquiry, the social problems confronting urban Black Americans (PPCU, Box 48). As a research fellow in the New York School of Philanthropy's Bureau of Social Research, Haynes had the opportunity to engage in research which held both broad general social value and met his particular self-interest as well. This research was directed toward providing knowledge for social work practice (Haynes, 1912:8).

Haynes got the opportunity he wanted early in his academic career at the School of Philanthropy, when Edward Devine, professor of social economics at Columbia and Director of the Bureau of Social Research instructed him to describe and analyze the migration of the Black population as part of a national study of urban migration patterns to be used as the basis of starting a national employment finding agency. During his three years as a traveling secretary for the Young Men's Christian Association, Haynes had worked out a schedule and kept records of the

operation of the Jim Crow cars on Southern Railways and was planning to make that the basis for his thesis for doctoral research. As he studied the movements of the Black population and the whole movement of urban populations, however, it struck him "that here was a factor fundamental to the races of white and Negroes in the United States and a subject worthy of deep study" (Haynes, 1912:143). As Haynes gathered data for this study between January, 1909 and January 1910, it became clearer to him that "Negroes were being influenced by the same economic and social forces as the whites and the response of the two were similar" (PPCU Box 48). He found that the divorce of Blacks from the soil in the breaking down of the plantation system just after the Civil War, the growth of industrial centers in the South, and the call of higher wages in the North, were the strongest influences to account for the concentration of Blacks in the cities (Haynes, 1912:143). Haynes later noted that he was challenged by southern scholars whose conclusions were the accepted views of the day—that the migration would soon cease and that Blacks would return to the South and the land (Haynes, 1960:6). It is reasonable to infer that Haynes was somewhat annoyed that his research, supported by statistical and carefully gathered data, would be challenged. His annoyance was demonstrated when in 1924, at the National Conference of Social Work, he referred to those who claimed that Blacks were returning in large numbers to the South as "propogandists" (Haynes, 1924:65).

As indicated by his list of published research studies,¹ Haynes was not deterred by disbelievers and critics, and continued to conduct research and collect facts zealously. His research study under the auspices of the Bureau of Social Research was conducted not only to fulfill his requirements as a fellow, but also "in the search for the truth, that the enthusiasm of reform may be linked with the reliability of knowledge in the effort to better the future conditions of the city and the Negro" (Haynes, 1912:8). As reflected by the above statement, Haynes was moving steadily toward the actualization of his philosophy of education or knowledge for service and social reform.

Dr. Samuel Lindsay served as Haynes' faculty counselor at Columbia University and consented to allow him to use his research study conducted under the supervision of the Bureau for his Ph.D. thesis. As Haynes proceeded to expand his research by utilizing data from the United States Census, another phase of the subject finally came into the picture: "What was happening to those Negro migrants when they settled in Northern cities?" He referred to the only studies which provided similar information, such as Dubois' Philadelphia Negro (1898), and R. R. Wright, Jr.'s The Negro in Pennsylvania (1908), and decided to answer that part of his inquiry by studies of the migrant Blacks, in the city of New York (PPCU Box 48).

Haynes' study, based upon figures of the New York State Census of 1905, consisted of a sample population of 2,500 families, totaling 9,788 persons. The families studied resided in three segregated neighborhoods² in the city. The sample population was representative of the three neighborhoods and of the total Black population in New York City. Haynes' study used numerous charts, graphs, and statistics to present a scientific study of Blacks in the City. His study presented the facts, as Haynes found them, by measurement and comparison and

concluded with valid generalizations. With this study, Haynes moved from the role of social scientist and fact gatherer to the role of social reformer recommending solutions to the problems faced by Black urban dwellers. The study was divided into two parts: Part I dealt with Blacks as wage earners and with the various occupations open to them under the general headings of domestic and personal service, trade and transportation, and manufacturing and mechanical pursuits. Part II dealt with Blacks in business and with the character of Black business enterprises.

Haynes' findings indicated that Black wage earners, in comparisons with the cost of living, received very inadequate wages in domestic and personal service with the exception of the few occupations that afforded tips. The limited number of workers who were able to join unions did receive union wages. Haynes notes that the number of Black trade union members increased from 1,271 in 1906 to about 1,358 in 1910—slightly over 5 percent of the total working population of Black males (1912:82). He also found that it was imperative for women to work and that such women were often employed in domestic and personal service. The low income capacity of the families studied made it necessary for them to seek lodgers in order to meet the escalating cost of rent. Haynes believed that the low income of Black males, the presence of lodgers in the family, and the absence of the mother due to employment kept the standards of living at a minimum and made the family unable to protect itself from both physical and moral disease (1912:88).

Others who conducted similar research studies of Blacks in urban centers concluded, as did Haynes, that family life was in jeopardy. John Daniels, for example, in his survey of Blacks in Boston, showed that the necessity which compelled women to work imposed severe "obstacles to home-building" (1914:176). Mary White Ovington, in her study on the economic and social status of Blacks in New York City, found the infant mortality rate staggering. "Negro mothers," she noted, "owing to the low wage earned by their husbands...leave their homes [for employment] but...sacrifice the lives of many of their babies" (1911:56). She also found that, "the poorer the family,...the more eviable appears the fortune of the anti-social class," and since temptation was continuous, the children of the poor that grow up "pure in thought and deed" do so in spite of their surroundings (1911:38). The fortune of the anti-social classes was often obtained by illicit means since there were few opportunities for Black business enterprises.

In surveying the business enterprises among Blacks in the city, Haynes found such enterprises limited primarily to barber shops, grocery stores, dress makers and tailors, restaurants, employment agencies, real estate and insurance agencies. Of the 309 firms surveyed, Haynes found few had been established through partnerships. Of those in partnerships, there were rarely more than two persons. There were no cooperative or corporate businesses. He attributed the small number of businesses to lack of experience, initiative, accumulated capital, established credit, and good will. In addition to the handicap of the social environment, Haynes attributed the inability of Blacks to establish lucrative business enterprises to the prejudices and indifference of white groups, and to previous conditions of servitude (1912:139-147).

Throughout the study and in conclusion, Haynes indicated that Blacks would continue their migration to urban centers and that such migration would result in maladjustments and subsequent problems. He further indicated that the problem

...alike of statesman, race leader, and the philanthropist is to understand the conditions of segregation and oppositions due to race prejudices that are arising as a sequel to this urban concentration and to co-operate with the Negro in his effort to learn to live in the city as well as the country (1912:33).

Haynes not only made this a charge for others, but incorporated it similarly into his own professional ideals and endeavors. His commitment to this charge can be observed throughout his life's work as a social work activist and reformer and as a sociologist. His efforts to understand the consequences of segregation and opposition (a term which today may be called "oppression") ranged from the planning and implementation of interracial conferences and "clinics" to scholarly research and publications.

In 1910 Haynes completed his investigation of the Negro in industry in New York City and submitted the final written report to the Bureau's Director, then Ms. Pauline Goldmark. He also graduated from the School of Philanthropy in 1910, an achievement which marked a first for any Black student.

Following his graduation, Haynes continued his studies at Columbia which included further development of the research on the Negro in industry in New York. This research ultimately culminated in the publication of The Negro at Work in New York City (1912). After its completion, Haynes' thesis was honored by being selected for inclusion by the faculty of political science of Columbia University in a published series entitled, "Studies in History, Economics and Public Law."

In addition to a strong commitment to research and sociology, Haynes was also dedicated to establishing a national organization to provide social work to newly urban Blacks and to training enthusiastic young Blacks for social work in such an organization. To that end, he and Ruth Standish Baldwin founded the National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes (NLUCAN) in 1911, an organization which by 1916 had become synonymous with social work in the Black community. (The organization's name was changed to the National Urban League in 1920.)

Shortly after the new organization was founded, Haynes was offered a position as director of the Department of Social Science at Fisk University. Upon accepting the faculty position at Fisk, he immediately put his plan into effect. The plan included (1) preparatory instruction and training of Black students as well as (2) selecting promising students and providing opportunities for further professional social work study and practical experience among their own people in cities (Haynes 1911:384).

The Department of Social Science at Fisk was to serve as an example and a "powerful stimulus to other institutions and other centers to emulate and draw experience from" (PPCU Box 32). This made Haynes' task even more complex because it required that he work carefully and exhaustively to establish and maintain a high quality training program that could withstand constant scrutiny. Haynes, however, was not averted by the complexity of his task. Rather, he was confident that capable students enrolled in a rigorous broad course of study would raise the standards and increase the efficiency of social work among urban Blacks (Haynes, 1911: 387). The program of providing professional training in social work was very successful and can be measured by the impressive list of graduates who benefited from Haynes' enthusiasm and careful planning, including such scholars as Drs. Inabel Lindsay, Ira DeA. Reid and Abram Harris (PPCU Box 55).

The program of study that Haynes developed at Fisk reflected his faith that a thorough knowledge of sociology, economics and social problems was needed to alleviate social problems. He developed five courses in the Social Science Department which included: (1) Elementary Economics; (2) Advanced Economics; (3) Sociology and Social Problems; (4) History of the Negro; and (5) The Negro Problem (Fisk Bulletin, 1912:49; 1913:49). This course of study also included a series of lectures on problems and methods of bettering conditions among Blacks in cities (Fisk Bulletin, 1912:48). Each student was required to spend four hours per week for thirty weeks in field placement in Nashville as well as to participate in an investigation of some social problem, such as housing or occupations, among Black Nashvillians (Fisk Bulletin, 1916:58). The Fisk program developed in a way that reflected the trends in other social work programs. The two courses on the history and social problems of Blacks, however, added a dimension to the Fisk program which had not been included on any large scale in other schools of social work. This dimension gave the students at Fisk an opportunity to develop their power of independent thinking on the subject and to know, beyond personal experience, the background and social situations of the client population which they were preparing to serve. Haynes' beliefs about the value of history to social workers was similarly held by several other leaders in social work education. Edward Devine of the New York School of Philanthropy, in a presentation before the National Conference of Charities and Corrections in 1915 stated that it was

desirable that social workers should have definite knowledge of the historical relations of social classes to one another, of the privileged and the exploited, of the distressed and their benefactors, of the employers and wage earners (1915: 609).

George Mangold, Director of the St. Louis School, presenting at the same conference, concurred with Devine and added that, social work leaders who lacked a historical perspective, "will lack the sound and permanent elements which are necessary for the definite improvement of social conditions" (1915:613).

The two history courses that Haynes taught began the systematic collection of masses of source materials for the study of Blacks in the United States. These

courses were the first systematic courses in Black history to be given in American colleges. Haynes' interest in Black history and its relevance to social work led him to become a founding member of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) in 1915 (Jones, 1974:143).

Despite the seriousness of Haynes' commitment and the high quality of his professional involvement in history, social work education, and sociological research, he was, in the main, ignored by the elite in both sociology and social work. It is difficult to account for his contributions being disregarded except for reasons of racial prejudice. His contributions to social work as founder of the first national social work organization for social services to Blacks and the first school of social work for Blacks have also been relegated to a footnote in social work history.

Haynes was, however, given a forum at the National Conference of Charities and Corrections (NCCC) in 1911 to discuss the new social work program (Haynes, 1911). Yet, in 1915 when several prominent social work educators, such as Lee, Devine, Smith and Abbott spoke on issues in social work education, Haynes was not among them. Only two papers presented at the NCCC between 1915 and 1932 dealt with professional training for Blacks, one with medicine and the other with nursing (Kenny, 1928:180-83; Roberts, 1928:183-85).

Haynes' expertise as a sociological researcher was, however, given some recognition when in 1919 and 1924, he discussed Black migration patterns and the problems of employment. He took that opportunity to urge social workers to assist Black migrants' integration into the educational, civic and economic life of the community (1924). Yet, it is interesting to note that his works were clearly of minor importance. And, ironically, Haynes, who by research orientation and training toward both empiricism and reform was part of the mainstream of American social work and sociology as they were evolving at the turn of the century, found himself relegated to the periphery of his professions.

As times changed, the Department of Social Science that Haynes established at Fisk eventually became an intellectual center for sociological studies of the socioeconomic and racial structure of the South. The social work program, however, never maintained a reputation as the center for pioneering and modeling social work education for Blacks. It was perhaps the opening of the Atlanta School of Social Work in 1920 which brought Haynes' long-held ideas of professional social work training for Blacks into focus. The pioneers of this school, Jesse Thomas and Gary Moore, were both beneficiaries of the stimulus which Haynes gave to social work education and representatives of the next generation of social work educators and leaders (PPCU Box 48). Haynes, by then had turned his attention elsewhere.

Perhaps, it was social work's preoccupation with Freudian psychoanalysis after 1920 that encouraged Haynes to seek another arena for his skills and expertise. Although he never criticized the social work profession, he, unlike many social workers during the 1920's, did not favor minimizing the integration and coordination functions of the profession in favor of Freudian psychoanalysis (Lubove, 1977:

107). Haynes realized, instead, that opening lines of communication between individuals, classes and institutions, mobilizing community resources and conducting scientific research were vital and legitimate professional responsibilities worthy of continued pursuit; and he worked indefatigably, until his death in 1960, to that realization.

NOTES

1. This list included: THE NEGRO AT WORK IN NEW YORK CITY (1912); THE NEGRO NEW-COMER TO DETROIT (1918); NEGROES AT WORK DURING WORLD WAR I AND RECONSTRUCTION (1921); COTTON GROWING COMMUNITIES (1934) with Benson Y. Landis; and AFRICA, CONTINENT OF THE FUTURE (1950).
2. Within the Eleventh Assembly District, the area bounded by Thirtieth and Thirty eighth streets, Seventh and Tenth avenues; within the Nineteenth Assembly District, Sixty-first, Sixty-second, and Sixty-third streets, between Amsterdam and Eleventh avenues, commonly called "San Juan Hill"; within the Twenty-third and Thirty-first Assembly Districts, One Hundred and Thirtieth and One Hundred and Thirty-third streets between Eighth and St. Nicholas avenues, and One Hundred and Thirty-fourth and One Hundred and Thirty-fifth streets between Fifth and Seventh avenues (Haynes, 1912:52).

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