

CHARITY
ORGANISATION
SOCIETY OF
NEW YORK

Annual Reports

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**CHARITY ORGANISATION
SOCIETY OF NEW YORK,
ANNUAL REPORT**

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Harvester Microform are proud to make available the microform publication of a complete run of the Reports of the Charity Organisation Society of New York, 1883-1914, drawn from the British Library of Political and Economic Science, London, New York Public Library.

The Reports of the Charity Organisation Society of New York, 1883-1914 form Series One of the wide-ranging programme entitled American Urban Life and Health. This programme seeks to make available original source material on the crisis in American urban life and health in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Further parts of the programme will cover other regions - making possible a comparative nationwide study.

New York was especially vulnerable. Castle Garden and the Ellis Island were the golden gates to America for millions of European immigrants anxious to claim the free land still available at the end of the nineteenth century. Between the years 1881 and 1890 more than five million new citizens arrived an increase in the total population of more than 10% in less than a decade.

The Charity Organisation Society was set up to cope with the massive problems created by this dramatic growth in population. At the centre of reform work, its Reports provide a detailed and revealing account of living conditions, and describe investigations of health, industry, delinquency, insanity and crime.

Uncontrolled real estate development, political corruption and economic depression were some of the causes of the poverty and social injustice, against which the Charity Organisation battled. Its Reports cover every issue of social concern - overcrowding, wretched housing, inadequate schooling, high and exploitation in the work market.

Economic depression exacerbated the problems. The crash of the New York City stock market in 1893 created four years of intense poverty. "Sweat shops" were adopted by the emerging Labour Movement as a symbol of social injustice. Events such as the 1884 Tailors' Strike in New York City, combined with the pressure group politics of the Charity Organisation Society, forced government to pioneer new labour, women and child protection laws. The Organisation contributed to the new optimism that surged through America from 1900 onwards - and its reforms were an essential part of the new Progressive Era.

In 1901 Theodore Roosevelt, a native New Yorker and former New York Police Commissioner, became President of the Organisation. The major anti-trust and social reform legislation that he enacted were heavily influenced by the problems of New York and the manner in which they were faced. These problems can be studied at first hand, using the Charity Organisation Society Reports.

The Reports of the Charity Organisation Society are a first-hand record of American urban life in the late 19th century and in the Progressive Era. As such, they form a key resource for all urban social, labour and medical historians.

CHARITY ORGANISATION SOCIETY OF NEW YORK: ANNUAL REPORTS

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