

University of Chicago Library

Guide to the Luther Lee Bernard Papers 1928-1938



© 2007 University of Chicago Library

Table of Contents

Descriptive Summary	3
Information on Use	3
Access	3
Citation	3
Historical Note	3
Scope Note	5
Related Resources	6
Subject Headings	6
INVENTORY	6
Series I: Departmental Histories	6
Series II: Life Histories of Sociologists	7
Series III: Correspondence	10

Descriptive Summary

Identifier	ICU.SPCL.LLBERNARD
Title	Bernard, Luther Lee. Papers
Date	1928-1938
Size	1 linear foot (2 boxes)
Repository	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

Abstract Luther Lee Bernard, sociologist. The Luther Lee Bernard Papers include data that Bernard collected for his studies, only part of which apparently was included in his published works. Generally this data can be divided into two general groups: 1) Material, mostly responses to a form letter, relating to the development of the teaching of sociology in American colleges and universities; and 2) the intellectual careers of influential and pioneer sociologists. The collection also includes correspondence relating to these projects.

Information on Use

Access

No restrictions.

Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Bernard, Luther Lee. Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Historical Note

The sociologist Luther Lee Bernard (29 Oct. 1881-23 Jan. 1951) was born in Russell County, Kentucky to the farmer Hiram H. Bernard and his wife Julia Wilson. Hiram H. Bernard, a former Union soldier treated Luther tyrannically and that led to a bitter and antagonistic relationship between them. The family moved to West Texas in 1891 where Luther enrolled with teachers who introduced him to the subject of modern science and the writings of Charles Darwin.

After attending a high school which offered no grades Bernard entered Pierce Baptist College in Missouri. Graduating in 1900, Bernard stayed on to teach science for two years; two more

years teaching languages at Lamar College followed. After that Bernard entered the University of Missouri to complete his BA degree in 1907.

While Bernard earned his BA he studied with the sociologist, Charles A. Ellwood, a PhD from the University of Chicago. Ellwood's reputation rested on the theory that society was bound by a "physic" rather than "real" bond. Bernard, in becoming a confrontational scholar would later critique these ideas.

Bernard earned his PhD at the University of Chicago under Albion Small. His thesis, "An objective standard of social control," promoted the study of society as a whole over the study of the individual representative. He used the work of Emile Durkheim to critique the tradition of psychological sociology. Studying the whole of society would give a better scientific "social control." This thesis involved a harsh critique on the work of Albion Small and thus the two scholars parted ways. In leaving the University of Chicago Bernard delivered a scathing six page letter in which he condemned the University of Chicago's Department of Sociology for its approach toward education and which involved a heavy use of theory and abstraction rather than application and an aloofness towards student that hurt the students in their job searches. This was the first of the many confrontations he would provoke during his career.

Bernard was unsatisfied with his first job placement after his degree and viewed his position at the University of Florida as a form of exile from the academy. He moved on to the Universities of Minnesota (1918-1925) and North Carolina (1928-1929), Washington University in St. Louis (1929-1946), and Pennsylvania State (1947-1950). His frequent moving was viewed by his colleagues as reflective of his hypersensitive and prickly personality in addition to scandals that arose when his adulterous affairs began shortly after he married Francis Fenton, his fellow graduate student, in 1911. The marriage produced one child and Bernard and Fenton divorced in 1922. While teaching in Minnesota, the administrators forced Bernard's resignation when he was charged with "common-law-marriage" which was then illegal in that state. Before moving on to Cornell in September 1925, Bernard married the gifted graduate student, Jessie Ravitch (more than twenty years his junior), whose scholastic work as Jessie Bernard surpassed his own. They had three children and remained married until his death but his philanderous practices made their marriage a stormy one. All in all, Bernard's confrontational personality and rumors of his personal life subdued his academic achievements.

Despite his personal and professional troubles and the third rate universities that employed him Bernard grew to be "leading proponent of a radical variant of objectivist sociology". He stated that positivistic sociology requires "projective logic," which was later compounded by C. Wright Mill's call for a "sociological imagination".

Bernard argued that the ideal situation was one in which the individual adjusted perfectly to his surrounding environment. In *Instinct* he argued that instincts were learned customs and traditions, the way to social progress was through a manipulation of the environment.

In the 1930's Bernard began collecting "life histories" in preparation for a history of sociology. He also collaborated with his wife Jessie Bernard in researching and published the history of positivism which they presented in 1943 as *Origins of American Sociology*. Extremely active

within his profession, Bernard corresponded frequently with his “life history” interview subjects and with potential allies in his sociological debates. His letters became widely known as “L.L.B.’s onion skins.”

Considered a rebel within the field of Sociology Bernard, decided to take a more dominant role within professional organizations and organized a group to oppose the interpretive policies of the American Sociological Society (ASS). Successful in his opposition, Bernard was elected president in 1932. He emphasized research on contemporary social issues and recruiting women into the field. In Bernard’s presidential address he alienated many colleagues by attacking the existing research establishments. The Sociological Research Association was founded as a response and Bernard viewed his exclusion as an “elitist plot.” Bernard continued his struggle against the sociological establishment and resigned from the ASS in 1938. He then undertook editing *American Sociologists* which became the outlet for his professional opinions until 1947.

Concerned with the sociological position of the “little man” and not assured that New Deal focus on business was the only answer to the Depression, Bernard spoke out against Roosevelt and called for an “objective standard” that would balance the focus of the profession of sociology. Concerned with international issues since before his Argentinean fellowship (1926-1927) he spoke out against Fascism. Before the war ended Bernard published his critique, *War and Its Causes* and rejected the barbarity of war throughout history.

Although he perceived himself as marginalized from the sociological profession Bernard influenced his student George Lunberg who brought Bernard’s focus on “sociological objectivism” into the post war debate.

Bernard passed away in State College, Pennsylvania in 1951.

Scope Note

The Luther Lee Bernard Papers include various types of data that Bernard collected for his studies, only part of which apparently was included in his published works. Generally this data can be divided into two general groups: 1) Material, mostly responses to a form letter, relating to the development of the teaching of sociology in American colleges and universities; and 2) the intellectual careers of influential and pioneer sociologists. The collection also includes correspondence relating to these projects.

The material concerning the development of the teaching of sociology is composed of outlines for compiling data; a form letter requesting information from universities and colleges; some correspondence with individuals concerning departmental histories; and several documents, each one relating the history of sociology at a particular university. The material concerning sociologists’ intellectual careers is composed of outlines for compiling data; a form letter requesting information from sociologists; correspondence about autobiographies and biographies of sociologists; and documents, autobiographical and biographical, some of which were written by Bernard. With the miscellaneous correspondence are a few letters from 1938 concerning controversies over affiliation with the International Federation of Sociological Societies, and

about the formation of a Sociological Research Association among members of the American Sociological Society, of which Bernard was president in 1932. In a few cases, a single piece of correspondence or a single document is relevant to both groups of data. The article is then filed with the biographical material. A small body of correspondence concerning both groups of data could not be sorted alphabetically, as more than one letter appears on a single sheet of paper. For this correspondence, an alphabetical list of the sociologists addressed appears in the guide.

Related Resources

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/theart.html>

Subject Headings

- Bernard, Luther Lee
- American Sociological Society
- Sociologists
- Sociology

INVENTORY

Series I: Departmental Histories

Box 1

Folder 1

Outlines for data

- "Outline for the history of sociology"
- "Sociology in the United States"
- "Sociology in the United States"
- Form letter to universities and colleges

Box 1

Folder 2

- Akron Municipal University
- Antioch College
- Atlanta University

Box 1

Folder 3

Brown University

Box 1

Folder 4

Columbia University

Box 1

Folder 5

Cornell University

Box 1

Folder 6

Drew University

Box 1

Folder 7

- Goucher College
- University of Kansas

Box 1

Folder 8

- Lenoir-Rhyne (SEE H. M. Snyder, Box 2, folder 13)
- Louisiana State University
- Miami University
- University of Michigan

Box 1

Folder 9

- University of Minnesota
- University of Mississippi

Box 1

Folder 10

University of Missouri

Box 1

Folder 11

- University of Montana
- University of Nebraska

Box 1

Folder 12

- Ohio State University
- Ohio Wesleyan University
- The Pennsylvania State College
- Princeton University
- University of Richmond, Virginia
- Simmons College School of Social Work
- Skidmore College
- Smith College (SEE Chase Gaing Woodhouse, Box 2, folder 18)

Box 1

Folder 13

- Southern Methodist University
- Stanford University
- Straight College

Box 1

Folder 14

The University of Texas

Box 1

Folder 15

- Tufts College
- Wesleyan College
- College of William and Mary Life Histories

Series II: Life Histories of Sociologists

Box 1

Folder 16

outlines

- "Suggested outline for data for sociological life history"
- "Suggested outline for data"
- Form letter to sociologists

Box 1

Folder 17

- A. L. Beeley
- Robert Hamilton Bishop
- Frank W. Blackmar
- E. W. Burgess

Box 1

Folder 18

Charles Joseph Bushnell

Box 1

Folder 19

- Grace E. Chaffee
- F. Stuart Chapin
- Carroll D. Clark
- Edwin Leavitt Clarke
- John R. Commons

Box 1

Folder 20

- Charles Horton Cooley
- Charles Wellsley Coulter
- W. Rex Crawford
- James Elbert Cutler

Box 1

Folder 21

- Vattel Elbert Daniel
- George F. David
- George R. Davies
- Jerome Davis

Box 2

Folder 1

- Michael M. Davis
- James Quayle Dealey
- Robert Cloutman Dexter
- Edwin L. Earp

Box 2

Folder 2

Charles A. Ellwood

Box 2

Folder 3

- Richard T. Ely

- Earle Edward Eubank
- R. L. Finney
- A. N. French
- Charles Elmer Gehlke

Box 2

Folder 4

- Franklin H. Giddings
- J. M. Gillette

Box 2

Folder 5

- J. L. Gillin
- George Elliott Howard
- Charles W. Hutson
- A. E. Jenks
- L. M. Keasbey

Box 2

Folder 6

- J. P. Lichtenburger
- Frederick E. Lumley

Box 2

Folder 7

- Joseph Mayer
- Roderick Duncan McKenzie

Box 2

Folder 8

- A. J. Muntsch
- Cecil C. North

Box 2

Folder 9

Howard W. Odum

Box 2

Folder 10

- Maurice Parmelee
- E. George Payne
- Harold A. Phelps

Box 2

Folder 11

Walter Rauschenbusch

Box 2

Folder 12

- E. A. Ross
- Edwin R. A. Seligman

Box 2

Folder 13

H. M. Snyder

Box 2

Folder 14

J. H. W. Stuckenberg

Box 2

Folder 15

- W. I. Thomas
- George Edgar Vincent

Box 2

Folder 16

Lester F. Ward

Box 2

Folder 17

- Amos Griswold Warner
- U. G. Weatherly
- D. C. Wells
- Walter F. Willcox

Box 2

Folder 18

- Chase Going Woodhouse
- Erville B. Woods
- Carroll Davidson Wright
- Unalphabetized Letters Concerning Departmental and Life Histories

Box 2

Folder 19

- R. E. Baber
- O. E. Baker
- Barnes
- Emory S. Bogardus
- Myrtle Brooke
- J. E. Cutler
- Seba Eldridge
- Ellwood
- George Elliott Howard
- Joseph Mayer
- Herbert Adolphus Miller
- Mills
- Howard W. Odum
- E. A. Ross
- Mary Stuckenberg
- W. I. Thomas
- George E. Vincent
- W. W. Whitehouse

Series III: Correspondence

Box 2

Folder 20

- Incomplete document concerning sociologists

- Correspondence about the American Sociological Society

Box 2

Folder 21

Correspondence

- L. L. Bernard to Prof. Eubank, Jan 15, 1938
- L. L. Bernard to Prof. Wood, Jan 18, 1938
- Cecil C. North to L. L. Bernard, Apr 11, 1938
- Cecil C. North to ?, Apr 11, 1938
- Maurice Parmelee to Prof. Sorokin, Feb 18, 1938
- Miscellaneous Correspondence and Documents (Correspondence to and from Bernard)

Box 2

Folder 22

Correspondence

- S. P. Breckinridge, Jun 2, 1928
- Frank J. Bruno, Dec 12, 1927
- Irvin S. Corman, Mar 8, 1932

Box 2

Folder 23

Correspondence

- J. L. Gillin, Dec 2, 1931
- Report of Research in Sociology, 1930-31" by John S. Gillin and Kimball Young
- J. H. Kolb to Gillin, Oct 22, 1931
- Alvin Johnson, May 5, 1928
- May 14, 1928
- G. W. Lamke, May 27, 1930
- Marie Le Blanc, Jun 4, 1928
- Howard W. Odum, June 2, 1928
- Frederick B. Richards, May 31, 1928
- E. A. Ross, Dec 12, 1927
- Harrold H. Swift, Jun 4, 1928
- O. Douglas Weeks, Jun 4, 1928