

Indiana's Yield of Eminent People Compared with that of Nearby States

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This study was instigated partly by a comment by Elmer Davis (1890-1958) in his excellent discussion of Indiana at the celebration in Washington, D. C., of the 140th anniversary of statehood. This highly distinguished Hoosier-born journalist, newscaster, and public official observed that Indiana had produced many high-class second-rate men but very few first-rate ones. He wondered why. Indiana has been for more than a century one of the more populous of the states, ranking from sixth to twelfth, one of the more prosperous states, and in many respects one of the most fortunate. In 1962 a much-publicized federal declaration that Indiana has received recently notably less than its due share of federal contracts and grants "because it does not have its share of highly competent men," has focused attention upon this problem.

Long recognized has been the fact that many of our more capable people have left the state because better opportunities for them were available elsewhere. This is true, for example, of the two Hoosiers who have won Nobel prizes, W. M. Stanley and H. C. Urey, chemists, and of those elected to the National Academy of Sciences, and most of those starred in *American Men of Science*.

The present study started with geologists and geographers. The Geological Society of America has been recognized almost since its inception in 1889 as a world leader, and its presidents are distinguished men, practically all members of the National Academy of Sciences. Indiana was the birthplace of only one (C. P. Berkey), while Ohio yielded 5; Missouri and Minnesota, 3 each; Illinois, Wisconsin and West Virginia, 2 each; and Kentucky, Tennessee and Iowa, one each; and Ontario, 5. Moreover the one born in Indiana left the state as a boy. By contrast Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, Wisconsin, and Minnesota each not only yielded one to several of these eminent people but their universities graduated and employed two or more of them for lengthy periods.

The Association of American Geographers, established in 1904, was until 1948 somewhat comparable with the G.S.A. although less distinguished. No native of Indiana has been president of the A.A.G. and only one native has been vice-president (C. M. Zierer, I.U. '22, '23). By contrast, Kentucky was the birthstate of 2 A.A.G. presidents; Ohio of 4 presidents and 3 vice-presidents; Michigan of 6 presidents and 3 vice-presidents; Illinois of 5 presidents and 6 vice-presidents; Wisconsin of 2 presidents and 3 vice-presidents; and Minnesota and Missouri each of 2 presidents; and Iowa and Ontario each of one.

Combining the number of presidents of the G.S.A. and presidents and vice-presidents of the A.A.G. born in each state, the totals are: Indiana 2, Kentucky 3, Missouri 5, Ohio 12, Illinois 13, Michigan 9, Wisconsin 7, Minnesota 5, Iowa 2, Ontario 6.

Supplementary to these studies of eminent geologists and geographers, several other types of notables were studied: No native of Indiana has been *president of the United States* whereas 7 natives of Ohio have been, and one each of Kentucky, Missouri and Iowa. Even more significant, because larger numbers are involved, and the lack of fortuitous circumstances often involved in the election of presidents of the United States, are the *presidents of the American Association for the Advancement of Science*: No native of Indiana has been president of the AAAS, while Ohio yielded 11, Michigan 4, Illinois 6, Kentucky 2, Missouri 1, and Ontario 2. No native of Indiana, born since 1820, has been *president of the American Bar Association* (George Wright, 1887). Only three Hoosiers have been presidents of the *American Historical Association* (Edward Eggleston, 1900; C. A. Beard, 1933; James G. Randall, 1952). Illinois yielded 5, Ohio 3, Iowa 2, Wisconsin 3. Of the *American Chemical Society*, Indiana yielded only one before 1939 (Harvey W. Wiley, 1893) but 5 since then (Charles A. Kraus, 1939, W. A. Noyes Jr., 1947; E. C. Britton, 1952; John C. Warner, 1956; Arthur Cope, 1964). Ohio yielded 5, Illinois 5. Of the *Ecological Society of America*, Indiana yielded 3 (C. Juday, 1927; W. C. Allee, 1929; S. A. Cain, 1958), Illinois yielded 6, Michigan 4, Ohio 4, Iowa 3, Nebraska 3, Minnesota 2. Of the *American Physical Society* Indiana yielded 2 (E. Merritt, 1914; L. A. DuBridge 1947), Ohio yielded 8, Illinois 3, Michigan 2, Wisconsin 1, Iowa 1. Of the *American Botanical Society* Indiana yielded 2 (C. A. Barnes, 1903; J. R. Schramm, 1925). Michigan yielded 9, Illinois 3, Wisconsin 3, Nebraska 2, Ohio 1. Of the *American Psychological Association*, Indiana yielded 6 (W. L. Bryan, 1903; Lewis Terman, 1923; J. F. Dashiell, 1938; D. W. Allport, 1939; C. P. Stone, 1942; and E. L. Kelly, 1955). Illinois yielded 6, Ohio 4, Nebraska 4, Minnesota 1, Iowa 1. Of the *American Society of Zoologists* Indiana yielded 5 (Jacob Reighard, 1903; C. Grave, 1928; Fernandus Payne, 1931; W. C. Allee, 1936; V. C. Twitty, 1959). Illinois yielded 8, Ohio 4, Michigan 3, Iowa 3, Wisconsin 1, Nebraska 1. Of the *National Education Association* Indiana yielded 8 (J. Swain, 1914; Robt. Aley, 1917; J. H. Newlin, 1925; Henry Lester Smith, 1935; O. C. Pratt, 1936; Donald DuShane, 1940; Edith Joynes, 1943; Robert Wyatt, 1963). Illinois yielded 7, Ohio 7, Iowa 2, Minnesota 1, and Missouri 2.

These various totals of the far greater yield of eminent people from states near Indiana than from Indiana prove that Indiana, despite its advantages, has unquestionably failed to produce its share of outstanding men. Why? In population totals, Indiana has been surpassed among these states only by Illinois and Ohio and they only slightly and recently. Its average per capita income has been above, and its agricultural and other natural resources are comparable with those of these other states. It has had several high-quality institutions of higher learning.

The data given in this article clearly substantiate Elmer Davis' observation that Indiana has yielded few first-rate men. He rightly wondered why. My 44 years of study of Indiana and its more notable people (including a volume *Indiana Scientists* published by the Academy) permit me to list contributing factors.

Highly significant is the smaller percentage of Indiana's people who are seriously interested in scholarly achievement. Unfortunately there is an excessive amount of interest in basketball, football, local politics, fraternities, sororities, local clubs, and local prestige. Few people in Indiana care earnestly for more than prompt victories and local recognition. Many even "leading citizens" think that people who are sketched (because of their achievements) in *Who's Who in America*, for example, are "queer," and most Hoosiers almost scorn people who win wide recognition. What counts with most Hoosiers is local recognition or materialistic successes. These ideals are held widely in other states, but somewhat less universally in states near Indiana than here.

The financial support of Indiana's state universities and colleges has been conspicuously less generous than that received by the state institutions of nearby states. This fact reflects a lesser appreciation on the part of key members of the legislature of the great value of higher education and of the great value to Indiana of affording excellent higher education to those qualified. The fact that most of the especially talented young people leave Indiana to accept positions where their talents and skills are better recognized and rewarded is a really serious loss to Indiana.

What can we individually do to improve Indiana's standing? As suggested in my address as president of the Academy, and elsewhere, we should strive more actively to encourage young people and our fellow workers, and should do what we can to increase respect for Indiana, its educational institutions, and especially scholarly endeavors. Encouragement to be effective requires opportunities. Words are not enough.