

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NORTH CENTRAL SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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The 2010 meeting of NCSA will be the 85th. It all started over coffee in December, 1924, at the American Sociological Society (ASS) meeting in Chicago, according to Dennis Terzola (1969). His brief article in *Sociological Focus*, Vol. 2, No. 3, Spring, 1969 is a good source of information. That meeting led to the founding of the Ohio Sociological Society (OSS) which held its first meeting on April 4, 1927, at Ohio State University. Newell Sims, Oberlin College, was elected president, Cecil North, Ohio State University, vice president, and Frederick Detweiler, Denison University, secretary. Apparently there was no need for a treasurer. In fact, there was no treasurer until Melvin DeFleur assumed that office in 1965.

The Ohio Sociologist was the first "bulletin", published from 1927 to 1938, when it became *The Ohio Valley Sociologist*. That change in title occurred along with two other organizational changes. Despite some dissent over the possible loss of "the delightful fellowship and personal contact" associated with OSS, in 1937 it became the Ohio Valley Sociological Society, including the states of Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, West Virginia and western Pennsylvania. In addition, in 1938, it became recognized as a regional affiliate of ASS.

Only 1 meeting was held during World War II, in 1944, in part due to loss of members for the duration, and restrictions on travel. But it was rejuvenated, gradually. *The Ohio Valley Sociologist* had always been a mimeographed publication, but in 1965 the Publication Committee wanted it to look more professional and it became type-set. Two years later the Publication Committee initiated 2 more changes. *Sociological Focus* came into being as a professional journal, with Kent Schwirian of Ohio State University as its first editor. And the Ohio Valley Sociologist continued, edited by Shailer Thomas.

In 1968, after considerable discussion a special committee recommended that OVSS should incorporate, which became official on April 3, 1968. And in 1969, after prolonged discussion, the first joint meeting with the Midwest Sociological Society was held.

That's where the text in Terzola's article ends. However, there are 2 informative addenda. He lists all of the officers by name, position held, year and affiliation from 1925-1926 to 1969-1970. He gives the dates and locations of all of the annual meetings and their locations for those same years. From 1925 to 1948 all of the meetings but 2 were held in Columbus, Ohio, the exceptions being in 1932 when it was in Delaware, Ohio (Ohio Wesleyan University) and in 1933 when it was in Granville, Ohio (Denison University). And finally, in 1969 dues for regular members were \$3.00, and for students \$1.00.

The next major change was creating the position of Executive Director, which was President Jim Davidson's doing in 1984. Barbara Jones Dension was selected for that position, with the primary responsibility of managing the many arrangements for the Annual Meeting. She left the position in 1993, and Mary French, a non-academic was selected to replace her. She left after 3 years and Dean Purdy, Bowling Green State University, replaced her. Dean had been a member of the Council for a number of years, and served as Treasurer. He was ED until his retiring from the position this year, 2009.

Teaching began to receive attention on the Program in the late 1980s. There were occasional Didactic Seminars prior to that. By 1987 there was a Teaching Committee, represented on Council, and teaching related sessions were on

the program for the Annual Meeting. In addition workshops for high school teachers were held in conjunction with annual meetings.

Finances have been a significant issue most of the time. This has been a low budget organization. In the earlier years Departments helped defray many of the costs, such as with editing and publishing *Soc Focus*. And as we grew in number of members and the program grew from 7 sessions in 1959 to 10 times that or more today the costs increased considerably. We need 8 to 10 meeting rooms to handle all of the concurrent sessions. There were only 22 presentations in 1959, counting the President's address and the Business meeting. NCSA has grown in many ways.

If you have additions, revisions, etc, please let me know. I suspect I have more than reached my page limit.