

Contents

- I. Strategies for Studying the History of American Sociology
- II. Hull-House Artists in Chicago and Beyond: A Curatorial Project
- III. Mary Jo Deegan: Biography, Research, Writings
- IV. Depression Dogs: FSA/OWI Photographs, 1935-1944
- Appendix: Sociology in a Nutshell



Michael R. Hill is an interdisciplinary scholar with doctorates in Geography & Sociology. He is the author of *Archival Strategies and Techniques* and co-editor of *Harriet Martineau: Theoretical & Methodological Perspectives*. Michael is the former editor of *Sociological Origins (S/O)* and is now the Associate Director of The Jane Addams Research Center and Poet's Corner in St. Joseph, Michigan.



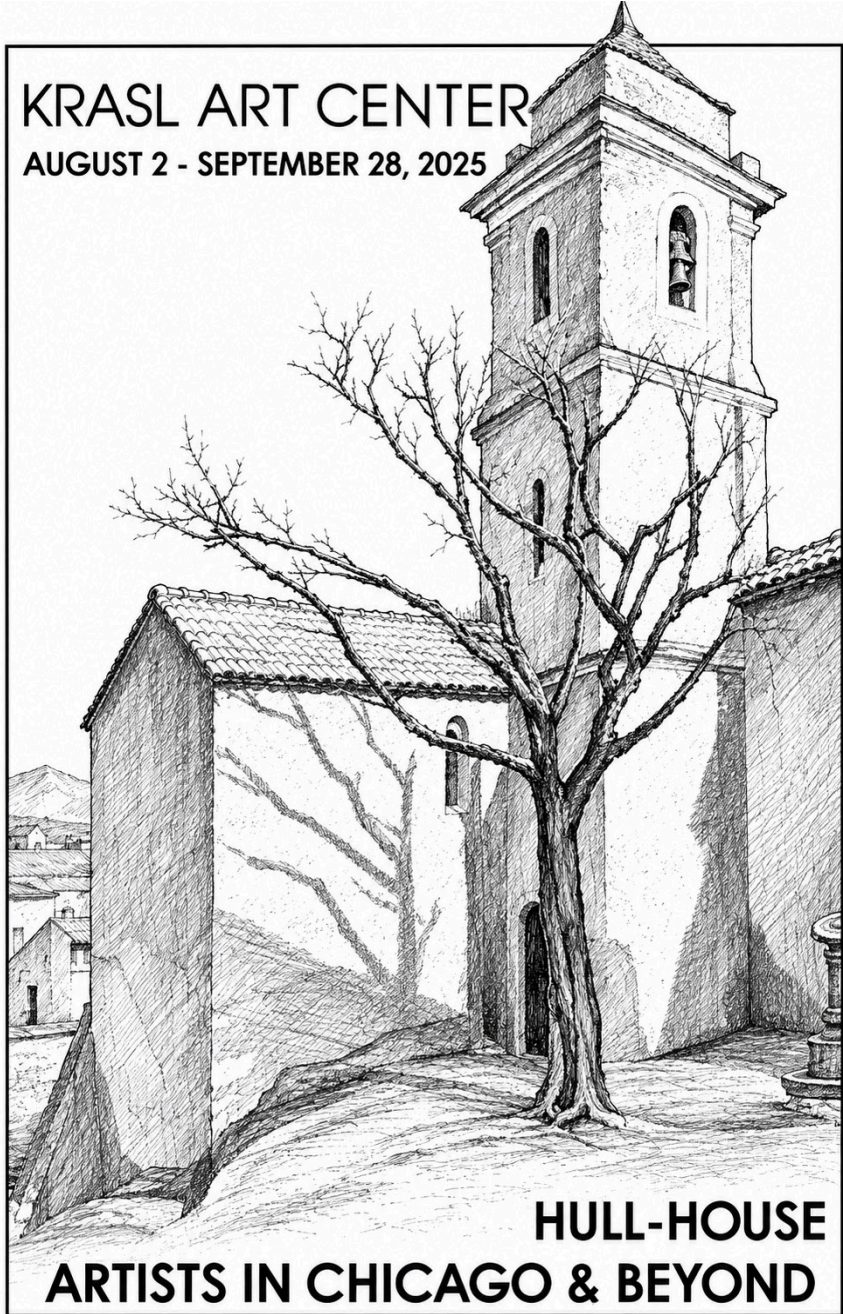
The Salerno Lectures

Explorations in the Art and History of Sociology

Michael R. Hill

Proof

The Salerno Lectures



Frontispiece: Black & white rendition of the full-color postcard announcing the 2025 show “Hull-House Artists in Chicago & Beyond” at the Krasl Art Center in St. Joseph, Michigan. The artwork is based on an untitled oil painting by Enella Benedict, the founding artist of the Hull-House Art School in Chicago.

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Art and History of Sociology

Michael R. Hill
Associate Director
Jane Addams Research Center



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Contents

List of Illustrations vi

Preface vii

I. Methods and Techniques for Studying the History
of Sociology in America 1

II. Hull-House Artists in Chicago and Beyond: A Curatorial
Project in the History of Sociology 13
Appendix to Chapter Two 28

III. Mary Jo Deegan, 1946–2024:
Biography, Research, Writings 31

IV. Depression Dogs: Photography, Sociology, Poetry and
the FSA/OWI Files, 1935–1944 51

Appendix: Sociology in a Nutshell 75

About the Author 85

List of Illustrations

Frontispiece: Announcement for the art exhibit “Hull-House
Artists in Chicago & Beyond” i i

Poster for Salerno Lectures 2003 3 0

Figure 1. Mary Jo Deegan 4 8

Figure 2. The female Deegan family: Judith, Ida May, Mary Jo, Carol 49

Figure 3. Mary Jo Deegan with school friends at the
St. Joseph, Michigan, public library 5 0

Figure 4. Timeline — Photography & Sociology 6 3

Figure 5. Number of Photographs by Year 6 4

Figure 6. Fake FSA-style Photograph 6 5

Figure 7. Dorothea Lange — Dog-shaped food stand 6 6

Figure 8. Arthur Rothsten — Winter sled dogs 6 7

Figure 9. Jack Delano — Dog sleeping under automobile 6 8

Figure 10. Jack Delano — Iowa State College veterinary school 6 9

Figure 11. John Collier — Jewell Mazique and family dog 7 0

Figure 12. Dorothea Lange — Displaced sharecroppers 7 1

Figure 13. Russell Lee — Dog guarding flooded home 7 2

Figure 14. Marion Post Wolcott — Dog following coffin 7 3

Figure 15. John Vachon — Boy and dog 7 4

Michael R. Hill — First Day of School (Leon, Iowa) 8 4

Preface

It is an honor and a great pleasure to return to Salerno to present my most recent explorations in the disciplinary history of sociology, and I am deeply grateful to Professor Giuseppina Cersosimo for hosting this visit. In 2003, here in Salerno, I offered a discussion of “Methods and Techniques for studying the History of Sociology in America.” That paper, reproduced and updated below, is presented here primarily as a prologue to the three new chapters in this volume. I have also included an appendix: “Sociology in a Nutshell” — which (I hope) elucidates the conceptual topography of the taken-for-granted thinking that underpins much of my sociological research, teaching and writing.

Much has changed during the intervening twenty-three years since my first visit to Salerno. As a longtime student of visual sociology and the sociology of the visual arts, I have become increasingly immersed in the concrete, material manifestations of artistic production from the late 1800s to the mid 1960s within the Hull-House Art School founded in Chicago by sociologists Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr in Chicago. This interest resulted in my curation of the exhibition: “Hull-House Artists in Chicago and Beyond” at the Krasl Art Center, in Michigan, in 2025. My report on that project and the historical research it entailed forms Chapter Two, below.

January 2024 marked the passing of my long-term life-partner, sociological theorist, and disciplinary historian, Mary Jo Deegan. Her sponsored visit to Salerno in 2003 — and the warm welcome she received — together with the several papers she presented, was a professionally and emotionally significant event in her career. Her pioneering work on early women in sociology remains foundational. My account of Mary Jo’s theoretical visions, methodologies, and multi-faceted studies comprises Chapter Three.

My most recent project is the discovery and compilation of just over 150 documentary photographs from the 1930s and early 1940s, made by several extraordinary photographers, employed by the U.S. Farm Security Administration during the Great Depression, that depict dogs — alone or with humans, at rest, work, and play. These images provide a glimpse into “the lives of dogs” during the most painful economic period in American history. A report on this work, which forms Chapter Four, is inspired by the ASA section on Animals and Society, continues my interest in sociological theorizing about dogs (an interest shared by my colleagues in Salerno),¹ and opens ekphrastic perspectives explored by my poet-life-partner, Janice Marie Zerfas.

— MRH

¹ *Dogs and Society: Anglo-American Sociological Perspectives, 1865–1934*. Edited by Michael R. Hill and Mary Jo Deegan. Lincoln: Zea Books, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries, 2016; *Cani & Società: Prospettive sociologiche anglo-americane 1865–1925*, edited by Michael R. Hill and Mary Jo Deegan. Translated and with an afterword (postfazioni) by Raffaele Rauty. Esplorazioni No. 20 (a series edited by Giuseppina Cersosimo). Calimera (Italy): Edizioni Kurumuny, 2014. Both volumes are available gratis as PDFs via DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska-Lincoln..

Chapter One

METHODS AND TECHNIQUES FOR STUDYING THE HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY IN AMERICA¹

This discussion, first published in 2005, was presented to students in the University of Salerno in 2003 and is reproduced here as a prologue to the three new lectures prepared for presentation in 2026. These three new papers, each in their own way, reflect instances of “existential serendipity” and “unexpected moments of fortuitousness” — concepts explored in the essay below.

Professore Rauty, Colleghi, membri del Seminario, Signore e Signori: E’ un grande privilegio parlare con voi oggi nel vostro bel paese dei metodi di ricerca per lo studio e la documentazione della storia della sociologia. La storia disciplinare e’ importante per me. L’anno scorso ho concluso il mio incarico a capo della Sezione sulla Storia della Sociologia nell’ Associazione di Sociologia Americana, quindi so bene che la storia e’ importante anche per molti dei miei colleghi. Nel 2005, l’ Associazione Americana di Sociologia festeggerà’ il suo contenario: di conseguenza, sempre piu’ sociologi americani cominciano a porsi questioni storiche riguardo alla disciplina della sociologia. Nel presentare queste osservazioni, spero di attirare l’attenzione sugli specifici aspetti metodologici della scrittura e della ricerca della storia disciplinare in America. Consentitemi di dire che mi dispiace moltissimo di non poter

¹Originally published in *Sociological Origins*, Special Supplement to Volume 4, No. 1, Fall 2005: 3-12.

This paper, now slightly revised, was presented November 19, 2003, to the Second Meeting on the History of Sociology, Dipartimento de Sociologia e Scienza della Politica, Università degli Studi de Salerno, Italy, co-sponsored by the United States Consulate (Naples). This lecture served as a preface to Mary Jo Deegan’s preliminary remarks on “Jane Addams e gli uomini della Scuola di Chicago: il genere, la Hull-House e l’Università di Chicago” and her subsequent *Lectio magistralis* on “I gruppi etnici, la Hull-House e la scuola di Chicago, 1892–1960.” My special thanks to Professor Raffaele Rauty for his kind invitation and warm hospitality, and to Maria d’Ebloli who provided consecutive translation during my presentation.

parle con voi in Italiano oggi visto che la mia conoscenza della lingua è nulla. Perciò, il resto della mia presentazione sarà in inglese.²

A FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM

Let me begin with a fundamental problem: How is it *possible* for scholars to know, discover, and document the structure, patterns, history, and accomplishments of academic and scientific disciplines? This is a complex and difficult intellectual and methodological problem. This is a problem requiring patience, reflexivity, critique, and much hard work. It is a problem addressed by sociological specialists in the fields of “sociology of knowledge” and “sociology of science.” It is also a problem with which all sociologists must be concerned. The methods and presuppositions we use to discover disciplinary history necessarily shape our “findings” in a variety of consequential ways. The problematic nature of this situation is greatly exacerbated when scholars in one country attempt to learn the disciplinary history of scholars who live and write in other lands. My understanding of sociology in Italy, for example, is limited largely to passing familiarity with the works of Niccolò Machiavelli, Vilfredo Pareto, and Cesare Lombroso. Of course, as I hope you will cordially instruct me after the seminar, there is much much more to learn about Italian sociology. But for now, let me reverse the situation and pose the question this way: How can scholars in Italy, like yourselves, proceed methodologically to understand and learn about the robust and many-faceted history of American sociology? The examples I use here are

² I am indebted to Marcis Caporale of Lincoln, Nebraska, USA, who translated my introductory greeting into Italian.

The text in English reads: “Professor Rauty, Colleagues, Members of the Seminar, Ladies and Gentlemen: It is a great privilege to speak with you today in your beautiful country about research methods for studying and documenting the history of sociology. Disciplinary history is important to me. Last year, I completed my term as the Chair of the Section on the History of Sociology in the American Sociological Association, so I know that history is also important to several of my colleagues. In 2005, the American Sociological Association will celebrate its centennial anniversary year and, as a direct result, additional American sociologists are now starting to ask historical questions about the discipline of sociology. In presenting these remarks, I hope to focus attention on the specifically methodological aspects of writing and researching disciplinary history in America and England. Please allow me to say that I have one very deep regret in speaking with you today: my Italian language skills are virtually nil. Thus, the remainder of my talk must be presented in English.”

drawn from the United States, but similar procedures apply, more or less, to other English-speaking countries.³

A traditional and seemingly reasonable response is to “go to the library” to read the relevant scholarly books on the subject of American sociology. Unfortunately, there are many difficulties here. For example, the books available to you are *pre-selected* in various ways:

- (1) Of the many books that are written or proposed, only a relatively few are actually published,
- (2) Of the books that are published, only a relatively few are purchased and made available in university libraries (especially in the case of books published in other countries), and
- (3) For those books that do get published and are available in libraries, we are held hostage to the biases of each published author.

The problem of bias in disciplinary history is very severe. It is important to realize:

- (1) Publishers typically publish mainly those books for which they anticipate good sales, and
- (2) Many factors are typically *believed* by publishers to increase sales, including:
 - (a) The fame or prestige of the author, and
 - (b) The fame or prestige of the subject(s) of the book.

The sad result for the overall history of sociology is that most of our disciplinary accounts are written by relatively well-known, well-established authors in prestigious schools who write about the sociologists whom they consider to be the most important and the most significant. The consequences, over the past 100 years, are both circular and cumulative. In sociology generally, for example, there are *hundreds* of scholarly books

³ For example, my own research on the English sociologist, Harriet Martineau (1802–1876), has been conducted largely from afar — from within the United States.

on the work of Max Weber and Émile Durkheim. In the United States, there are *hundreds* more books and articles about sociology and sociologists at the University of Chicago (to which my colleagues, Professor Rauty and Professor Deegan have added their own welcome and distinguished contributions).⁴ This is a general human process, as your well-known countrymen, Pliny the Younger,⁵ wrote nearly two thousand years ago:

How much does the fame of human actions depend upon the station of those who perform them! The very same conduct shall be either applauded to the skies or entirely overlooked, just as it may happen to proceed from a person of conspicuous or obscure rank.⁶

In summary, the published books on the history of sociology in the United States typically tell only the stories that privileged academics in elite schools want to tell. In many cases, these are interesting and valuable stories, but they are neither representative nor comprehensive narratives.⁷

⁴ See, for examples, Lester R. Kurtz, *Evaluating Chicago Sociology: A Guide to the Literature, with an Annotated Bibliography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Nels Anderson, *On Hobos and Homelessness*, edited by Raffaele Rauty (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Mary Jo Deegan, *Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School, 1892-1918* (New Brunswick, Transaction Books, 1988); and Mary Jo Deegan, *Race, Hull-House, and the University of Chicago* (Westport: Praeger, 2002).

⁵ Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus (62 A.D.- ?).

⁶ Letter LXVII (To Macer), in *Letters of Pliny*, translated by William Melmoth, revised by F.C.T. Bosanquet, *The Harvard Classics*, Vol. 9 (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909: 305)

⁷ This general problem is compounded by uncritical reliance on introductory textbooks which Kuhn shows systematically warp the disciplinary history of every discipline. See, Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). For a recent discussion on the evolving relationship between disciplinary history and textbooks in sociology, see Mary Jo Deegan, "Textbooks, the History of Sociology, and the Sociological Stock of Knowledge," *Sociological Theory* 21 (September 2003: 298-305).

THREE ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES FOR READING THE HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY

Methodologically, we are stuck in a difficult place if we want to read more representative and comprehensive accounts of the disciplinary history of sociology in America. How can we read more broadly? For starters, we can apply three provisional strategies for selecting historical materials to read:

(1) We can *purposefully* choose to read the work of relatively unknown authors who write about relatively unknown sociologists. For example, suppose we each compile a long list of books published about the history of sociology, and then select from that list a book about otherwise unknown sociologists that was published by the *least* prestigious press! This seems counterintuitive at first glance. Indeed, we may discover that the book selected isn't a very good book, or is badly written. On the other hand, many of these overlooked works provide delightful and intellectually provocative reading. And, if we read several such books, there is a good chance that we will at least be *introduced* to any number of unheralded sociologists who have led interesting and instructive sociological lives (this does not exempt us, however, from also attending to the standard works on *status quo* reading lists). Having been introduced to an *alternative* list of sociological actors, we are better positioned to construct more representative accounts of disciplinary history.⁸

(2) Rather than being narrowly restrictive or inherently elitist, we can purposefully widen our definitions of (a) who, in fact, qualifies to be categorized as a "sociologist" and (b) what types of activity qualify as

⁸ Mary Jo Deegan provides several reference sources that offer basic biographical information — once you have discovered the name of a little-known sociologist. For details, see "Transcending a Patriarchal Past: Teaching the History of Women in Sociology," *Teaching Sociology* 16 (April, 1988: 141-150). With additional bibliographic research, it then becomes possible to write intellectual sketches of the accomplishments of many such sociologists. See, for numerous examples, Mary Jo Deegan, *Women in Sociology: A Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991) and Chapter 2, this volume..

“sociological.” The Käsler/Deegan criteria,⁹ for example, provide a useful model in this regard, an approach that led materially, in Deegan’s case, to the re-discovery of Jane Addams as someone who was clearly engaged in specifically *sociological* activities.

(3) Rather than reading latter-day accounts *of* early disciplinary history, we can purposefully turn instead to the actual works produced by early sociologists themselves. It is surprising how often these early works are politically refreshing, methodologically lively, and theoretically substantial. To begin, we can purposefully compile a comprehensive list of the early members of the American Sociological Society (now the American Sociological Association), and then search for the books and articles they wrote. Many of these works remain available for purchase via used book dealers.¹⁰ Moreover, the early issues of the *American Journal of Sociology* (as well as dozens of other journals in the humanities and social sciences) can be searched (and downloaded) on-line via JSTOR in many university libraries – and if JSTOR is not available locally, one can subscribe to it for only \$40 per year once one has joined the American Sociological Association. For my own research, I have begun searching JSTOR for articles by obscure sociologists, downloading their journal articles as PDF files, and organizing these files to build my own digital library for future reading. I should add that there are also many interesting and useful early journals and magazines that are not available via JSTOR,¹¹ but JSTOR provides a place to begin your search. Further, to locate articles published in obscure journals since the 1960s, written by

⁹ See Mary Jo Deegan, *Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School*, p. 9. These criteria are: (1) occupies a chair of sociology and/or teaches sociology, (2) membership in a national sociological society, (3) authorship of sociological articles or textbooks, (4) self-definition as a sociologist, or (5) definition by others as a sociologist. Dirk Käsler defined as a sociologist anyone who met just *one* of these criteria. Deegan shows that Jane Addams meets *all* five.

¹⁰ For books published in the US and England (and, increasingly, for other countries as well), the Advanced Book Exchange is currently the best on-line source of used academic books. You can find it online (www.abe.com) and there easily search the offerings of thousands of book dealers. Many titles are expensive, but others can be purchased at modest cost.

¹¹ See, for example, *Sociological Papers* (published by the London Sociological Society in the early 1900s), *Bibliotheca Sacra* (for early writings by Christian sociologists in the United States), etc., etc.

unrecognized scholars about largely unknown sociologists, the expensive, on-line version of *Sociological Abstracts* is an valuable resource.¹² These three strategies: (1) purposefully turning to obscure writers, (2) purposefully adopting inclusive rather than exclusionary definitions of sociology and sociologists, and (3) purposefully reading original works themselves rather than *accounts of* those writings, can help lead you, eventually, to a more representative understanding of the disciplinary history of sociology, not only in the United States but also elsewhere.

A few American scholars have attempted to write more comprehensive and inclusive accounts of the disciplinary history of American sociology. This group includes not only Mary Jo Deegan but also several other members of the former ASA Section on the History of Sociology,¹³ specifically: Anthony Blasi, Linda Rynbrandt, Lynn McDonald, Mike Keen, Susan Hoecker-Drysdale, Barry Johnston, Connie Frey, Patricia Lengermann, Jill Niebrugge-Brantley, and the late Helena Znaniecka Lopata, among others. The substantive results of this “new history” in American sociology provide important alternative models of disciplinary activity and scholarly behavior.¹⁴ In his presidential address

¹² For example, the articles published in *Sociological Origins* are fully indexed in *Sociological Abstracts*.

¹³ Now the ASA Section on the History of Sociology and Social Thought. This organizational move significantly diluted/deflected the original intent of the section’s founders to concentrate specifically on the organizational and disciplinary history of sociology per se.

¹⁴ See, for example, my essay on “Martineauian Sociology and Our Disciplinary Future,” *Harriet Martineau: Theoretical & Methodological Perspectives*, edited by Michael R. Hill and Susan Hoecker-Drysdale (New York: Routledge, 2001: 191-193). [For other recent examples along these lines, see especially the centennial volume sponsored by the ASA Section on the History of Sociology: *Diverse Histories of American Sociology*, edited by Anthony J. Blasi (Leiden: Brill, 2005); *Social Ethics: Sociology and the Future of Society*, by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, edited with an introduction by Michael R. Hill and Mary Jo Deegan (Westport: Praeger, 2004); *The New Woman of Color: The Collected Writings of Fannie Barrier Williams, 1893-1918*, edited with an introduction by Mary Jo Deegan (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002); *On Art, Labor and Religion*, by Ellen Gates Starr, edited with an introduction by Mary Jo Deegan and Ana-Maria Wahl (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2003); *The Dress of Women: A Critical Introduction to the Symbolism and Sociology of Clothing*, by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, edited with an introduction by Michael R. Hill and Mary Jo Deegan (Westport: Greenwood, 2002); Mary Jo Deegan, *Race, Hull-House, and the University of Chicago: A New Conscience Against Ancient Evils* (Westport: Praeger, 2002); and *Essays in Social Psychology*, by George H. Mead, edited with an introduction by Mary Jo

to the American Sociological Association, Joe R. Feagin commended and encouraged the efforts of these scholars in bringing the previously neglected work of Jane Addams, W.E.B. DuBois, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Harriet Martineau, and others, to our collective sociological attention.¹⁵ This new work has been accomplished not by following the well worn path, but by looking into dimly-lit corners, by being inclusive, and by widely reading original sources in libraries and archives.¹⁶

EXISTENTIAL SERENDIPITY

As an “appendix” to this discussion, allow me to add a note concerning what might best be termed the “existential serendipity” of several of the new disciplinary histories now being written by scholars in the United States and elsewhere. The strategies I have listed provide only part of the answer to the question: “But how did you discover sociologist “X” in the first place?” “Why did you think that someone like Jane Addams, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, or Harriet Martineau might be an important sociologist when few people, if any, ever wrote about their sociological accomplishments?”

Part of the answer rests simply in “being in the right place at the right time.” The late American sociologist Erving Goffman defined such situations as a variety of “fortuitousness,”¹⁷ and Mary Jo Deegan has described similar events as “archival surprises.”¹⁸ It is usually the case that each scholar who writes about formerly obscure sociologists has had

Deegan (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2001)].

¹⁵ Joe R. Feagin, “Social Justice and Sociology: Agendas for the Twenty-First Century,” *American Sociological Review* 66 (February, 2001: 1-20).

¹⁶ Learning how to discover and follow clues to sociological history in archives is important, but lies beyond the scope of the present discussion. For details, see Michael R. Hill, *Archival Strategies and Techniques* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1993).

¹⁷ Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974: 33-35).

¹⁸ Mary Jo Deegan, “‘Dear Love, Dear Love’: Feminist Pragmatism and the Chicago Female World of Love and Ritual,” *Gender & Society* 10 (October, 1996: 590-607).

a unique experience that brings that previously unknown sociologist to their attention. In Mary Jo Deegan’s case, for example, at a time when American women were asking feminist questions generally, she found herself — as a graduate student — in a section of the enormous Regenstein library at the University of Chicago.¹⁹ There, she unexpectedly came face-to-shelf with hundreds of sociological books written by women she had never heard mentioned in her courses. “Who are these women?” she asked herself, and thus, at that moment, started what became her career: documenting the work of previously unknown women sociologists, including Jane Addams. The encounter in the library was a moment of existential serendipity.

Let us take another example: Mike Forrest Keen studied how the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) conducted secret surveillance on American sociologists. The political tensions in academia initially engaged Mike’s attention when he learned about the activities of his grandfather, an academic sociologist whose loyalty was questioned in the late 1940s by the trustees of the college where he taught.²⁰ It was 20 years later, however, when Mike first got the idea to use the US Freedom of Information Act to request copies of the FBI files of prominent American sociologists. While attending an National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Seminar at Harvard University in 1988, a severe heat wave struck the Boston area: “It was so hot that the Widener Library had to close its doors for the first time in its more than 300-year history.” Mike and the other seminar members retreated to a local pub, ordered cold beer, and launched an impromptu seminar during which Rick Patterson mentioned having obtained Albert Einstein’s FBI file via the Freedom of Information Act. Mike was immediately intrigued: “What a great source of data!”²¹ Without that serendipitous moment, he might never have

¹⁹ Mary Jo Deegan, personal communication.

²⁰ Mike F. Keen, personal communication. In yet another instance of serendipity, Mike recounts learning about his grandfather’s academic freedom difficulties only when he chanced upon a small file marked “Fight with Trustees” among the papers that survived after his grandfather’s death in the late 1960s.

²¹ Mike F. Keen, “The Freedom of Information Act and Sociological Research,” *The American Sociologist* 23 (1992: 43-51).

started what became a massive and original research project: compiling lists of names of deceased sociologists and then formally requesting all relevant files from the FBI. In this way, Mike learned much about the history of American sociology that could be learned in no other way.²²

I conclude with two stories related to my own research. First, how did I come to “discover” and then re-publish Harriet Martineau’s *How To Observe Morals and Manners*, the earliest research methods text in sociology?²³ It is a good exemplar of existential serendipity. First, in my earlier studies as a geographer,²⁴ I became acutely interested in research methods, *per se*. Next, I was a student in a research methods course in sociology in which the instructor assigned a reading by the well-known Frenchman, Alexis de Tocqueville, who made social observations in the United States in the early 1800s.²⁵ Next, I mentioned this assignment to Professor Deegan, who bristled: “De Tocqueville! Why aren’t you reading Martineau?” (Deegan was right, of course, it turns out that Martineau made much better and more detailed observations in the United States.²⁶) Fortunately, as things developed, our library did *not* have the full text of

²² Mike Forrest Keen, *Stalking the Sociological Imagination: J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI Surveillance of American Sociology* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999). Reprinted with a new introduction by Mike Forrest Keen and Reinhart Kossler as *Stalking Sociologists: J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI Surveillance of American Sociology* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2003).

²³ Harriet Martineau, *How to Observe Morals and Manners* (London: Charles Knight, 1838); Sesquicentennial edition of the first social science methods text, with new appendices, index, and an introduction by Michael R. Hill. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1989. (currently offered on demand and as an ebook by Routledge). Hill’s Introduction is available gratis as a PDF via DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

²⁴ Michael R. Hill, *Spatial Structure and Decision-Making Aspects of Pedestrian Route Selection through an Urban Environment*, Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Geography, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1982. (Digital copies available from the author on request).

²⁵ Alexis de Tocqueville, *De la démocratie en Amérique* (Paris, 1835-40). Translated as *Democracy in America*, by Henry Reeve (New edition, with a biographical notice by the translator and some additional notes, London: Longmans, Green, 1875).

²⁶ Michael R. Hill, “A Methodological Comparison of Harriet Martineau’s *Society in America* (1837) and Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* (1835–1840),” *Harriet Martineau: Theoretical & Methodological Perspectives*, edited by Michael R. Hill and Susan Hoecker-Drysdale (New York: Routledge, 2003: 59-74).

Martineau’s American studies.²⁷ The only source available in Nebraska was an abridgement of *Society in America* published in 1962 by Seymour Martin Lipset. In his introduction, Lipset quoted from *How to Observe Morals and Manners*, noted the book’s likely methodological priority, and admired Martineau’s methodological acumen.²⁸ Thanks to Lipset, I became intrigued. Our library in Lincoln did not have a copy of *How to Observe*. Indeed, few libraries possessed copies, but I obtained the book via interlibrary loan. I was amazed! *How to Observe* was a masterful volume filled to the brim with savvy, creative and logically rigorous methodological advice. Thus, at that point, I began my effort to get it republished.²⁹ It was serendipity. I was in the right places at the right times, and the consequences opened my long-term interest in Martineau.

About this same time, I also became interested in Roscoe Pound, the former Dean of the Harvard Law School. I was listening to a seminar on the history of sociology, conducted by Professor Deegan, when one of the participants happened, entirely by chance, to mention the name of Roscoe Pound (and this primarily because Pound was originally from Nebraska). As luck, or fortuitousness, or existential serendipity would have it, I was at the university library the next day making photocopies of totally unrelated materials. My eyes wandered over the titles of books left stacked near the photocopy machine by a previous user. Now, to fully appreciate what happened next, I must tell you that I had recently completed a Ph.D. in geography and was only then starting my work in sociology. As my eyes wandered casually over the book titles, I became intrigued when I saw an old book titled simply: *The Phytogeography of Nebraska* (the plant geography of Nebraska), by someone named Roscoe

²⁷ Harriet Martineau, *Society in America* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1837).

²⁸ Seymour Martin Lipset, “Harriet Martineau’s America” in *Society in America*, by Harriet Martineau, edited, abridged and with an introductory essay by Seymour Martin Lipset (New York: Doubleday, 1962: 7, 37-39). Specifically, in reference to Martineau’s *How To Observe Morals and Manners*, Lipset wrote: “This volume is, perhaps, the first book on the methodology of social research in the then still unborn disciplines of sociology and anthropology” (p. 7) and asserted that “Her methodological treatise testifies to the considerable sophistication that she brought to this inquiry” in *America* (p. 37).

²⁹ Harriet Martineau, *How to Observe Morals and Manners*, sesquicentennial edition, with a new introduction by Michael R. Hill (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1989).

Pound.³⁰ Could this *possibly* be the *same* Roscoe Pound who became the famous Harvard law professor? That question changed my professional life. At that moment, although I did not recognize it at the time, I had found my new dissertation topic. Subsequently, I discovered that Pound was not only a lawyer, he was *also* an important botanist — the founder of the American school of plant ecology — *and*, what’s more, that he was *also* a full-fledged *sociologist* as well, one who met *all* of the Käsler/Deegan criteria. Imagine my wonderment as I soon learned that Pound was the founder of the American school of sociological jurisprudence, led a massive social survey in Cleveland, taught sociology courses at Harvard, was a close colleague of several ASS presidents, and was for twenty-five years an active and influential member of the American Sociological Society. Had I not been a trained geographer, had I not gone to the library to make photocopies when I did, and had I not attended Professor Deegan’s seminar when a fellow student made a casual reference to Roscoe Pound, I would never have discovered Pound’s sociological accomplishments.³¹ This was indeed an instance of existential serendipity.

CONCLUSION

I encourage you to read widely in the history of sociology, to abandon elitist preconceptions, to remain open to new visions and new models of sociological practice. In some cases, no doubt, such a program results in dead ends, but it can also result in amazing discoveries. Be patient, be creative, be adventurous. Learn to appreciate and act upon unexpected moments of fortuitousness. I wish for each of you your own happy event, your own moment of existential serendipity while researching and studying the history of sociology.

³⁰ Roscoe Pound and Frederick E. Clements, *The Phytogeography of Nebraska*, 2nd edition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, Botanical Seminar, 1900).

³¹ Michael R. Hill, *Roscoe Pound and American Sociology: A Study in Archival Frame Analysis, Sociobiography, and Sociological Jurisprudence*, Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Nebraskan-Lincoln, 1989.

Chapter Two

HULL-HOUSE ARTISTS IN CHICAGO AND BEYOND: A CURATORIAL PROJECT IN THE HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY

This project involved collecting and arranging approximately two hundred physical objects, including paintings, etchings, drawings, lithographs, fabrics, ceramics, jewelry, photographs, maps, books, and a chrome-plated coffee pot for visual display in a two-month exhibition in an art museum that ran from August 2 to September 28, 2025. All items in the show related in various ways to the Hull-House Art School in Chicago. Hull-House, as you undoubtedly know, was a pioneering social settlement founded in 1889 by Jane Addams (Deegan, 1988) and Ellen Gates Starr (Deegan and Wahl, 2003). Addams is now generally recognized as a major American sociologist who drew to Hull-House a remarkable set of women and men, known as Residents, who not only welcomed members of the local community into the settlement as neighbors who were offered a wide range of social services and educational programs, but who also brought an astonishing array of intellectual and political expertise, including: sociology, medicine, art, architecture, music, typesetting and printing, political science, economics, philosophy, and education, to name a few. Ellen Gates Starr was herself a disciple of the Arts and Crafts Movement and became a highly-regarded fine arts bookbinder. My interest here focused on the artists and the art students who taught and/or practiced art making at Hull-House.

Mounting an exhibition in a public art museum is a very different undertaking than the more typical academic sociological activities of writing books and articles, giving papers at professional conferences, and/or teaching students enrolled in college and university courses and seminars. Curating an exhibition was for me a form of public sociology

(Burawoy, 2005),¹ one that involved presenting items for viewing by members of the local community, giving talks to local groups, participating in one-to-one discussions with museum patrons, answering questions from media, and writing explanatory materials for general audiences, members of which who might know little (or a lot) about what the items in the exhibit represented, individually and as a collection.

BUILDING A COLLECTION

I did not start out to curate an exhibition, that came much later. Most curatorial projects in art museums begin with the curator(s) inviting artists and/or the owners of various objects to loan them for an exhibition. Conversely, I began as a collector who purchased items for display in my home. Initially, however, it would be an exaggeration to have identified myself as “a collector,” that role, sociologically speaking, evolved and grew over time.

The first purchase in what became a collection, was an oil painting by Enella Benedict, a Hull-House Resident and the founding artist in the Hull-House Art School. It was discovered for sale online during the early years of eBay in the late 1990s. I was hunting for print materials: flyers, brochures, manuscripts, yearbooks, etc. associated with Hull-House when I encountered a listing — not for the usual stuff that garners the attention of an academic sociologist — but for an oil painting that the listing asserted had a connection to Hull-House. The artist was listed as “Ellna Benedict” a name I did not recognize. My life-partner at the time, Mary Jo Deegan, suggested the name sounded sort of like “Enella Benedict,” a name she knew as someone connected to Hull-House and its art program.² Close inspection of the signature on the painting revealed, yes, it was

¹ For Burawoy, “public sociology” connects academic research with everyday people by engaging in open dialogue with communities and groups outside of university settings. I had previously made few such presentations (e.g., Hill 2011; 2013).

² On the life and accomplishments of the late Mary Jo Deegan, please see Chapter Three, below.

“Enella,” not “Ellna” as listed. Nonetheless, the subject matter confused me as it depicted a sailing ship of some sort and the title on the back of the stretcher proclaimed “Last of the Whalers.” Why, I wondered, would a Midwestern artist in Chicago paint an east coast maritime scene? In answer, as serendipity would have it, my late partner replied, “Because Benedict was known to spend her summers on the east coast painting and then gave her paintings away as gifts when she returned to Chicago in the fall.” That was enough for me, the price was minimal, I bought the painting, and it hung in our Nebraska living room for years.

I kept my eye out for affordable works by artists linked to Hull-House and slowly added to what gradually became “a collection.” The second purchase was a pencil drawing by Leon Garland, and the third was a watercolor by Morris Topchevsky. After that, things snowballed: a woodcut by Todros Geller, a red demi-tasse cup and saucer from the Hull-House Kilns, and so on. And I began to ask: How many Hull-House artists were there? I began searching in earnest, mostly online, for names of artists linked to Hull-House. I was already skilled at drawing out linkages buried in archival repositories (Hill, 1993) and the resources available online only served to make the research easier, wider, and faster.³ Suffice it to say, my list grew by leaps and bounds.

My interest was piqued. I had already developed an intellectual interest in visual sociology and the sociology of the visual arts. This began during my stint as Acting Assistant Dean for Research in the Iowa State University College of Design from 1979 to 1980, followed by devising (and passing) a specialty doctoral comprehensive exam in the field (Hill, 1984), organizing a Visual Sociology Day at the University of Nebraska in 1985, and serving on the board of directors of the International Visual Sociology Association from 1985 to 1987. I subsequently began participating in a series of summer workshops for teachers at the Art Institute of Chicago and launched a one-year visual blog in which I daily

³ Nonetheless, my research benefitted enormously from traditional in-person research in archival repositories at the Smithsonian Archives of American Art in Washington, DC; The University of Chicago; the University of Illinois at Chicago; the Art Institute of Chicago; and the Chicago Public Library.

posted my own photographs and/or abstract images based on athletic shoes (Hill, 2016). Most recently, I am exploring creative visual projects made possible by generative artificial intelligence (Hill, 2026a, b). It was a 2010 visit to an exhibition at the Hull-House Museum in Chicago, however, that further increased my interest in art at Hull-House specifically. The catalog for that exhibit (Mascorella and Silva, 2010) identified only a dozen artists associated with Hull-House. That, I realized, given my research to-date, was a radical underestimate (see my current working list in the Appendix to this chapter, below).

In 2015, we moved permanently from Nebraska to Michigan⁴ where my late partner and I purchased a two-story former office building and set about establishing the Jane Addams Research Center — which is still a work in progress. There were several blank walls begging for artwork and my collecting became a regular and frequent activity. I set myself the goal of collecting at least one artwork by each artist who had a connection to Hull-House, as a Resident, benefactor, art teacher, influential visitor, or as a student. This project was largely possible on a retired academic's budget due to the fact that few Hull-House artists had become well known in the art market, prices were surprisingly low. Most experienced archival researchers will tell you it is a special treat to hold in one's hands the material artifacts, the letters, scrapbooks, and original manuscripts of past writers and scholars that one is studying.. To be co-present on a daily basis, in our living room, with a gradually increasing number of unique, irreplaceable handmade objects associated with the Hull-House Art School was inherently magical. As the collection grew, and as I now began to think of myself as “a collector,” the possibility of mounting an exhibition came slowly into sharper focus.

PROPOSING AN EXHIBITION

The move to St. Joseph, Michigan, placed me in close proximity to the Krasl Art Center, only two and a half blocks away, in which I became

⁴ We purchased a cottage in 1982 a few miles north of St. Joseph and spent our summers there, escaping Nebraska's oppressive summertime heat while simultaneously enabling frequent research trips to Chicago libraries.

a member and volunteered as a docent and occasional lecturer. After several meetings and tentative discussions, Tami Fauver, the Krasl's executive director and chief curator made an enormous leap of faith and accepted, late in 2023, my proposal to curate and mount an exhibition of Hull-House art and artists in 2025. One of the important steps in making the proposal was to prepare a visual inventory of the items in the collection. I created a digital file with sufficient images to seriously interest director Fauver. She suggested that I create a detailed inventory and for this part of the project, I hired a computer-savvy assistant, Kyah Culp, who created an inclusive, proprietary spreadsheet to help me better manage the collection. It turned out that I had collected far more artworks and related materials than I realized (a fact I thought prudent to keep to myself as I didn't want director Fauver to be overwhelmed).

Accepting the proposal was a leap of faith on the Krasl's part because my previous experience as a curator was virtually nil. I had curated a small exhibition of artifacts associated with the history of sociology at the University of Nebraska (Hill, 2000). And, since moving to southwest Michigan, I had enrolled in several continuing education courses in the relatively nearby School of the Art Institute of Chicago.⁵ I also began attending the online curatorial roundtables hosted by Steven Henry Madoff, chair of the Curatorial Practice program at the School of Visual Arts in New York. The roundtables helped me better understand the dynamics and pitfalls of curatorial work, the design of exhibitions, and ideas for engaging visitors. For example, Philippe Pirotte, a German art history professor, advocated: (1) more room for incomplete/unfinished works, (2) appreciation of the Buddhist tradition in which multiples and copies of artworks are as valid as singles and originals, and (3) more one-time-only, in-person exhibition events. And, as a frequent museum goer, I had my own experiential idea of what I wanted to see when I walked into a gallery as a patron. Still, actually curating a large exhibition was for me uncharted territory.

⁵ 96 miles, door-to-door.

PREPARING THE EXHIBITION

The challenge was to create a coherent, thoughtfully-organized presentation of artifacts. While I had a good understanding of Hull-House and its associated artists, most visitors to the Krasl would not. Further, the Hull-House Art School operated for well over half a century, from the late 1800s until into the 1960s, plus continuing print workshops at a short-lived rump location on Chicago's north side into the 1970s. It was evident that chronology had to play a part in structuring the flow of the exhibition. The resulting organization evolved in part from consultations with the Krasl's executive director and input from my presentation to the Research in Art and Visual Evidence (RAVE) Workshop in the Department of Art History at the University of Chicago, for which Anne Morse, one of my former instructors at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, was the discussant (Hill, 2025b). Anne Morse underscored the importance of focusing attention on lesser known artists in the collection while others wanted to know more about the synergistic relationships Hull-House had with other artist groups in Chicago. The final texts of the explanatory panels for the exhibition are presented below.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EXHIBITION

Part I of the exhibition introduced Jane Addams, Ellen Gates Starr, and the idea of Hull-House. Parts II-III displayed art work by Hull-House art instructors and their students. Part IV included examples of artwork by friends and visitors who enlivened the arts at Hull-House. And finally, Part V documented art work and dramatic performances after the closure of the original Hull-House settlement on Halsted Street. The explanatory panels read as follows:

Part I: Introduction to Hull-House

"From 1889 until its demolition in the early 1960s, Chicago's Hull-House on South Halsted Street was the premier social settlement in the U.S. Art and visual exploration, including mapping, were central to the pioneering work of Hull House and its

co-founders, Jane Addams (1860–1935) and Ellen Gates Starr (1859–1940).

"This exhibition presents graphics and artworks made by or associated with the community of Residents, Instructors, Students, and Friends of Hull-House. The Hull-House Art School, the Butler Art Gallery, Hull-House lecture programs, the Hull-House Kilns, the Hull-House Music School, the Hull-House Theater, the Chicago Arts & Crafts Society, and the Chicago Public School Art Society were vibrant, interrelated centers for youthful artistic exploration and mature artistic expression. The works exhibited here embody not only the enthusiasm for art at Hull House, but also reflect the ongoing rise of modernism in American art.

"In addition to the dozen artists typically associated with Hull-House by prior authorities, the Jane Addams Research Center (JARC) has identified and collected works by many artists not widely known to have connections to Hull-House. In presenting these selections from its collection, JARC encourages ongoing research into the complex, multi-faceted, multi-disciplinary, and interconnected art worlds of Chicago and beyond.

Part II: Hull-House Residents, Art School Instructors & Directors (Including students who became instructors)

"In its heyday, Hull-House enjoyed a contingent of 40 to 50 self-supporting men and women, known as Residents, who lived and worked there, shaping and guiding the many programs that defined what became a multi-storied, full city-block of facilities including: studios, print shop, classrooms, libraries, kitchens, coffee shop, galleries, gymnasium, performance spaces, club rooms, a labor museum, apartments, and so on.

Taken together, the Residents represented a wide range of skills and disciplines, including economics, religion, literature, education, child study, politics, psychology and sociology, as well as music, theater, design, bookbinding, printing, engineering, architecture, and the visual arts. It was Jane Addams' genius to bring these extraordinary people together to interact, often daily, and to inspire

and support each other in their collective goal of being “good neighbors” to the adjacent immigrant (notably European and Mexican) communities surrounding Hull-House. Enella Benedict (1858–1942) was the first Director of the Hull-House Art School. She and subsequent directors were joined by other Residents and numerous volunteer Instructors who offered formal training for children and adults in a variety of artistic disciplines, including art history, painting, printmaking, weaving, ceramics, drawing, metalwork, clothing construction, furniture making, lettering and calligraphy, letter press, bookbinding, poster art, etc. Norah Hamilton (1873–1945) took charge of the programming for youth. The making of etchings and lithographs flourished at Hull-House during the Great Depression via the establishment of a WPA workshop directed by Carl Hoeckner (1883–1972). Emily Edwards (1888–1980) continued the Hull-House tradition of looking to Mexico for inspiration.⁶ Michael Gamboney (1911–1986) directed the art program in its later years. Several Hull-House Instructors began their artistic careers as Hull-House students.

Part III: Hull-House Students and Wider Horizons

“Whereas a few Hull-House students subsequently became Hull-House Instructors, many more, both as youngsters and/or as adults, took art classes at Hull-House and then moved on to continue their studies and/or work elsewhere. It is largely through these students, taken as a whole, that the impetus and ethos of Hull-House art instruction spread locally and nationally. In one remarkable case, when art instruction in another venue proved too conservative,⁷ it was Jane Addams who provided encouragement and studio space for the incorrigibles, a group that self identified as “The Independents”, before they moved on. In general, the reciprocal ebb and flow of artistic influence between Hull-House

⁶ Notably, Edwards invited and secured the Mexican photographer, Manuel Álvarez Bravo (with whom she had previously worked, to teach a semester-long course in the Hull-House Art School.

⁷ This was the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

and other art organizations (such as the School of the Art Institute, The Chicago Society of Artists, the Chicago Society of Etchers, the No-Jury Society, “The Ten”, Cor Ardens, and like-minded groups) has yet to be definitively mapped. Indeed, many of the works displayed here were created by former Hull-House students well after they studied at Halsted Street.

PART IV: Associated Artists and Friends of Hull-House

“The wider art worlds that intersected with Hull-House enlivened everyday life at the settlement, including visits by active artists, exhibitors in the Hull-House galleries, patrons and supporters, board members, lecturers, performers, educators and friends. The greater Chicago communities of academics, artists, and philanthropists were well represented in activities at Hull-House. From the very beginning, the Arts & Crafts Society of Chicago, founded at Hull-House in 1897, brought numerous luminaries to Hull-House, including Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959), among others. Charles Lawrence Hutchinson (1854–1924), the president of the Art Institute of Chicago, was a Hull-House treasurer and board member; Gertrude Stein (1874–1946) read her work; Lorado Taft (1860–1936) gave insightful lectures; Eva-Watson-Schütze (1867–1935) photographed Jane Addams and invited Hull-House artists to exhibit in shows at the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, and so on.

Part V: Afterglow

“Following demolition of the great majority of the original Hull-House on Halsted Street in the 1960s, the Hull House Association used its remaining funds to open smaller operations on Chicago’s north side, including 1257 Wilson and 3212 N. Broadway. In the 1970s, the Hull House Print Workshop, co-ordinated by Catherine Cajandig, was a significant outlet for the visual arts. Various Post-Halsted Street efforts also extended the provision of venues for theatrical expression into the 21st Century. The Hull House Association ceased operations in 2012.

“Today, visitors to the Jane Addams Hull House Museum (incorporating the original Hull mansion and the Residents’ Dining Room), on the campus of the University of Illinois Chicago (800 S. Halsted Street), are invited to capture and re-imagine the community spirit of Hull-House through ongoing programs and exhibitions. Major archival deposits related to Hull-House are located in the Special Collections department of the Richard J. Daley Library at the University of Illinois Chicago. Several online materials are also available. Staff from the Jane Addams Research Center were available on a limited basis at scheduled hours at the Exhibition Reference Desk to help guide further inquiries and wider research.”

ENGAGING THE PUBLIC

In addition to the explanatory panels, a two-page list was made of the names of the artists appearing in each part of the exhibition. Copies of this list were distributed to patrons as a “take home” extension of the exhibition.⁸ Individual object labels — giving the name of the artist, the date, and the title — were created for each item and affixed next to the referenced artwork. Patrons were free to take photographs of works in the exhibition and many did so.

The Krasl itself created press releases, distributed announcements (frontispiece), and promoted the exhibition in its quarterly member magazine. Further, the local newspaper ran stories about the exhibition (Aulet 2025a, b). The Krasl hosted a well-advertised opening reception with finger food and a cash bar on Friday evening, August 1, 2025, before which I gave a 30-minute illustrated introduction to the exhibition. As a further draw, the reception included a superb cello performance by Benamin Fryxell who joyfully played his own transcriptions of Eleanor Smith’s *Hull-House Songs* from 1915. A lively afterparty was held in the rooms of the Jane Addams Research Center.

⁸ For copies of the list, see the Appendix to this chapter, below.

In the week following the opening, my poet life-partner, Janice Marie Zerfas, led an open, participatory workshop on writing ekphrastic poetry that interpreted works in the exhibition (see Aulet 2025b). The two-hour workshop was held in the Krasl galleries so that the participants were co-present with the works they wrote about. The session concluded with shared readings of the writers’ newly composed poems.

During the final week of the exhibition, on the afternoon of September 20, I led a well-attended public panel discussion about the exhibition followed by a Q&A session. The invited panelists, who all graciously participated at their own expense, included: Nina Corazzo (Profesor Emerita in Art History, Valparaiso University), Anne Morse (Independent Art History Educator and Curator), and Lin Atnip (Instructor in the Graham School at the University of Chicago). The afternoon culminated with a free concert co-sponsored by the Krasl Art Center and the Jane Addams Research Center featuring the Chicago-based experimental percussion ensemble *Beyond This Point* at a local tavern across the river in nearby Benton Harbor.

Months before the exhibition, I inadvertently helped generate interest in the show by giving an invited illustrated talk on “Thinking about Hull-House” to the Berrien Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in St. Joseph, Michigan, during which I briefly alluded to the show.⁹ As it turned out, this liberal-leaning audience not only knew about Jane Addams but also spread interest in the upcoming exhibition by word of mouth. During the exhibition itself, members of the congregation were some of the most enthusiastic people who visited the show.

An unusual aspect of the exhibition was the provision of a small mobile library of books and pamphlets related to Hull-House and the artists in the show. This resource was made available twice a week during sessions staffed and supervised either by myself or my assistant, Kyah Culp. We were also available to answer questions and give mini-tours as time permitted. In this way, we met several people who knew one or more

⁹ I am indebted to Rev. Jim McConnell for the invitation.

of the artists, who had visited Hull-House, or who themselves possessed related works of art.

MOUNTING THE SHOW

The physical and logistical aspects of mounting an exhibition deserve special mention. Unlike many museums that allow themselves weeks to prepare exhibition spaces and hang artwork, the Krasl typically allots only a single week for taking down the previous show and hanging the new one. In the case at hand, the removal of the previous show and the repair of the gallery walls took longer than expected. The artworks for the Hull-House show were transported uncrated by private vehicle and the Krasl's service van from the Jane Addams Research Center and stacked in the Krasl's vestibule more or less grouped according to the five parts outlined by the organization panels presented above.¹⁰ Final placement of the artworks in the galleries was done on the fly, and my role, when it became obvious that we had more artworks than gallery space, was to make quick decisions about which works to hang and which works to return to the Jane Addams Research Center. As approximately 200 items were finally selected, this, consequently, resulted in an unavoidable delay in the final preparation and affixing of the object labels for each artwork.

The Krasl staff, led by director Fauver, did the physical work of handling the artworks, climbing ladders, and placing the works. I advised concerning visual relationships and the order of placement. We quickly decided on a "salon" rather than a "gallery" format, due to the large number of works to be displayed. It should be noted that the framing of several works was done at virtually the last minute. To reduce the cost of the exhibition, I had stockpiled used frames that I purchased at garage sales, thrift stores, and flea markets — and spent several late nights prior to and during the hanging of the show cutting mats, cleaning and rewiring frames and installing prints. All in all, it was a push! But, when Friday evening of the scheduled opening arrived, everything was ready, the

¹⁰ The only exception was the serendipitous loan by a private collector of a large, valuable work by Roger Brown. For this item, director Fauver personally shepherded the painting from Chicago to the Krasl and back again.

artworks were beautifully installed, the cellist arrived on time, the wine was chilled, and the catered finger food appeared like magic. Everything was ready, that is, with one major exception.

The object labels were not ready! The decision was made to open the exhibition with the large explanatory panels in place, but with no identifying object labels for the individual artworks. In fact, the labels were not ready until a week after the opening. And this, it turned out, created an interesting experience for visitors: they encountered a collection bereft of any identifying information, titles, or dates. And further, to my surprise, most people liked it! It was apparently refreshing to encounter intriguing works of art without identification tags. The opening and the first week of the show were visited primarily by seasoned gallery goers, they were delighted by an exhibition sans labels. Eventually, however, the labels arrived and were properly affixed, resulting in a more traditional gallery experience.

AFTER THE SHOW

The exhibition was well received. The show had been mounted with minimal expense. And friends began asking, would it travel to other galleries? The cost of crating, shipping, and insurance would be expensive, so the realistic answer is likely "no." Nor could I afford the time and expense of personally staffing and supervising the mobile library. We are exploring the feasibility of small, rotating thematic exhibits at the Jane Addams Research Center itself. In the meantime, I have prepared a digitized visual inventory of the entire exhibition. It is a very large PDF file and is currently available via a free file transfer service upon request. As my schedule permits, I hope to complete a publishable catalog in the not too distant future.

What was the overall major accomplishment of this project? Beyond the personal pleasure of sharing my collection with others, the show resulted in a more fulsome appreciation of what Jane Addams did at Hull-House — a tangible, material understanding that she was far more than a social worker, that the arts were *central* to her emancipatory rather

than academic vision of sociology as an applied undertaking. Several patrons were impressed by the sense of community fostered at Hull-House through participation in the arts. As Addams (1930) wrote late in life: “The arts have, I think, always been embodied in the ultimate aims of Hull-House.” The settlement provided creative opportunities to learn art-related skills, build self-confidence, and deepen one’s appreciation of aesthetics. The artists at Hull-House were fully in tune with the wider art world and their work not only reflected but contributed directly to the rise of modernism as an artistic movement.

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Appendix to Chapter Two: List of Artists



HULL-HOUSE ARTISTS IN CHICAGO & BEYOND

ARTISTS AND INDIVIDUALS REPRESENTED IN THE EXHIBITION

Key: Numbers in [brackets] refer to hanging numbered objects; +P refers to unnumbered objects on pedestals; +HIW refers to unnumbered hanging objects on island walls.

Section I: Introduction

Addams, Jane (1860–1935) [2,5,9,23]+P
Brooks, Gwendolyn (1917–2000) [8]
Burroughs, Margaret T.G. (1917–2010) [10]
Cox-McCormack, Nancy (1885–1967) [4]
Deegan, Mary Jo (1946–2024) [21-23]
Fosco, Nick (dates unknown) [20]
Giusti, George (1908–1990) [12]
Hull-House Kilns +P
Pond & Pond, Architects [1]
Sherman, Beatrix (1894–1975) [6]
Starr, Ellen Gates (1859–1940) [22]

Section II: Instructors & Residents

Álvarez Bravo, Manuel (1902–2002) [118]
Armin, Emil (1883–1971) [34-38]
Balsham, Leah (1915–2015) [68]+P
Barton, Macena (1901–1986) [89-90]
Bekker, David (1897–1956) [120]

Benedict, Enella (1858–1942) [27-28]
Berdich, Vera (1915–2003) [77-81]
Berkman-Hunter, Bernece (1911–1988) [111-113]
Booth, Cameron (1892–1980) [94]
Coen Kahn, Eleanor Jean (1916–2010) [69]
Cuculic, Branka (dates unknown) +HIW
de Diego, Julio (1900–1979) [86-88]
Deknatel, Frederick Henry (1864–1949) +P
Deutch, Deutch (1904–1959) +P
Edwards, Emily (1888–1980) [117, 119]
French, Myrtle Meritt (1886–1970) +P
Gamboney, Michael (1911–1986) [104]
Garland Dreikurs, Sadie Ellis (1900–1996) [40]
Garland, Leon (1896–1941) [39]
Geller, Todros (1889–1949) [58-61]
Gibling Schindler, S.P. (1893–1933) [73]
Gilman, Charlotte Perkins (1860–1935) [51-54]
Gualtieri, Joseph P. (1916–2015) [75-76]
Hamilton, Norah (1873–1945) [71]
Hannell, Hazel (1895–2002) [42-44] +P
Hannell, V.M.S. (1896–1950) [45]
Hazenplug, Frank (1874–1931) [33]
Hoeckner, Carl (1883–1972) +HIW
Hoff, Margo (1910–2008) [83]
Iannelli, Alfonso (1888–1965) [66-67] +P
Jacobs, William (1897–1973) [95-102]
Josimovich, George (1894–1986) [70]
Kellogg Tyler, Alice de Wolf (1862–1900) [41]
Kerr, Blanche Weyburn (1872–1955) [91]
Kirkland, Wallace (1891–1979) [55-57]
Kohn, Misch (1916–2003) [122-125]
LaFavor, Will (1861–?) [115]
Levy, Beatrice S. (1892–1974) [109-109]
Lindin, Carl Eric Olaf (1869–1942) [46-48]
Loeb, Dorothy (1887–1971) [93]
Luther, Jessie (1860–1952) [92]
Michalov, Ann (1904–1992) [74]
Millman, Edward (1907–1964) [82]
Monroe, Harriet (1860–1936) [62-64]
Pond, Irving Kane (1857–1939) [1, 49-50]
Residents of Hull-House [24-26]
Richheimer, Alice A. (1911–1978) [126]
Sachs, Herman (1883–1940) [84]
Smith, Eleanor Sophia (1859–1942) [62]
Stephan, John Walter (1906–1995) [121]

Teske, Edmund (1911–1996) [110]
Topchevsky, Morris (1899–1947) [29-32]
Topp, Alex (1911–1999) [114]
Torres, Jesus (1898–1948) +P
Ubaldi, Mario C. (1912–1993) +P
Weisenborn, Rudolph (1881–1974) [85]
White, Charles W. (1918–1979) [72]
White, Hervey (1866–1944) [116]
Whitmore, Robert H. (1890–1979) [103]

Section III: Students

Brod, Fritz (1900–1952) [144]
Brower, Marcy (1928–2020) [140]
Byer, Samuel (1886–1966) [145]
Constant, George (1892–1978) [148]
Dalstrom, Gustaf (1893–1971) +HIW
Ferstadt, Louis G. (1900–1954) [142]
Foy, Frances (1890–1963) +HIW
Friend, Esther K. (1907–1991) [149] +P
Goldin, Leon (1923–2009) [146]
Havens, Leonard M. (1914–1973) [141]
Karlin, Eugene (1918–2003) [139]
Lichtenstein, Carl W. (1902–?) [149] +P
Liebes, Dorothy Wright (1897–1972) +HIW
Mitruk, Stanley M. (1922–2006) [147]
Noel Shagam, Helen (1912–1989) [127-134] +P
Palansky, Abraham (1890– ca 1960) [138]
Pillin, Polia (1909–1992) +P
Resnikoff, Florence (1920–2013) +P
Ritman, Louis (1889–1963) [137]
Rose, I. Iver (1899–1972) [150-152]
Ruzicka, Rudolph (1883–1978) +HIW
Singer, William Earl (ca1909–?) [143]
Weiner, Louis (1892–1967) [135-136]

Section IV: Associated Artists & Others

Biesel, Fred (1893–1954) [184]
Brown, Roger (1941–1997) [unnumbered loan]
Bunin, Louis (1905–1994) [185]
Burroughs, Margaret T.Goss (1917–2010) [10, 179-181]
Cizek, Frank (1865–1946) [168]
Cortor, Eldzier (1916–2015) [157]

Donaldson, Elise (1887–1980) [166]
Goss, Bernard (1913–1966) [159]
Hine, Lewis Wickes (1874–1940) [173]
Jensen, Jens (1860–1951) [182]
Kuh, Katharine (1904–1994) [169]
Maier, Vivian (1926–2009) [156]
Miller, Edgar (1899–1993) [160]
Moholy-Nagy, Lazlo (1895–1946) [183]
Owen, William Bishop (1895–1963) [165]
Priebe, Karl J. (1914–1976) [161]
Rush, Olive (1873–1966) [158]
Sloan, J. Blanding (1886–1975) [162-164] +P
Spongberg, Grace (1906–1992) [171-172]
Stein, Gertrude (1874–1946) [167]
Stenvall, John F. (1907–1998) [176-178] +P
Taft, Lorado (1860–1936) [153]
Watson-Schutze, Eva (1867–1935) [174-175]
Wright, Frank Lloyd (1867–1959) [154-155]
Wynne, Madeline Yale (1847–1918) [170]

Section V: Afterglow

Alexander, Anita E. (1929–2019) [188, 197]
Cajandig, Catherine (1932 —) [187]
Daley, Richard J. (1902–1976) [192]
Giuliano, Thomas (1929–2009) [198]
Gordon, Bacia (1904–1977) [190]
Lane, Mark (ca 1956 —) [191]
Metz, Barbara Lazarus (1930–2011) [189]

Addendum: Chicago Society of Artists Block Calendars [on display table]

The annual block calendars issued starting in 1937 onward to the present day by the Chicago Society of Artists contained prints made by artists associated in various ways with Hull-House, including: Emil Armin, Frances Strain Biesel, Vera Berdich, Fritz Brod, Catherine Cajandig, Gustaf Dalstrom, Elise Donaldson, Frances Foy, Todros Geller, Thoms J. Giuliano, Hazel Hannell, V.M.S. Hannell, Carl Hoeckner, Beatrice S. Levy, Ann Michalov, William Earl Singer, Grace Spongberg, John F. Stenvall, Morris Topchevsky, Alex Topp, and Louis Weiner.



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI SALERNO
DIPARTIMENTO DI SOCIOLOGIA E SCIENZA DELLA POLITICA
Storia del Pensiero Sociologico • Sociologia I • Sociologia II
Con il patrocinio del Consolato degli Stati Uniti d'America di Napoli

**Jane Addams,
la Hull House,
la Scuola di Chicago,
la ricerca sociale**



VITTORIO COTESTA
RAFFAELE RAUTY
MICHAEL HILL
MARY JO DEEGAN

Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia • Ex Centro Stampa
Mercoledì 19 novembre • ore 10:00
Giovedì 20 novembre • ore 14:30

Poster for Salerno Lectures 2003.

Chapter Three

MARY JO DEEGAN (1946–2024): BIOGRAPHY, RESEARCH, WRITINGS

SUMMARY INTRODUCTION

Born in Chicago in 1946, Mary Jo Deegan (Figure 1) became an authority on Hull-House and the Chicago schools of sociology. Deegan was a prolific chronicler of Edith Abbott, Jane Addams, W.E.B. DuBois, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Annie Marion MacLean, Harriet Martineau, George Herbert Mead, Robert Park, Elsie Clews Parsons, Anna Garlin Spencer, Ellen Gates Starr, Jessie Taft, Amos Griswold Warner, Fannie Barrier Williams, and myriad others (e.g., Deegan, 1991a). She was also a pioneer in disability studies and an insightful analyst/critic of American culture. Deegan received awards for her work from the American Sociological Association (ASA) section on the History of Sociology and the ASA section on Peace, War, and Social Conflict. The Mary Jo Deegan Project, based in Spain, continues her work among Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking sociologists. In 1995, Deegan was made an Admiral in the Nebraska Navy, by order of E. Benjamin Nelson, Governor of the State of Nebraska, for distinguished service to the citizens of Nebraska.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The period immediately following the World War II was a time of considerable optimism as well as social challenge in the United States. The expansion of suburbs, automobile culture, television, and the middle class fueled the feeling among many white Americans that the future held unlimited possibilities. This rosy forecast came into serious question, however, during the 1960s and 1970s with America's entanglement in Vietnam, increasing economic divergence between the wealthy upper class and the working poor, the rise of the women's liberation movement, and the increasingly activist struggles of Black political leaders like Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Starting in the 1970s, university departments housing graduate programs in sociology moved from what Mary Jo called "the dark era of

patriarchal ascendancy” (Deegan 1991a) toward greater opportunities for — and acceptance of — women as professional colleagues, but not without resistance from entrenched and powerful males in the discipline. The Department of Sociology in The University of Chicago, long the recognized powerhouse of the discipline, concretely manifested the male domination of the field via the many publications in the *Heritage of Sociology* series edited by Morris Janowitz. During this period, many departments of sociology turned away from the qualitative, ethnographic tradition pioneered at the University of Chicago to adopt increasingly quantitative, so-called “scientific,” models of research.

In contrast, the relatively recent proliferation of interdisciplinary fields of study in American universities, such as Women’s Studies, Black Studies, Ecology and Environmental Studies, Gender Studies, Peace Studies, Modernist Studies, and the like, opened alternative spaces for non-quantitative modes of inquiry, weakening the traditional ability of graduate sociology departments to define the nature of social research. Sociology today is no longer a monolithic enterprise, and the University of Chicago has had to share institutional influence with an ever widening coterie of competing institutions. For many, but not all, sociology students today, universities, especially those outside the United States, now offer both uncertainty and excitement as sites of inquiry increasingly defined by a growing multitude of intellectual perspectives and possibilities.

BIOGRAPHY

Mary Jo’s early childhood unfolded on the Southside of Chicago in an ethnic Irish neighborhood where she attended kindergarten and first grade at Visitation Catholic School. One of her fondest early memories involved walking several city blocks with a 5-cent coin clutched tightly in the palm of her hand to purchase a hamburger at a neighborhood White Castle restaurant in Chicago. Thereafter, she grew up in an all-female family headed by her working-class mother, Ida May Scott Deegan (1915–1997), and two older sisters. With Ida May’s encouragement, all three sisters became professional women: Judith Margaret (1939—) became an attorney, Carol Ann (1943—) became a nurse, and Mary Jo became a university professor. This remarkable upwardly mobile outcome resulted in large part from Ida May’s decisive separation from Mary Jo’s abusive father (William James Deegan (1908–1959), a hard-drinking Chicago fire-fighter) and Ida May’s inspired escape with her three daughters from inner-city Chicago in 1953 to the picturesque and largely

affluent middle to upper middle-class town of St. Joseph, Michigan (Figure 2). There, Mary Jo, as the daughter of a pink-collar working mother, experienced much more sharply drawn social class lines, but also delighted in the Children’s Department of the town’s library (she was a voracious reader, see Deegan (2006)) and flourished in the Catholic education system, graduating from high school in 1964 (Figure 3). Although highly critical of the patriarchal teachings and structure of the Church, she remained a steadfast Catholic throughout her life.

Initially trained in chemistry and mathematics (Lake Michigan College, 1966; Western Michigan University, 1969), Deegan turned, after a physically disabling accident and subsequent medical maltreatment, to medical sociology, disability studies, qualitative methods, phenomenology, pacifism, social theory, symbolic interaction, archival investigation, and disciplinary history. She earned her M.A. in sociology at Western Michigan University (1971) and the Ph.D. at the University of Chicago (1975). Over the years, her mentors included Odin Anderson, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Mircea Eliade, Erving Goffman, Irving Louis Horowitz, Morris Janowitz, Victor Lidz, Cora Bagley Marrett, David Schneider, Milton Singer, Talcott Parsons, Victor Turner, Morton Wagonfeld, and Gibson Winter. Her graduate studies at Western Michigan allowed her to be among the earliest white women sociologists to have a Black woman, Cora Bagley Marrett, as her graduate thesis supervisor.

Deegan engaged the world of popular culture with personal and professional *joie de vivre*. Her avocations included reading science fiction and mystery novels, collecting and selling costume jewelry, and dancing to live reggae bands. She was devoted to her four pet dogs, all lovingly named after sociologists. Living in Nebraska from 1975 to 2015, she escaped to her beloved Lake Michigan cottage almost every summer, allowing her to conduct archival research at the University of Chicago, enjoy Chicago Symphony Orchestra concerts, and repeatedly visit the Art Institute of Chicago. She was an active traveler, with sustained visits to Germany, Canada, Ireland, Italy, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, and shorter visits to Austria, Belgium, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Hungary, Luxembourg, Mexico, The Netherlands, Poland, Puerto Rico, Slovakia, Scotland, and Switzerland. Deegan officially became an Irish citizen by descent in 2002.

After teaching at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) for

forty years, Deegan was appointed Professor Emerita of Sociology in 2015. She then returned to her roots and moved permanently to St. Joseph, Michigan, where she became the founding executive director of the Jane Addams Research Center (one of her longtime ambitions) and continued her investigations into disciplinary history until her death. Deegan was also a visiting scholar at the University of Michigan and the University of Notre Dame.

Mary Jo Deegan died peacefully and unexpectedly of natural causes in early 2024 while gazing through a kitchen window at the woods just outside her much beloved Lake Michigan cottage. Deegan's books are now found in libraries worldwide and many shorter writings remain easily available via the UNL Digital Commons website. Her file cabinets brim with yet to be completed projects awaiting posthumous attention.

RESEARCH

Deegan's initial explorations unfolded in the physical sciences. With her training in chemistry, she worked summers first as a food chemist and later as a lab technician who developed a cost-cutting testing technique for gas chromatography that earned her a commendation from — and the possibility of future employment — with the LECO corporation in St. Joseph, Michigan, a global manufacturer of analytical laboratory instruments, mass spectrometers, and metallographic equipment. However, by the time she completed her major in chemistry, with a minor in mathematics, she had experienced a disabling accident that placed her in a wheelchair, a situation in which she learned firsthand that physically disabled women faced extraordinary career obstacles in the male-dominated industrial and commercial world. It was then that her interests, and her graduate training, turned to sociology, a discipline in which — in an undergraduate course — she boasted earning an "A" without ever reading the assigned textbook.

Her 1973 master's thesis at Western Michigan University, completed under the direction of Cora Bagley Merritt,¹ was a standard

¹Merritt, born in 1942, became a tenured professor of sociology at the University of Wisconsin in 1974 and later served as Deputy Director of the National Science Foundation from 2011–2014).

quantitative investigation: "Organizational Traits Affecting Change in the Michigan Division of Vocational Rehabilitation." The experience left her unsatisfied, however. Her training in mathematics resulted in deep scepticism concerning the widely unquestioned and unreflexive use of statistics in sociology. It is a curious and sobering reality that Mary Jo had far greater training in mathematics and scientific method than most (if not all) of the sociologists who later disparaged her substantive and theoretical work as biased and "unscientific".

Merritt encouraged Mary Jo to pursue doctoral studies and to apply to the leading departments of sociology. She was thrilled to be accepted by the University of Chicago. Her hard science background and Merritt's recommendation opened the door, but it was the older, traditional *qualitative* emphasis, for which Chicago had become justly famous, that drew Mary Jo to Chicago. The qualitative approach to sociology, however, was no longer practiced at Chicago. To Mary Jo's dismay, it had been replaced by quantitative survey research and statistical analyses! This was a serious, career-shaping dilemma for many graduate students at Chicago, especially for those who wanted to pursue qualitative investigations. Mary Jo had had enough of math and statistics, however, and she opted for qualitative research. Foundationally, many of the older qualitative studies were still required reading for the doctoral prelims. This helped. And for coursework, Mary Jo found appreciative professors in the departments of anthropology and religious studies as well as a pivotal seminar taught by a well-known visiting professor: Talcott Parsons. Fortunately, Mary Jo found a supportive sociology faculty member, Odin Anderson (1914–2003)² and thus she completed a traditional, qualitative, participant-observer dissertation in 1975: "Identity Change in Modern Society: A Study of the Physically Disabled".

Throughout her distinguished academic career, Mary Jo pursued qualitative investigations: as a theorist, as a participant observer, and as a researcher in archival repositories. She also emphasized qualitative approaches in her teaching and advising, much to the chagrin of several members of the Department of Sociology at the University of Nebraska

² Anderson, who worked in various capacities at the University of Chicago from 1962 to 1996, was a respected founding figure of medical sociology.

where she was hired based largely on her physical science background, her quantitative M.A. thesis, and the stellar ranking of the department at Chicago. Nebraska was simply unprepared to understand Mary Jo's innovative, pioneering, and discipline-changing research, nor to appreciate the fact that Mary Jo published far more books during her tenure than the rest of the faculty combined. The enmity and envy that Mary Jo experienced at Nebraska took an enormous emotional toll, and goes a long way to explain her highly-valued summer escapes to Michigan.

WRITINGS

Feminism

Deegan's active feminism blossomed during her studies at the University of Chicago and continued throughout her life. She spoke often of discovering, in the stacks of Regenstein Library, hundreds of books on economic and social issues written by women, books that her male professors never mentioned. She wondered why, and dedicated herself thereafter to making these women writers visible to present-day students and scholars. Deeply opposed to patriarchy and patriarchal violence in all its manifestations, she was never anti-male. She called for equality, mutual respect, and social justice in all human relationships; the hallmark of her thinking, like that of Jane Addams, was cooperation, not conflict. Early on, Deegan excavated the underappreciated work of women in the male-dominated field of symbolic interactionism (1987b). She delighted in the feminist investigations conducted by her students (2021). Deegan played an instrumental role in the work of the Nebraska Sociological Feminist Collective (1988) and in 1980 became a founding co-editor of *The Midwest Feminist Papers*.

The Midwest Feminist Papers (issued intermittently from 1980–1997) was a creative, group-generated initiative that gave voice to the scholarly questions, research interests, and social concerns of a growing cohort of Midwestern feminist sociology graduate students and their feminist faculty mentors during the last quarter of the Twentieth Century. They were active members of Midwest Sociologists for Women in Society, a regional expression of the larger national Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS). Never intended as a full-fledged journal, *The Midwest Feminist Papers* was distributed in limited numbers, at cost, to

interested purchasers during annual meetings of the Midwest Sociological Society. Subscriptions were never offered, one usually had to journey to the annual MSS meetings to obtain each issue. As a result, few paper copies of these “time capsule” documents of late 20th century feminist sociology survived, but they are now again available, digitally and in print copy, in a three-volume facsimile edition compiled by Deegan and Hill and published by Zea Books (2024).

A brief introduction to Deegan's understanding of feminism in sociology per se is found in “The Feminist Sphere and the Sociological Cube: Theoretical Reflections on the Everyday Life of an Academic/Sociologist/Feminist” (1983). Her co-written short essay, “We're ‘Partners’ — Not Husband and Wife” (1988c), explicated her cooperative strategy for implementing feminist values in her everyday personal life.

Disciplinary History

Best known for her groundbreaking study of sociologist Jane Addams (1988a), Deegan also explicated the intersecting constellations of men and women associated with Hull-House — including Annie Marion MacLean (2014) and Ellen Gates Starr (2003a) — and probed the institutional relationships between Hull-House, the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom (2003b), the University of Chicago (1995, 2002), the American Sociological Association (1981, 2022a), and other organizations. She was inspired by Harriet Martineau (2001a, 2005a, 2008b) and was impressed by the theories of George Herbert Mead, producing three volumes exploring Mead's ideas regarding education (1999), war (2008a), and social psychology (2011a). Likewise, her three co-edited volumes of works by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1997, 2002a, 2004a) placed Gilman's ideas squarely within the realm of sociological discourse. She resisted renewed efforts to erase women from the sociological canon (2003c), and vigorously asserted the importance of women and humanism in public sociology (2011b).

Deegan also attended to African-American thinkers and sociologists, generally (2000a, 2002c) and as individuals, especially: W.E.B. DuBois (1988b), Ellen Irene Diggs (1991b), Oliver Cox (2000b), E. Franklin Frazier (2002d, 2007a), Charles S. Johnson (2007b), and, most

notably, the severely underappreciated work of Fannie Barrier Williams (2002a, 2008c, 2020). Her recent essay on Pandita Ramabai (2022b) reflected her expanding inclusion of people of color worldwide in her work and research.

Disability Studies

Deegan, while at the University of Chicago, became deeply interested in the long heritage of Chicago ethnographic studies (2001b) and she employed qualitative methodologies in her doctoral dissertation on amputees and physical rehabilitation (1975). Subsequently, she co-edited a pioneering volume on the intersection of gender and disability (1985). Throughout her career, she came to see disability less as a medical issue and as more centrally grounded in the struggle for human rights and human dignity.

Core Codes in American Ritual Dramas

An unflinching and egalitarian feminist theorist, Deegan's (1989b, 1998) stinging analyses of the core codes of inequality (sex and class) and repression (bureaucracy and time) that structure American ritual dramas and quotidian social interactions made her anathema to chauvinists, racists, capitalists, university administrators, and Big Red football fans alike.

Victor Turner (1967, 1969, 1974), on whose work Deegan's theory is partially founded, and who was one of her professors at the University of Chicago, defined the patterns of ritual interaction as "anti-structural," by which he meant that ritual patterns differ from the usual, mundane patterns or structures of everyday routine. This anti-structural characteristic is most fully developed during the "liminal" phase of ritual interactions. In Turner's pre-modern world, "liminality" involves the topsy-turvy inversion of everyday rules of order and structure. Liminal play in rituals often reverses sex and class roles, for example, or requires giving away possessions that are highly valued in everyday life. Liminality is often accompanied by dancing, singing, feasting, fasting, drug use, sexual abandon, exotic costumes — in short, by anything that helps differentiate a ritual event from the standing patterns of mundane routine.

For Turner, ritual transport to — and return from — a liminal world that is "out of everyday time" and "out of everyday space" builds bonds of *communitas* between ritual interactants. Deegan, however, inspired by Erving Goffman and T.R. Young, demonstrated that modern American rituals incorporate rather than banish, challenge, or "play" with the core codes of everyday life. Participants in American rituals rarely escape the repressive/oppressive structures of daily life. Deegan identified four codes that deeply structure social experiences in American society, specifically: (1) capitalism, (2) sexism, (3) bureaucratization, and (4) the commodification of time. Supplementary codes, including racism, agism, homophobia, and able bodyism, compound the reality and experience of repression and oppression, a point that Deegan (1985) raised in her earlier analysis of "multiple minority statuses."

The core codes of American life are not turned topsy-turvy in our ritual interactions, and thus result in alienation rather than *communitas*. Modern rituals, however, are not without some anti-structural features, and they are frequently experienced as "fun" (in contrast to liminal "play"). "Having fun" is a primary goal of many participatory American ritual activities, including going to football games, pick-up bars, and auctions (Deegan, 1973b, 1989b). Michael Ball (1990) adapted Deegan's framework to survey the core codes that structure professional wrestling. Media-constructed rituals (Deegan, 1989b), such as watching *Star Trek* and sending postcards, are also permeated, more often than not, by the principal core codes. Deegan (1989b) showed, however, in her analysis of *The Wizard of Oz*, that American rituals can attain considerable liminality.

Deegan was severely critical of "fun" and the core codes that reinforce it. "Fun," unlike *communitas*, generates alienation to the degree that "fun" is achieved through ever greater incorporation of the core codes in ritual activities. The price of "fun" is the negation of *communitas*. "Fun" events generate group identity by creating "in" and "out" groups, "winners" and "losers." When ritual play is liminal, however, there are no outsiders, no one "loses." Liminal play destroys exclusivity and cuts across the lived, socially-constructed realities of class division, sexual domination, administrative compartmentalization, and the pervasive equation of time with money. When realized, liminal play is a vital source of community strength and revitalization.

Deegan's theory posits a spectrum of ritual practices, from thoroughly flawed to deeply liminal. The degree to which core codes permeate specific ritual practices varies considerably. Building on the recognition that liminal play is possible in modern settings, Deegan pragmatically showed us how to revise old rituals and devise new ones that eliminate (or reduce) the intrusion of the core codes into our ritual celebrations, thus generating renewal and *communitas*.

Deegan presented a theory of core codes and *communitas* that implicitly challenged the organization of sociological practice in bureaucratic structures such as universities. The rituals of modern academic sociology are permeated by the same core codes that Deegan found in many modern participatory and media-constructed rituals, specifically: the codes of oppression (class and sex codes) and the codes of repression (bureaucracy and time codes). Thus, sociology remains little more than a rationalization for repressive and oppressive social control mechanisms unless it convincingly demonstrates and acts upon its own capacity for *communitas* and emancipatory change as an organized academic discipline. Empirically, Hill (1990) explored this possibility by presenting a brief analysis of the shift from *communitas* to increasingly bureaucratized alienation and control at the University of Nebraska in the early 1900s. Employing Deegan's theory, Hill suggested that bureaucratic alienation is not inherently a necessary feature of modernity, but can be reversed through the cooperative invention of new rituals that celebrate rather than hegemonically exploit the anti-structural possibilities of ritual activities.

IMPACT AND LEGACY

Deegan's work frequently upset intellectual apple carts; she boldly challenged widely held cultural values and academic mythologies. Joe Feagin (2024), former president of the American Sociological Association, expressed it this way:

Her seminal book, *Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School, 1892–1918*, was a watershed moment for U.S. sociology. It revealed the influential role of Chicago's Jane Addams and other early women sociologists in

developing the feminist pragmatism perspective, which emphasized qualitative research, cooperative ethics, liberal education, and democracy. Deegan showed how these early women sociologists contributed to the development of symbolic interactionism, a distinctively U.S. perspective that views human behavior as socially constructed, highly interactive, and cooperatively changeable.

Deegan's historical and theoretical research work faced resistance from some major quarters of the discipline, but she persisted, driven by a belief in the liberatory potential of her critical scholarship, especially for women. As she noted, "Women can [create change], but only if a large enough number want to do it, agree on definitions of what is desirable, and have access to the means to obtain these goals."

Feagin concluded:

In honoring Mary Jo's legacy, we must continue her work of recovering the significant feminist past of sociology and amplifying the many feminist and other voices of those who have been marginalized. Her scholarship has opened our eyes to the rich tapestry of women's major contributions, reminding us that the sociology discipline's history is far more diverse and radical than we once understood it to be. Mary Jo Deegan's life was a testament to the power of human persistence, courage, and a relentless pursuit of societal truth and justice.

In summarizing Deegan's work, Gary Alan Fine (2024) of Northwestern University and a former president of the Midwest Sociological Society noted:

Few people can change a field. Mary Jo Deegan is one of the sacred few. Her lifetime study of ignored figures throughout the history of sociology opened the eyes, the hearts, and the pens of her colleagues to the essential, if often unexplored, role of women scholars in the creation of

a discipline. Names (and the people, the politics, and the publications behind those names) who had once been invisible became unforgettable. It is entirely appropriate that Mary Jo was the first recipient of the History of Sociology Section of the American Sociological Association Lifetime Achievement Award in 2002. In the following eight years, Mary Jo’s research received the outstanding publication award of the section four times. She owned our past! But more than counting plaques, Mary Jo Deegan was a committed friend, a fierce advocate, and an innovative scholar. Our knowledge of the gendered troubles of sociology has been recognized through her vision.

Those who fail to appreciate the pioneering and often theoretically radical perspectives that characterize Deegan’s work are those who felt somewhat threatened (e.g., Lopata, 1995) or others who oversimplify her methodologies, running roughshod over the unrelenting logical force of her conclusions. Overall, most critics join with Feagin and Fine in celebrating Deegan’s research and insights (e.g., Bystydzienski, 2011; McDonald, 2019; Dufoix, 2022).

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Figure 1. Mary Jo Deegan.



Figure 2. The female Deegan family: (left to right) Judith (sister), Ida May (mother, in rear), Mary Jo (in front), Carol (sister).



Figure 3. Mary Jo Deegan (rear center) with school friends at the St. Joseph, Michigan, public library,

Chapter Four

DEPRESSION DOGS: PHOTOGRAPHY, SOCIOLOGY, POETRY AND THE FSA/OWI FILES, 1935–1944

Here we visit our current project, in which Janice Marie Zerfas, my poet-partner (Zerfas, 2019, 2026), and myself are completing a poetic visual portfolio of dogs in the United States during and after the Great Depression for the years 1935 to 1944.¹ Unlike my previous work which typically involved at least some in-person archival research,² the empirical resources for this project are entirely digital, online, and available without user fees to virtually everyone with a computer and unobstructed Internet access. We have availed ourselves of a special portion of the vast collection of online visual materials maintained by the U.S. Library of Congress.³ Specifically, we explored the 170,000 digitized negatives made by the team of photographers employed by the U.S. Farm Security Administration (FSA) and the Office of War Information (OWI).

From within the FSA/OWI files, we discovered approximately 155 photographs featuring dogs. A few images depict dogs alone, but more typically they illustrate dogs in a variety of relationships with humans. This “data set” can be approached from multiple directions, including:

- (1) As a time-bound, inherently intriguing visual portfolio,
- (2) Sociology and photography as reflexive social practices,
- (3) The interface between animals and humans, and
- (4) Interdisciplinary ekphrastic responses to visual imagery.

¹ Forthcoming: Michael R. Hill and Janice Marie Zerfas, *Depression Dogs: Canine Images from the American Federal Photography Projects, 1935–1944*. St. Joseph, Michigan: The Art Critic Press, to be distributed by Amazon.com.

² Cf., Hill (1993) for a general introduction to archival research and, for the most recent worked examples, my work on the Chicago poet and influential founder of *Poetry* magazine, Harriet Monroe (Hill, 2024a, b).

³ First, go to: www.loc.gov/collections/, then select “Farm Security Administration/ Office of War Information”.

The reality of these varied possibilities underscores the point that although photographs may be intentionally created for specific purposes, they may in fact be used for very different ends, ends over which the photographer may have little if any lasting control.

A VISUAL PORTFOLIO

Several of the photographers represented in our collection of canine images — and the FSA/OWI files more generally — are now highly regarded as among the best America has produced, including: Esther Bubley, Jack Delano, Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, Russell Lee, John Vachon, and Marion Post Wolcott, among others. That is to say, many of the FSA/OWI images — while originally *documentary* in intent — are now appreciated (and collected) as *art*.

In compiling a thematic “picture book” featuring dogs found in the FSA/OWI files preserved by the Library of Congress, we are using the photographs in a manner that likely never occurred to anyone eight decades ago. Viewers today may find some of the photos nostalgic, many charming, others beautiful, some haunting. That is to say, these photos can be unapologetically appropriated and enjoyed — not so much as prosaic documents — but in their own right as images that delight, disturb, or give pause for reflection and remembrance.

PHOTOGRAPHY, SOCIOLOGY, AND REFLEXIVITY

Although we can now appreciate the photographs in our collection as art per se, they were originally made as *documents* intended to educate Americans about social conditions in America. Indeed, Ansel Adams, the noted landscape photographer, famously chastised the director of the FSA/OWI project: “What you've got are not photographers, they're a bunch of sociologists with cameras.”⁴ In fact, they had little sociological training. Only one, Arthur Siegel, had an undergraduate degree in sociology.⁵ Nonetheless, the relatively systematic documentation of social activities was generally perceived as inherently sociological, in much the

⁴ Reported by Stryker in Stryker and Wood (1973): 8.

⁵ From Wayne State University in 1937.

same way that the photographs of Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine were received by the public.

Neither sociology nor photography are ancient practices. Several writers have noticed that both appeared at about the same time. Indeed, their origins are largely co-terminus with the rise of the Industrial Revolution circa 1760 in England and the subsequent spread of technology and industrial mechanization to Europe starting in Belgium in 1807, in the 1830s in France, and from 1850 onward in Germany (Figure 4).

Sociology per se began, methodologically speaking, with Harriet Martineau's *How to Observe Morals and Manners* in 1838⁶; theoretically with Auguste Comte's explicit use of the term in 1839, and its wider popularization in English-speaking countries with Martineau's concise translation of Comte's *Positive Philosophy* in 1853.

Photography is generally said to begin with the oldest known permanent photograph, made by the French inventor, Joseph Niépce, in 1827; followed by the widely-received introduction of daguerrotypes in 1839 and the development of stable, high-quality silver gelatin prints in the 1890s.

Sociology, as a systemic, institutionalized enterprise, provided an intellectual apparatus by which members of emergent, expanding, and rapidly-changing urban industrial societies could reflexively submit the societies in which they lived to theoretical analyses and empirical investigation. Coincidentally, photography provided a technological means for capturing and freezing time-bound visual representations of selected subjects and moments from within those societies. It is neither surprising that sociology and photography share the same time frame and can be complementary, nor is it inherently problematic that specific applications of photography often have nothing in common with sociology as we know it.

⁶ Written at the tail end of the pre-photographic era, Martineau did not ignore the utility of recording visual data. Perceptively, she advocated making visual sketches of the settings and environments in which inquiries were conducted.

(1) The FSA/OWI Photographs as a Documentary Project

The FSA/OWI photographs were made during a relatively short sliver of human time, a decade, more or less, from 1935 to 1944. The images are static, two-dimensional, and (mostly) in black and white. The photos are physical, reproducible, artifacts from a bygone era. The FSA/OWI images were made when the mass dissemination of photographs as illustration, entertainment, and persuasion was unfolding in newspapers and periodicals like the *Survey Graphic* (1921–1952),⁷ *Life* (1936–1972)⁸ and *Look* (1937–1971). As noted, the FSA/OWI files contain approximately 170,000 photographs — an astonishingly large number at the time, but dwarfed in our own era. The graph in Figure 5, made for a pre-Covid discussion, shows the increase, year by year, of the number of photographs made from the mid-1800s to 2017. With the proliferation of digital cameras and smartphones at the end of the twentieth century, the number of photographs skyrocketed exponentially. Most recently, the estimated number of photos made annually climbed to just over two trillion images in 2025, approximately 94% of which were made using smartphones.⁹ To recap: the FSA/OWI photo files are very large relative to the time in which they were made, but minuscule relative to the number of photos now made every year.

(2) Bureaucratically Organized Visual Documentation

The FSA/OWI photographs were made by a bureaucratically-organized team of government photographers hired and paid for with monies generated by taxes and approved by the U.S. Congress. The photographs were made ostensibly to document, educate, rationalize, and promote the work of U.S. government agencies and programs during the Great Depression and World War II. In all, approximately 270,000 individual photos were made. Copies of selected photographs were

⁷ For example, Paul S. Taylor's essay "From the Ground Up" was illustrated with documentary photographs by Dorothea Lange in the September 1936 issue of the *Survey Graphic*.

⁸ For example, in its June 21, 1937, issue, *Life* ran a prominent six-page photo-essay tracking the devastation of the Dust Bowl.

⁹ 2025 Estimate from PetaPixel.com This number likely under estimates the actual figure by substantial margins, especially if we were to include covert military, law-enforcement, and government-sponsored surveillance programs.

distributed to and reprinted by willing newspapers and magazines. The 170,000 surviving negatives were deposited in the U.S. Library of Congress where they remain today. More recently, the negatives have been digitized and made available online via a website developed and maintained by the Library of Congress. Whatever else might be said about the FSA/OWI photographs, their creation, preservation, and continuing availability is fundamentally and undeniably an orchestrated social act.

The FSA/OWI photos document a less technologically advanced time in which the concepts of photojournalism and documentary photography were only just then coming into focus. Despite being dwarfed by today's astronomical numbers of photographs, the then relatively massive photography project directed by Roy E. Stryker was a remarkable undertaking. It reflected Stryker's goal of documenting rural poverty and hardship during the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl (Stryker and Wood, 1973). His idea (and the rationale for its government funding) was to build public support for New Deal public relief programs by showing Americans (especially those living in east coast urban areas) the reality of the crisis. The project expanded when later transferred to the Office of War Information, still directed by Stryker, to include positive images of the "home front" during World War II.

Stryker was not himself a photographer, but he had successfully utilized photographs in his lectures as an economist at Columbia University. There, he worked with Rexford Tugwell and subsequently followed Tugwell into government service at Tugwell's invitation. As Stryker's boss, Tugwell already had a positive appreciation of Stryker's ability to use photographs to illustrate economic realities and he set Stryker to work visually documenting the economic dimensions of the Great Depression. Over the course of his tenure, Stryker hired and directed approximately two dozen photographers who initially made some 270,000 photographs, of which 170,000 photographs survived Stryker's editorial discarding. It is from the latter, large set of images that the photographs we discovered were selected.

THE INTERFACE BETWEEN ANIMALS AND HUMANS

Beyond art for arts sake, the photos in our collection invite us to consider the lives of dogs in relation to their human companions and as

they sometimes co-exist more or less independently in our shared biosphere. After all, these *are* genuine visual documents depicting ordinary people and their dogs in real life settings. As such, they help us pose the kinds of questions and concerns that led to the founding of the Section on Animals and Society within the American Sociological Association in 2002. For example, do we sometimes exploit dogs unfairly or unethically?; to what degree have dogs become crucial to human activities?; to what extent do dogs become integral members of human families and communities?; what, if any, aspects of canine/human relationships appear constant or universal, or subject to change?; and so on. That is to say, as visual documents, these photos remain intellectually provocative.

(1) Discovering the Photographs: A Methodological Note

Before using our dog photos as a “data set” from which to draw hypotheses or propose further investigations, it behooves to consider, in this case, the degree to which our collection is representative of the FSA/OWI photographs generally and in terms of American dogs specifically. From a strictly statistical perspective, our 155 dog photos comprise a very small subset, approximately 0.09 percent, of the more than 170,000 photos amassed by the photographers who worked for the FSA/OWI. They were made by seventeen of the approximately two dozen photographers on the FSA/OWI payroll. So, a majority of the photographers are represented. But, of this group, some are represented with greater frequency than others; only one image each is attributed to Esther Bubley, Sheldon Dick, Walker Evans and Edwin Roskam. And only two each to Marjory Collins, Gordon Parks, and Ben Shahn, for example, whereas Russell Lee, John Vachon, and Marion Post Wolcott were responsible for many, many more. So, as a “sample” of the FSA/OWI photos taken as a whole, the 155 dog photos we discovered are problematic, statistically speaking, *if* one wanted to use them to make inferences about the FSA/OWI photographers and the archival FSA/OWI photograph repository in its entirety, let alone make any valid inferences about dogs as a whole during the Great Depression.

Our goal however was to present *all* of the images that we could find in the FSA/OW files that included dogs. The large number of visual images in the online digital collections of the Library of Congress present a challenge in identifying what turned out to be a relatively small number

of images that contain dogs. Each online image is accompanied by a descriptive label supplied by the photographer or a subsequent cataloger. Thus, we searched for key words in the descriptions: “dog,” “dogs,” “puppy,” “puppies,” by specific breeds, and so on. This resulted in a core batch of 75 images. Some images, however, are simply “untitled” and thus not easily discoverable by key word searches. Further, there is an unknown subset of photographs that depict dogs but are not identified as such in the searchable titles or descriptions. This is a fundamental problem for anyone who searches the FSA/OWI files. Frame by frame visual inspection of the full 170,000 images was, for us, impractical, although we did look more closely, as time permitted, at the files associated with Russell Lee, John Vachon, and Marion Post Wolcott on the assumption that photographers we knew to include dogs in photographs might be more likely to have made additional such photos that were not captioned, titled or described as including dogs. In the end, we also looked at published books of FSA/OWI photographs and made additional AI-assisted online searches. This resulted in sufficiently detailed clues that allowed us to find an additional 79 images within the FSA/OWI files at the Library of Congress and one image in the collection of printed FSA photographs in the New York Public Library.

(2) A New Caveat

As we enter an age of increasingly questionable AI-generated imagery, especially online, it behooves us to caution Internet users of the reality of fake FSA/OWI-style imagery. A well-documented example is the fictitious photograph of the New England bung maker (Figure 6). We rejected three dog photographs on suspicion of their being faked to look like FSA/OWI photographs. To be safe, we advise using only images that can be verified in the FSA/OWI files at the Library of Congress. Suffice it to say, Artificial intelligence can be fun (Hill, 2026a, b), but it can also be grossly misleading when not properly identified as having been employed.

(3) What Do the Photographs Show?

On the whole, the images include humans of all ages, young and old. Males and females are depicted, as are white, Black, Asian, and Latino subjects. Social class ranges downward from the wealthy and upper middle class to middle class, working class, impoverished lower class, and

finally to the truly destitute and dispossessed. The physical settings stretch from cities to small towns, ranches, rural fields, highways, and forests. As to buildings: interior, exterior, and transitional (e.g., porches) settings are depicted. Many parts of the U.S. are included: north, south, Midwest, and west. A few pictures show dogs in isolation; most appear in relation to humans. Only two “dogs” are inanimate, including a food stand shaped like a dog (Figure 7). The dogs vary in age, from puppyhood, through middle age, to a senior canine on its last legs. Some dogs are active (Figure 8), others lethargic (Figure 9), two are dead and one is literally skeletal (Figure 10). Some dogs are obviously loved and well cared for (Figure 11), others appear barely tolerated or ignored (Figure 12). There are working dogs, hunting dogs, and pampered household pets. One dog steadfastly guards its home long after its humans have departed (Figure 13) while another trails behind pallbearers carrying a casket (Figure 14). Several photos illustrate the affectionate bonds that can develop between dogs and their human companions (Figure 15). In sum, we present a time-bound, thought-provoking, sociologically suggestive gallery of dog and dog/human images. They give us pause to think.

EKPHRASTIC RESPONSES

Finally, in a detailed appendix, Janice Marie Zerfas welcomes viewers of our compilation to use and explore the images as prompts for writing ekphrastic (or interpretive) poems and vignettes. This interdisciplinary use of the photographs need be neither documentary nor sociological. We think it fair to suggest that somewhere among these images you will find a photograph that “speaks” to you and calls on you to respond further, beyond simply looking at the images per se or using them to build hypotheses. If so, if you do respond poetically or in some other media, then Roy Stryker’s documentary efforts will have generated a legacy well beyond his specifically practical and prosaic intentions.

LOOKING FORWARD

Beyond dogs per se, the FSA/OWI files contain spatial- and time-bound, ostensibly documentary, images that can be examined and appreciated in terms of all things visual, including: facial expressions, race, gender, domestic architecture, home decor, clothing, landscapes, children, agricultural equipment, automobiles, portraiture, social class markers, working conditions, social rituals, and so on. In sum, we invite

you to make your own interrogations of the FSA/OWI files insofar as they may relate to your particular interdisciplinary artistic, cultural, and theory interests.¹⁰

For readers interested in further exploring the visual relationships between dogs and humans, Ann-Janine Morey provides an excellent place to start in *Picturing Dogs, Seeing Ourselves* (2014). The special place of dogs in art is wonderfully examined in Thoms W. Laqueur’s *The Dog’s Gaze: A visual History* (2026). And, for sociologists interested in foundational theoretical statements about dogs and society, see Hill and Deegan (2016); and for a version in Italian, with an afterword by Raffaele Rauty, see Hill and Deegan (2014).

For readers who want to dig more deeply into the relationships between art, photography, philosophy, and sociology, we suggest starting with: Becker’s *Art Worlds* (1982) and then moving onward to the following: Barthes (1981); Bordieu and others (1990); Gamper (2021); Heywood and Sandywell (1999); Hill (1984, 2021); Sontag (1979); Wittgenstein (1958).

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¹⁰ See, for example: Stott (1973); Becker (1974); Stange (1989); Natanson (1992); Szto (2008); Faccioli and Losacco (2010); McEuen (2011); Harper (2012); Mattioli (2013); Kaplan (2014); and Appel (2025).

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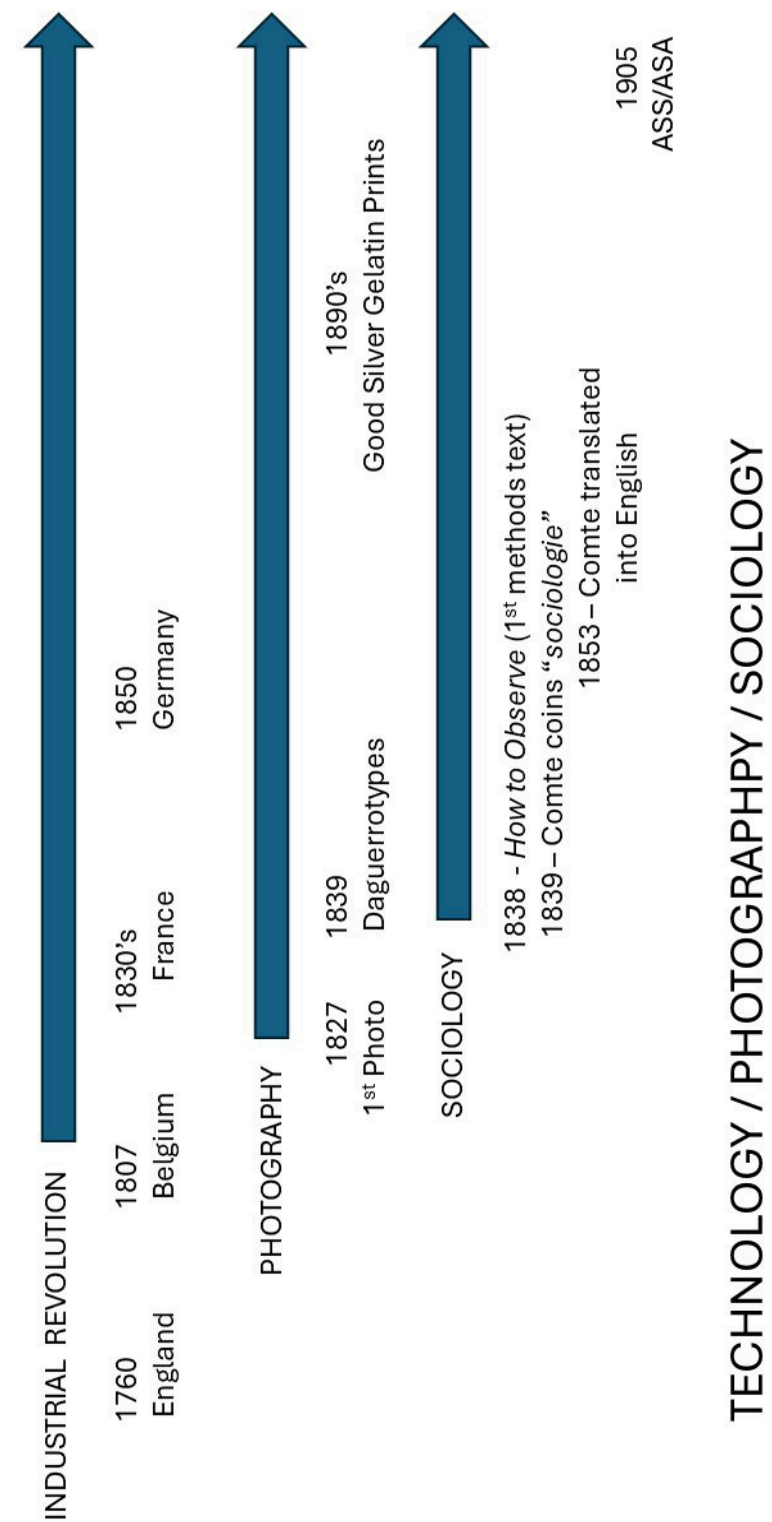


Figure 4. Technology/Photography/Sociology Timeline.

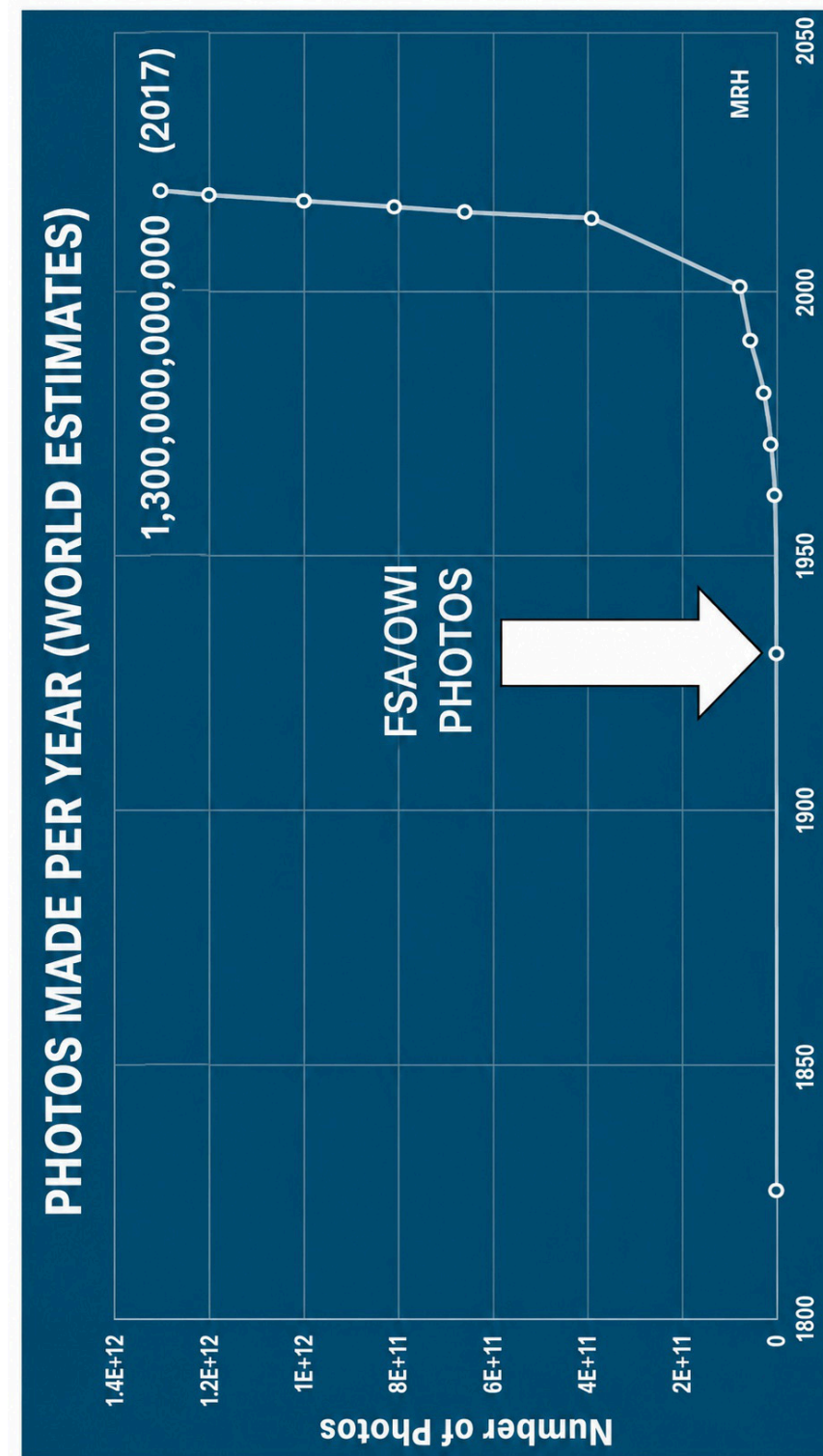


Figure 5. Number of Photographs Made Per Year (World Estimate).



Figure 6. Fake FSA/OWI photograph found on the Internet.



Figure 7. DOROTHEA LANGE, photographer. On U.S. 99 as it continues through Lane County, Willamette Valley, Oregon, 1939.



Figure 8. ARTHUR ROTHSTEIN, photographer. Snow carnival, Lancaster, New Hampshire, 1936.



Figure 9. JACK DELANO, photographer. A dog asleep under an automobile, Franklin, Georgia, 1941.



Figure 10. JACK DELANO, photographer. Students in anatomy class examine the skeleton of a dog, veterinary school at Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa, 1942.



Figure 11. JOHN COLLIER, photographer. Jewell Mazique (1913–2007), then a worker at the Library of Congress, with the family dog, Washington, DC, 1942.



Figure 12. DOROTHEA LANGE, photographer. Displaced sharecroppers swept off the plantations by tractor farming, depression, crop reduction program, and other factors, Greenville, Mississippi, 1937.



Figure 13. RUSSELL LEE, photographer. Dog on porch still guarding farmhouse evacuated during a flood, Cache, Illinois, 1937. With enlarged inset.



Figure 14. MARION POST WOLCOTT, photographer. Mountain people carrying a homemade coffin up creek bed to the family plot on the hillside where it will be buried. This section is too isolated to hold any formal funeral services immediately. Up the South Fork of the Kentucky River near Jackson, Kentucky, 1940.



Figure 15. JOHN VACHON, photographer. Dale Thornton, son of Clarence Thornton, who is a Farm Security Administration borrower. Story County, Iowa, 1940.

Appendix

SOCIOLOGY IN A NUTSHELL

The following terms, concepts, and ideas are *generally* useful as background in most sociological discussions, but remember that all lecturers bring their own definitions and perspectives to bear on their presentations of particular sociologies and sociological topics. At the same time, if you will study a given lecturer's set of definitions, and conceptualize them as elements within a presumably coherent system of ideas (*i.e.*, their "perspective"), you will go a long way to understanding what the lecturer considers important.

Professional sociologists define/use many basic principles in *highly specific* and *technical* ways. Effective sociologists grasp principles such as those below *all at the same time*, comprehend the *interconnections* between the concepts, and attempt to *extend* the *logical consequences* of those connections.

For myself, *Sociology* is the *systematic, empirically-grounded* study of *systems* of institutional arrangements called *societies* (or, in Ludwig Wittgenstein's pregnant appellation: "ways of living").

All *systems* have a *set of two or more elements*, a set of *relationships between the elements*, and are separated from their *environments* by more or less permeable *boundaries*. Virtually anything (including sociology, sociological perspectives, society, institutions, roles/statuses, classifications, languages, our bodies, etc.) may be *conceptualized* as a system with *sub-systems*. The *definition* of any system, including its boundary, is always *arbitrary*. Any system may be conceptualized as a sub-system in a larger system, etc.

If a system's boundary is *impermeable* (meaning that nothing can go through it, in or out), then it has no communication with its environment, and is said to be a *closed system*. If the boundary is permeable, we customarily speak of an *open system*. All *living systems*

are necessarily open systems, because they must admit food and energy, and they must expel wastes.

A system is said to be in a *state of equilibrium* when there is a balance in the relationships between the elements in the system and between the system and its environment. When this balance is upset, the system may go into a *state of crisis* or *disequilibrium*. *Feedback loops* convey information between elements within systems and between systems and their environments. A *reflexive system* can monitor its own state, make assessments, weigh alternative plans for future action, and take steps to change its state.

The *state* (or condition) of a system may also be described in terms of *entropy*. Entropy refers to the amount of energy and/or organization within a system. As entropy *increases*, a system has *less and less* energy and/or organization. When a system reaches the level of *maximum entropy*, then it has *no* energy and/or organization. Conversely, when a system has *negative entropy*, then it has energy and/or organization. Thus, when a living human being has high levels of negative entropy, he or she is “alive and kicking.” When human beings are in a state of maximum entropy, they are literally “dead as a doornail.” Sociologists sometimes talk about social systems as “organized” (i.e., as having high levels of negative entropy), or “disorganized” (i.e., as having high levels of entropy).

There are several very different *perspectives* (or *knowledge producing systems*) that can be adopted by sociologists depending on what they most want sociology to accomplish. A few possible goals for sociology include: explanation, prediction, revolution, stability, harmony, efficiency, profit, creativity, peace, control, social reform, emancipation, liberation, democracy, social equality, utopia, diversity, progress, understanding, playfulness, etc. The trick is to choose a perspective that fits your goal. Examples of various sociological perspectives include: *behaviorism, feminism, Marxism, pragmatism, idealism, constructivism, structural-functionalism, phenomenology, systems theory, post-structuralism, humanism, symbolic interactionism, positivism, systematic empiricism*, and so on. Here’s a problem: some

perspectives fit better with some goals than do other perspectives. Further, all of the perspectives possess a degree of internal logical coherence that is often incompatible with all or most of the other perspectives. Several textbooks, however, present these perspectives as forming one big happy, intellectually compatible family when such is not the case, resulting too often in portraits of sociology that are inherently confusing.

Each perspective employs methodologies of its own devising and generates its own distinctive theories. *Methodologies* are procedural rules that guide researchers in the active exploration of selected aspects of social behavior and experience. *Theories* are organizing schemes that state that selected dimensions of human experience are related in particular ways. Some sociological perspectives claim to be *scientific*, others do not. To be *scientistic* means to adopt the outward appearance of scientific procedure while, at the same time, fundamentally violating the core values of authentic scientific exploration.

Classification is the process of **assigning** items, objects, instances, events, or cases to **categories** based on **selected characteristics** of the item or case. Sociologists often devise *formal classifications* in order to better understand the patterns or structures of human groups. Every formal classification has *two or more categories* to which items, events or cases can be assigned. These categories are typically *exhaustive and mutually exclusive*. When categories are *exhaustive*, it means that all possible items that could be classified (or assigned) have categories to which they can be logically assigned; the categories “use up” or “exhaust” all of the items – no items (or cases) are “left over” without a category in which to “fit” or be placed. When categories are *mutually exclusive* it means that all items that could be classified (or assigned to a category) can logically be assigned *to only one category*. The careful construction of rigorous, intellectually meaningful classifications has long been considered a hallmark of good scientific thinking. The inherent problem, however, is that defining categories, as in defining the elements in any system, is *always arbitrary*; for this reason it is said that scientists *impose* their classifications upon

the world(s) they want to study. Mathematically-derived, empirically-based *multidimensional assignments* of objects/items to categories (fuzzy or otherwise) provide alternative but still necessarily arbitrary classifications.

Complicating the issue of *classification* is the idea that a person can be located within several classificatory schemes *at the same time*. For example, any given person can be classified in terms of “ethnicity”, “gender”, “social class,” “age,” and so on. The point in multidimensional space where these locations come together is typically referred to as “*intersectionality*.” So, for example, the extent to which advanced age is “problematic” depends a lot on where one is located in terms of all the other locations. If — to take one example — a person is wealthy, the experience of old age is, on average, much less problematic than if one is very poor, and so on. You can also think of this issue in terms of *multiple majority statuses* vs. *multiple minority statuses* (the latter term was coined by Mary Jo Deegan). Relatively few people have *only* majority statuses or *only* minority statuses. Most of us possess a *mixture* of multiple and minority statuses. The relative importance and interacting complexity of these statuses tends to shift over time as we move through *the life course*.

The *sociological imagination* (a term coined by C. Wright Mills) is sensitive to *history* (especially the time period since the *industrial revolution*), avoids *ethnocentrism* (and *scientism*), and *critically examines* present patterns.

Most sociologists can agree that, fundamentally, all humans are *embodied* and possess specifiable *capabilities* (e.g., surveillance, movement, reproduction, speech, reflexivity, opposable thumbs, thought, creativity, etc.), *vulnerabilities* (injury, death, pain, aging, disabilities, illness, imprisonment, physical capture, etc.) and *constraints* or limitations (e.g., we *must* have air, food, and water, we can run only so fast, we cannot see through opaque surfaces or physically be in two places at the same time, we have finite life spans, etc.). It is an inescapable *fact* that we *must* live our lives as embodied humans.

Various *technologies* can augment our capabilities, ameliorate or increase vulnerabilities, and reduce constraints, but cannot eliminate them altogether.

We are born embodied into a world of *ready-made institutions* and a *pre-set repertory of possible roles* (Note: to confuse matters, several writers call these “statuses” rather than roles, and then refer to the *behaviors* associated with each status as the “role”). We have the capacity to learn, through *socialization*, the basic patterns of our society’s institutions, including language. As children, we learn to *take the role of the other* (in part through *unstructured play*) resulting eventually in a *self*. We develop dialogues with our socialized “conscience” (the internalized voices of *others*). These interior dialogs in our *minds* (dialogues between the unsocialized “I” and the increasingly socialized “me” — and which we tend to think of as *individual* and unique) are *necessarily and fundamentally social in origin and character*. (This is a key point in George H. Mead’s theory of symbolic interaction; it is antithetical to individualist psychology).

Social institutions are *coercive, regulatory patterns*. Most people in a society agree that these patterns are “right” and that violations should be punished. Technically speaking, a *society* is the set of social institutions to which a large human group adheres.

The *major* social institutions include: *language, law, family, education, religion, polity, economy, science, medicine*, and the *standing civil order* (the latter is a “catchall” for widespread everyday patterns that do not fit comfortably in one of the other major institutions). Virtually all human behavior is *institutionally located*.

The *major* social institutions all *meet a set of criteria* setting them apart from minor institutions. These criteria are: *externality* (the patterns are not unique to us as individuals; they exist outside of our selves), *pervasiveness* (the patterns are found virtually everywhere), *coercion* (we are encouraged to conform to the patterns, and are punished if we break the patterns), *moral authority* (the patterns are seen as “right”),

temporal persistence (the patterns continue over long periods of time), *objective consensus* (most of us agree that the patterns exist), *systemic reinforcement* (patterns in one institution tend to be strengthened by patterns in other institutions), they *possess sets of associated roles* (or statuses), and *are instantiated* (i.e., we can point to concrete examples of the abstract patterns).

All institutions prescribe a specific set of *roles* (or statuses). Every role/status is named (e.g., teacher, student, nurse, etc.) and is a set bundle of *attitudes, behaviors, and evaluative criteria*. Persons in societies who *interact* with each other *necessarily* do so *in terms of roles/statuses*. People *dramaturgically perform* one role/status at a time, alternating between performances of roles/statuses defined by a variety of institutions.

Our *surveillance* capability permits us to *observe* and thus *evaluate* the role/status performances of others. *Reflexivity* allows us to evaluate our own performances, and, further, to reflect upon the very nature of such evaluations. No matter how good our information and how carefully we plan, our best attempts to organize our social worlds inevitably have unforeseen, *unintended consequences*.

Via *symbolic interaction* we communicate (using “symbols,” such as words and non-verbal gestures) with each other about many things (including assessments of each other’s role/status performances) and “call out” responses from each other, generating *conversations*. (As noted above, we internalize such conversations during the process of socialization and the development of a self).

At every given instant of time, we are capable of asking ourselves, “What is going on here?” or “What is happening?” Our answers to these questions are what Erving Goffman calls *frames*. The basic categories we use are *natural frames* (such as earthquakes and thunderstorms) or *social frames* (i.e., intended *guided doings*, such as shooting a gun or baking a cake). A *muffing* is a guided doing that goes awry (such as tripping over a sidewalk imperfection while walking). Frames can be

fabricated such that a *dupe* does not know what is really going on. All frames can be *keyed* from one frame that is meaningful into something similar but different (such as keying one’s actual experiences into a song, poem, short story, or tall tale). As humans, we find the situation of being unable to immediately apply a frame so uncomfortable that we sometimes grab too quickly at inappropriate explanations, resulting in our *misframing* the actual situation. Note that *all* of the frames we use are *words* (and are thus symbols) that we learned via socialization. Thus, our understanding of “what is going on right now” is *always* trapped (or captured, or constructed) within the social institution of language and the way in which those *words* are actually *used* in everyday speech (language, as Wittgenstein noted, if you try to pin it down, is remarkably flexible and fluid; and that “what belongs to a language game is a whole culture” — a situation that makes translating from one language to another a very tricky business). Finally, anything that can be framed can be keyed; anything that can be framed can be *fabricated*; any key can be fabricated; and any fabrication can be keyed, and so on.

On the definition of the situation: Saying that something *is* the case does not necessarily make it so; and saying that something is *not* the case doesn’t make it untrue; but, *if a person defines a situation as real, it becomes real in its consequences* (this is the famous “theorem” proposed by William I. Thomas and Dorothy Swaine Thomas). The important point here is that the actual or real consequences may not be anything like what the person intended. So, for example, if a person defines herself as “President of the United States,” when she is not actually the President, there will still be *real* consequences (most likely, she will be arrested and/or placed in a mental hospital if she persists in defining herself as the President and acts as if she is the President).

With the major exceptions of family, informal aspects of the standing civil order, and many phases of language, *instantiations* of major social institutions are typically located in *bureaucracies (hierarchical organizations)* exhibiting several “*ideal*” characteristics identified by *Max Weber*).

An instantiated organization is *fully bureaucratized* if it possesses these characteristics: hierarchical organization of offices (a pyramid of power); each office has strictly defined duties and responsibilities; well-defined lines of communication; well-defined chain of command or authority; certification (office holders are required to meet minimum qualifications); meritocracy (hiring and promotion are based strictly on merit); written rules (manuals and regulations); effectiveness; top-down distribution of instrumentality (folks at the top have more latitude in what, how and when they do their work, and are less subject to direct surveillance); and has a paid, full-time staff.

Today, most viable societies are constituted as *hierarchical, bureaucratically-organized nation-states*.

A *nation-state*, according to *Anthony Giddens*, is a *spatial power container* defined by a geographical *boundary* and characterized by *sovereignty*, *citizenship*, and state control of *the means of mass violence*.

Many (perhaps most) *social problems* (such as hunger, epidemics, war, murder, lying, prejudicial discrimination, etc.) are problematic due *in part* to the peculiar construction, capabilities, vulnerabilities, and constraints of embodied humans. *Conversely*, many of our *social institutions* are organized attempts to contend with and confront the reality, consequences, and possibilities of human embodiment.

Social change can be charted in terms of *adjustments in systemic relationships* between major institutions and/or roles/statuses, and/or the creation of new (or the elimination or redefinition of established) roles/statuses. This rate of change is *accelerating* whereas, *paradoxically*, fundamental dimensions of major institutional patterns remain fairly *stable* over long periods of time. Societies are capable of major *unpredictable* institutional shifts and revolutions. We live in an increasingly *hyper-modern* world.

Our hyper-modern world makes constantly increasing use of ever more complex technologies for transportation, manufacturing, military defense, policing, communication, entertainment, banking, agriculture, education, medical treatment, scientific investigation, etc. While bringing many desirable benefits, all of these technologies are also vulnerable to subversion individually — and collectively — to produce totally unexpected outcomes.

An *that*, at least for me, is sociology in a nutshell.

MRH



Michael R. Hill — First Day of School (Leon, Iowa).

About the Author

Michael R. Hill (mhill@JaneAddamsResearchCenter.org) earned Ph.D. degrees in geography (1982) and sociology (1989) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. His previous teaching posts include: Iowa State University, Albion College, University of Minnesota Duluth, University of Indiana South Bend, University of Nebraska at Omaha, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and the University of Notre Dame. As founder and editor of *Sociological Origins*, he is deeply interested in the history and development of sociology and the arts as intellectual enterprises. He is the author/editor/co-editor of several scholarly books and numerous articles and is now Associate Director of the Jane Addams Research Center in St. Joseph, Michigan. He twice won the Distinguished Scholarly Book Award presented by the American Sociological Association's Section on the History of Sociology (HOS). In 2003, Michael received the ASA's HOS Distinguished Scholarly Career Award. He is a member of the American Association of Geographers, the Geographic Society of Chicago, the American Sociological Association, and Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society. Michael lives and writes in southwest Michigan with his poet-partner, Janice Marie Zerfas.

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