

# **FIELD WORK AND SOCIAL RESEARCH**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649582563

Field Work and Social Research by F. Stuart Chapin

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**F. STUART CHAPIN**

**FIELD WORK AND  
SOCIAL RESEARCH**



The Century Social Science Series

**FIELD WORK  
AND  
SOCIAL RESEARCH**

BY

**F. STUART CHAPIN, Ph.D.**

PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIOLOGY, SMITH COLLEGE,  
DIRECTOR OF THE SMITH COLLEGE TRAINING  
SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL WORK

Author of "An Introduction to the Study of Social  
Evolution," "An Historical Introduction  
to Social Economy," etc.



NEW YORK  
THE CENTURY CO.

1920

ANDOVER-HARVARD  
THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY  
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

H49.760

Copyright, 1920, by  
THE CENTURY CO.

TO

*FRANKLIN HENRY GIDDINGS*

*Great teacher and pioneer leader in the scientific  
study of society, whose rare ability to arouse  
and challenge his student's thought has  
stimulated the use of scientific  
method in the study of  
social phenomena*





## PREFACE

A SCIENTIFIC technique has been developed in the field work of the social sciences. Scattered through the reports of private investigating agencies and government commissions there is a vast amount of valuable information on methods of making scientific investigations of social conditions by first hand contact with the facts—that is, by field work. This book gathers together the well tested methods and techniques and attempts to present them in an accurate and practical form. The treatment is not exhaustive, yet it is believed that all of the significant points are touched upon with sufficient detail to make the book useful as a manual to field workers. The theoretical principles underlying scientific method applied to the investigation of social conditions are outlined with sufficient thoroughness to make the book suggestive to students.

The methodology of field work is developed in chronological order as the reader follows the successive chapters of the book. The material is, however, so arranged in chapters and under text headings and by index, that the reader will not have to wade through a mass of descriptive material to find some detail of technique in which he is especially interested.

## PREFACE

Actual field work investigations of many different kinds are described in considerable detail and the theoretic principles underlying procedure are so stated that the practice may be critically examined in the light of well-established methods.

F. STUART CHAPIN

Northampton, Mass.  
May, 1920

# CONTENTS

## PART I

### THE APPROACH TO FIELD WORK

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	THE PLACE OF FIELD WORK IN SOCIAL RESEARCH . . . . .	3- 18
	Science Is Impartial . . . . .	4
	The Tasks of Science . . . . .	4- 5
	The Inductive Method . . . . .	6- 11
	Field Work and the Inductive Method . . . . .	11- 16
	Field Work in Social Research . . . . .	16- 18
	Selected References . . . . .	18
II	CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF DOCUMENTARY SOURCES PRECEDES GOOD FIELD WORK . . . . .	19- 45
	The Sceptical Attitude Toward Documents . . . . .	19- 20
	The Historical Method . . . . .	20- 21
	External Criticism . . . . .	21- 24
	Internal Criticism . . . . .	24- 26
	The Author's Good Faith and Accuracy . . . . .	26- 36
	Summary of Principles of Criticism . . . . .	36- 38
	Partial List of Common Documentary Sources . . . . .	38- 45
	Selected References . . . . .	45

## PART II

### SCOPE AND ORGANIZATION OF FIELD WORK

III	TYPES OF FIELD WORK AND THEIR PROBLEMS . . . . .	46- 72
	The Three Types of Field Work . . . . .	46- 47
	Problems of Field Work . . . . .	47- 51