

**AN AMERICAN VILLAGE COMMUNITY:  
A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF VILLAGE  
ASSOCIATION IN VIEW OF  
THE PROBLEM: WHAT DOES THE LOCAL  
COMMUNITY DO TO ITSELF TO  
INCREASE ITS GROUP EFFICIENCY?**

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An American Village Community: A Sociological Study of Village Association in view of the problem: what does the local community do to itself to increase its group efficiency? by Frederick Judson Soule

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**FREDERICK JUDSON SOULE**

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# AN AMERICAN VILLAGE COMMUNITY

A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF VILLAGE ASSOCIATION IN VIEW OF THE  
PROBLEM: WHAT DOES THE LOCAL COMMUNITY DO *to itself*  
TO INCREASE ITS GROUP EFFICIENCY?

BY

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Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
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## PREFACE

This study is the result of an investigation first undertaken in preparation of a Master's essay, submitted at Columbia University, April, 1909. Time and purpose did not then permit as detailed a discussion as was warranted. The scope of the Doctor's dissertation, however, has afforded opportunity for a more extended presentation. During the summer of 1909 the investigation previously begun was completed, and such data were retained as bore directly on the problem suggested by Professor Franklin Henry Giddings: What does the local community do *to itself* to increase its group efficiency?

Although the collection of data has been limited to the past two years, my observation of the activities and tendencies of the community (which for convenience is called Blankton) has extended over the past decade, during which time I have been intimately associated with the citizens and have watched with interest the increase of the social population, the development of the social mind, and the expansion of group coöperation for public welfare. I am therefore able to present many facts from my own experience. Testimony of old residents has also been procured. But for most of the data I have had recourse to the following sources: a history of the town from its early years to 1884; the files of two newspapers, "The Record," 1884-1909, and "The Times," 1896-1909; tax records; census reports; minutes of industrial and economic associations; council proceedings; school reports; college bulletins; minutes of churches and subordinate organizations; and minutes, reports, and records of various other voluntary associations.

I am indebted to many friends and acquaintances who have assisted me in the collection of material; to Professor Giddings, who has directed my study; and to Mr. Henry Wischkaemper, who has assisted me in the preparation of my manuscript.

F. J. S.

New York, December 30, 1909.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>I. INTRODUCTION: THE SOCIAL POPULATION</b> .....	7-11
Situation .....	7
Aggregation and Status.....	7
Demotic Composition .....	9
Historic Periods .....	10
<b>II. DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRY</b> .....	11-23
Communal Forces .....	11
Board of Trade.....	14
A Dominant Man.....	16
Reactions of Industrial Effort.....	19
<b>III. EFFORT FOR GOOD GOVERNMENT</b> .....	23-31
Social Interest .....	23
Form of Government.....	24
Elections .....	25
Agency of Social Pressure.....	27
Functions of the Governing Board.....	27
Results .....	31
<b>IV. EFFORT FOR PUBLIC WELFARE</b> .....	31-37
Civic Improvement League.....	32
Building and Loan Association.....	35
Role of the Newspaper.....	35
<b>V. RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY</b> .....	37-47
Coöperation in Institutionalized Religion.....	37
Socializing and Unsocializing Effects.....	41
<b>VI. EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY</b> .....	47-52
Growth of School System.....	47
Group Stimulus .....	49
External Stimulus .....	50
<b>VII. TYPES OF SOCIAL PLEASURE</b> .....	52-66
Pleasures of Physical Activity.....	52
Pleasures of Receptive Sensation.....	56
Pleasures of Emotion.....	61
Pleasures of Ideation and Thought.....	64
<b>VIII. UNORGANIZED SOCIAL CONTROL</b> .....	66-85
Public Opinion .....	66
Belief .....	68
Conventionality .....	72
Gossip .....	74
Moral Valuation .....	74
Asceticism .....	78
Custom: Social Inertia.....	79
<b>IX. CONCLUSION: SUMMARY</b> .....	86-88

## AN AMERICAN VILLAGE COMMUNITY

### I

#### Introduction: The Social Population

##### *Situation*

The community studied, like many others of the Great Lake Region, has developed within the past half-century, but being distant from a metropolis, its significance is greater than its population of 3000 might justify. About it are several hamlets and villages, two of which rival its industrial primacy. Courting distinction among these communities, it has officially designated itself a City.

The natural features of the district may be mentioned briefly. The elevation is 750 feet. The surface is slightly rolling, well drained by a small stream, and free from swamps. Artesian wells supply mineral water of medicinal qualities. The soil is prevailingly a clay loam, affording abundant opportunity for agriculture. There are no extremes of climate. (See table I.) The average temperature is 46.08°C. The winter is long, extending approximately from November 10 to March 20, and brings heavy fall of snow. Gales are infrequent, hail storms occasional, and electric storms common, especially in May.

##### *Aggregation and Status*

Blankton was surveyed and plotted in 1858. A settlement preceded this, however, by five years, when Mr. E—— established a lumber mill and deliberately stimulated a congregation of population. In 1858 the group formed a village organization and took its present name, having previously been called E——'s Mills. It was not incorporated until 1872.



# FO VINO AMORALIAO

There were several conditions determining location. Timber was abundant, consisting of pine largely, but also of maple, beech, oak, ash, basswood, elm, hickory, and hemlock. There was an extensive supply even in 1884, when the County Historical Record reported that millions of feet were yet to be marketed. A stream was accessible for the transportation of logs. The soil gave promise of agriculture after the lumbering stage, a prospect which was justified, for in 1906 the county was judged the best agricultural section of the state. Finally, means of communication were favorable enough to attract settlers, though by no means convenient. The nearest village upon a railroad was 30 miles away, the road over which mail and provisions were brought being little more than a trail, and the trip by stage requiring three days. By 1861 the founder of the village had secured sufficient state aid for improving the communication.

TABLE I, SHOWING WEATHER REPORT FOR 1908.

	January.	February.	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.
Mean Temperature (C.)	22	18	32.5	46	57.5	67	71	67	66	53.5	38	26
Total Precipitation	2.32	4.23	1.85	2.68	8.41	9.99	4.21	2.57	.65	.80	2.42	2.49
Total Snow (inches)	20	35	6	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	23.5
No. of Days Clear	15	19	11	11	18	20	18	21	16	15	16	11
No. Days Part Cloudy	5	5	9	8	13	10	8	9	12	10	14	14
No. of Days Cloudy	7	13	12	11	8	10	8	8	9	4	10	14
No. of Days Thunder Storms	.....	.....	.....	.....	0	.....	2	1	.....	.....	1	.....
No. of Days Hail	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
No. Days Killing Frost	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1	.....	.....	.....

After 1860 the community grew with regularity for a decade, on account of the increase of the lumber industry, but the next decade was more static because of the decline in the industry. (See table II.) With the beginning of agricultural pursuits and the systematizing of group cooperation after 1880, the community entered upon a period of continuous development.

The early growth of population was largely by congregation

from neighboring villages and cities. From 1870 to 1880 a genetic growth prevailed, a foreign born immigrant being almost unknown in the community previous to 1884. The nationalities represented among the second and third generation settlers were primarily English, Irish, and French.

TABLE II, SHOWING INCREASE OF POPULATION.

1860.....	70	1865.....	200*
1870.....	404	1875.....	425
1880.....	467	1885.....	600
1890.....	1,646	1896.....	1,800
1900.....	2,047	1906.....	2,500
1900.....			3,000†

\*Figures for half-decades are best attested estimates.

†Based on a personal calculation, sanctioned by city officials.

The economic status of the early population was low. The founder of the village was reported to control all the wealth, but his total estate did not exceed \$10,000. Extreme poverty so prevailed that in a famine resulting from fire and financial depression in 1859 Mr. E— proved almost sole benefactor to the distressed. The population dwelt in log houses or frame shells and, according to the report of a school teacher, "lived on corn bread, venison, leeks, vinegar pie, and corn coffee." By 1875 there were a dozen places of business, established trades, and a comfortable supply of wealth, most families owning homes valued at an average of \$500.

#### *Demotic Composition*

The developing population has resulted in an intermingling of nine races. (See table III.) It will be observed that 1.7% is first generation, 4.5% second, and 93.8% third or over. There have been two primary causes of the small percentage of foreign born. On the one hand the community is small and isolated. Two cities of 40,000, less than 50 miles away, have large percentages of both first and second generation immigrants. On the other hand demand for labor, especially in manufacturing, has been supplied by local or neighboring population. Of the 93.8% a large proportion could be shown to be of many genera-

tions' citizenship. A goodly number of families trace their history to the early colonial period, being for the most part of New England parentage.

It is to be noted in the table that the newer immigration from Europe, that is the Italian, Hungarian, Polish, and Slav, has not touched the city except in the case of the Italian, and that very insignificantly.

TABLE III, SHOWING DEMOTIC COMPOSITION IN 1909.

Nationality.*	First Generation.	Second Generation.	Third Generation or Over.
English .....		1.4%	40.4%
German .....	.4	.5	22.1
Welsh .....			11.8
Irish .....	.6	1.3	6.1
Swedish .....			5.2
French .....			3.3
Scotch .....		.4	2.2
Jewish .....	.2	.3	1.5
Italian .....	.4		.4
Negro .....			.5

\*The calculation is formed on the basis of the writer's personal knowledge of a large part of the population, and also on the basis of family names. Conclusions are therefore only approximate, and in some cases arbitrary, but on the whole are nearly correct.

### *Historic Periods*

The history of Blankton has two clearly marked periods, 1853-1883 and 1884-1909. The first was characterized by limited communication and association, by simple and direct coöperation, and by an undeveloped communal consciousness. The primary industrial interest was lumbering, which fostered individual enterprise to the subordination of social activity, on the one hand demanding a maximum expenditure of energy and on the other hand affording satisfaction of needs. The second period was characterized by developing communication and association, by indirect and complex coöperation, and by wide-spread social activity. The chief industrial interests were agriculture and manufacturing, which gave stimulus to group effort. The impetus of a dominant man and competition with rival villages were other significant causes. A communal consciousness, first evident in 1879, arose to clear expression in 1884. The need of