

# Preface

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## *Rationale*

In the *Encyclopedia of Social Welfare History in North America*, we endeavored to bring together basic information on the history of social welfare in the three major countries that constitute North America—Canada, Mexico, and the United States of America. Our intention was to provide readers with information about how these three nations have dealt with social welfare issues, some similar across borders, others unique, as well as to describe important events, developments, and the lives and work of some key contributors to social welfare developments. If we have succeeded, the encyclopedia will be useful to beginning students of social welfare history as well as established scholars who are seeking to extend their investigations into new areas of inquiry.

This encyclopedia, the first of its kind, takes a *continental, tri-national* approach to its subject matter. Experts on the history of social welfare in Canada, Mexico, and the United States contributed entries to the volume. We have defined social welfare broadly, to include education, informal mutual assistance, the development of the social work profession, and voluntary charitable activities as well as state-supported public welfare activities. (The encyclopedia does *not*, however, attempt to cover the history of social work practice or the development of specialized education for social work or the other human services.) The coverage is broad and interdisciplinary; contributors include scholars from the fields of anthropology,

economics, education, health sciences, history, labor and industrial relations, political science, social work, and sociology.

Much published research on social welfare policy and social welfare history takes a national approach, with perhaps a nod to developments in other countries. In choosing a continental focus for this encyclopedia, the editors hoped to encourage, in a small way, cross-national and comparative research. We hope that readers will find the encyclopedia a convenient guide and starting point for investigations of the development of social welfare history in any one of the three countries as well as for comparative studies.

## *Organization and Themes*

The entries in the encyclopedia are, for the most part, chronological. In some cases, the entries are *sui generis*, unique to a particular country. In other cases, where appropriate, similar entries on two or on all three countries have been grouped together to facilitate cross-national comparisons. In addition, a Reader's Guide is provided, which groups entries by country and by topic.

Research Guides to studying social welfare history in Canada, Mexico, and the United States are provided in an appendix. Written by archivists, these guides introduce the reader to resources for further research, including archival depositories and printed primary sources in social welfare history in each of the three countries. Chronologies of important events in social welfare that are described in the entries are

also provided. A chronology is presented for each of the three countries covered in this volume so that the reader can trace events in one country or compare developments in two or three countries at various points in time.

### *Editorial Process*

Social work librarian Ruth Britton suggested a need for this encyclopedia. Surveying standard reference works showed a void in this area; hence, the project began. In planning this project, it was decided early on that its scope should be North American, including Canada, Mexico, and the United States. Our intention was to provide readers with information about how these three nations have dealt with social welfare issues, some similar across borders, others unique, as well as to describe important events, developments and the lives and work of some key contributors to social welfare. Associate editors for Canada and Mexico, both of them experts in the history of social welfare in those countries, were invited to join the project and contributors, both established and emerging scholars, were recruited.

Our intention was to bring together in one source basic information about themes, issues, events, and personalities that shaped North American social welfare, broadly conceived. In deciding what to include, we were selective, admitting early on that we could not cover every issue, policy, or personality that might be relevant. In particular, it was not possible to provide as much detail on the development of the helping professions, in particular social work, as some readers may wish. We hope the final product will provide readers with valuable information about national as well as cross-national social welfare history. And we hope that our work will encourage further study in this rich and complex field. The history of North American social welfare shows how three nations, each with a complex history, have chosen to deal with the provision of social welfare programs and services to their populations. Social welfare decisions in the past have affected the well-being of millions of people and individual and collective social welfare in the future remain a fundamental concern for all nations.

### *Acknowledgments*

The editors are grateful for the opportunity to work together on this project. The editors' names are presented in alphabetical order and each of us appreciates the contribution of the other. We also wish to acknowledge the work of our Associate Editors for Canada and Mexico, John Graham and Enrique Ochoa, respectively, for their critical work in identifying experts to prepare entries and in providing editorial guidance to the contributors. We are grateful, too, to Associate Editor Ruth Britton, librarian emeritus of the University of Southern California School of Social Work, who first suggested the need for this project, and for her keen suggestions and editorial skills. And, of course, this project could not have been completed without the generous commitment of time and expertise by the authors of our many entries. The hard work of keeping track of authors' entries and generally keeping the project on track was done by our able editorial assistants, both of them students in the PhD Program in Social Work at the University of Alabama, Benson Chisanga and Russell Bennett. It is appropriate to admit that without their good work this project might not have been completed. Staff members of Sage Publications, in particular Sara Tauber, Rolf Janke, and Kristen Gibson, worked tirelessly and patiently with us to bring this work to completion. We are indebted to them. Our employing institutions, Michigan State University and the University of Alabama, generously provided time for editorial work and resources for scholarship. We particularly want to thank the administrators who provided release time for research and tangible resources. John Herrick would like to thank his colleagues in the College of Social Science and the School of Social Work for their unflagging support and encouragement and for the patient concern and support of his wife, Kathleen. Paul Stuart would like to thank his wife, Joan E. Esser-Stuart, for her assistance and support, as well as University of Alabama colleagues, including Provost Judy Bonner, Dean James P. Adams, Jr., and Jordan Kosberg, former chair of the PhD program, for the provision of time and resources in support of this project.