

## A Southward Decline in the Yield of Eminent Americans Illustrated and Partly Explained

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The notable departure from areal uniformity in the distribution of the birthplaces of eminent Americans justifies some examples and possible explanations.

The present paper deals with the presidents of a dozen distinguished scholarly organizations plus the presidents of the United States. Its initiation was stimulated by a declaration by an exceptionally qualified native of Indiana that relatively few men of high distinction were born in Indiana. Lists were assembled of those born in each state who became eminent as indicated by their election as president.

The 12 organizations here considered, with the year of their founding, are: American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1848; National Education Association, 1857; American Chemical Society, 1876; American Bar Association, 1878; American Historical Society, 1884; Geological Society of America, 1889; American Society of Zoologists, 1890; American Psychological Association, 1892; American Botanical Society, 1894; American Physical Society, 1899; Association of American Geographers, 1904; Ecological Society of America, 1916.

The total number of presidents here considered is almost 900, of whom 75 were foreign-born (26 in Canada).

The states which yielded most of these presidents were: New York, 119; Massachusetts, 86; Ohio, 59; Illinois, 58; Pennsylvania, 56; Indiana, 36; Michigan, 29; Connecticut, 25; New Jersey and Iowa, 21 each; Wisconsin, 19; Virginia, 17; Maine and Missouri, 16; Minnesota, Nebraska and California, 12; New Hampshire, 11; Kentucky and Maryland, 10; Vermont and Kansas, 9; West Virginia, Georgia and Washington, 7; South Carolina, North Carolina and Tennessee, 6; Alabama and Utah, 5; Rhode Island and Mississippi, 4; Colorado, 3; Delaware, Louisiana, New Mexico, North Dakota and Oregon, each 2. Six states had one each. Only 5 of the 50 states yielded none (Alaska, Arizona, Nevada, Oklahoma, Florida).

Of the 34 presidents of the United States, 8 were born in Virginia; 7 in Ohio; 4 in New York; 3 in Massachusetts; 2 in Vermont and North Carolina; and 1 each in New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Kentucky, Missouri, Iowa and Texas. Of earlier ones, 11 were born in the South but of the later ones only 2: Wilson (Virginia) and Eisenhower (Texas).

The average southward decline in the birthplaces of the presidents here considered is striking. This applies to each of the 13 groups. The states bordering Canada yielded 14 U. S. presidents and 339 others; the tier of states next south of those bordering Canada yielded 5 U. S. presidents and 233 other presidents; the Middle Atlantic states, 6 and 200; the South Atlantic states, 11 and 48; the East North Central states, 7 and 163; the South Central states (with about one-fifth of the na-

tion's population 1840-1900) yielded 2 U. S. presidents (Lincoln and Eisenhower) and 43 other presidents. The northern tier of Southern states yielded 9 U. S. presidents (8 from Virginia) and 46 others. The Deep South yielded 4 U. S. presidents and 45 others.

Statisticians declared that when several independent groups of data reveal the same trend, it is highly likely that fundamental influences are operating. The data here considered are sufficient to prove the existence of some powerful influences.

One certainly significant factor affecting the number of eminent people born in any area is the total population. Several of the states which yielded relatively many presidents were comparatively populous when the presidents were born. For example, Virginia had about twice as many people in 1790 as did any other state and was not surpassed by Pennsylvania or New York until after 1810. In 1860 (approximately the median date of the birth of the older presidents here studied) the most populous states were New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Virginia, Indiana, Tennessee, Georgia, Kentucky, and Missouri. The most populous states in 1890 (approximately the date of the younger of the presidents here discussed) were New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, Missouri, Texas, Massachusetts, Indiana, Michigan, Virginia, Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Most of the states of small population yielded few presidents. The Rocky Mountain and Pacific states yielded only 12 and 21, but in proportion to population some states did remarkably well; for example, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Minnesota, and Nebraska.

Before discussing various other influences which help explain areal contrasts in yields, the 12 organizations will each be considered partly because some interesting lights are revealed.

The most distinguished of these organizations is the *American Association for the Advancement of Science*, founded in 1848. The 114 presidents were born predominantly in the North. The leading states were Massachusetts with 22; New York, 22; Ohio, 11; Pennsylvania, 8; Illinois, 6; Connecticut, 5; Michigan and Wisconsin, each 4; New Jersey, 3; 2 each from Maine, New Hampshire, Kentucky, Georgia; and 1 each from Delaware, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, South Carolina, Washington. Of the 3 born in the Deep South, 2, the LeConte brothers, were sons of a recent immigrant from Switzerland to the University of Georgia. Canada yielded 4, Germany, 3, and one each came from China, England, Scotland, Serbia, Sweden and Switzerland. New England with 31 was by far the most productive Census Bureau Region relative to population. Of the South's 5, two served before 1900, 2 since 1942. Of the 8 born in Europe, 6 were born in the northern fringe of the continent.

A predominant share of these especially distinguished scientists had part of their training in famous northern universities and many of them held positions therein.

The second oldest organization here considered is the *National Education Association*, founded in 1857. Although most of the 102 presidents are highly distinguished, several were teachers or principals rather than prominent educators. Recently several women have been

elected. The leading states as to birthplaces are New York, 10; Massachusetts and Indiana, 8; Ohio and Illinois, 7; Pennsylvania, 6; New Hampshire, 4; Connecticut, West Virginia, Tennessee, New Jersey, Virginia, 3; 2 each from Maine, Vermont, Iowa, Missouri, Georgia, Kansas, Washington; and one each from 7 states. Only 4 were foreign-born (2 in Ireland, and 1 each in England and Germany). Twenty of these presidents were natives of New England and many of those born in New York, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, etc., had some Yankee ancestors. Doubtless significant is the fact that New England had the first public schools, first normal schools, first colleges and universities. Only 6 presidents were born in the Upper South (Virginia to Kentucky) and only 7 in the rest of the South. Ten of these 13 Southerners were elected after 1915.

The *American Bar Association*, founded in 1878, has had among its 85 presidents numerous highly distinguished men including President W. H. Taft. The states in which most were born were New York, 16; Pennsylvania, 7; Virginia and Illinois, 5; Massachusetts, 4; Connecticut, New Jersey, Ohio, Alabama, and Mississippi, 3; 2 each were born in Maine, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Texas and Wisconsin; 1 each were born in 13 other states. Only 2 were foreign-born (England and Germany). By U. S. regions, the Middle Atlantic States was the birthplace of 26; the Midwest of 18; the northern margin of the South of 10; the Deep South of 15; New England of 10, the West of 3. In proportion to population at the average date of birth of these presidents, New England and upstate New York led by a wide margin and the South rated lowest.

The *American Historical Society*, founded in 1884, had as its president Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and many other highly eminent men. Eighteen of the 78 were born in Massachusetts; 8 in New York (mostly upstate); 6 in Pennsylvania; 4 each in Virginia and Illinois; 3 in Indiana; 2 each in Vermont, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Ohio, Wisconsin and Iowa; and 1 each in 5 other states. Only one was born south of Virginia, in contrast with 21 in New England and 12 in the Midwest. Four were foreign-born (Scotland, England, France and Russia).

Of the 74 presidents of the *American Chemical Society* (founded in 1876) 11 were born in Massachusetts; 10 in New York; 6 in Pennsylvania; 6 in Indiana; 5 each in Ohio, Illinois, and New Jersey; 2 in Kansas; and one each in 13 states and 10 foreign countries. The states bordering Canada yielded about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the native-born; the northern tier of the South, 4; the rest of the South, 3. The presidents elected since 1930 have come largely from the Midwest, but in proportion to population New England continued to lead. Universities especially significant in the training of chemists were Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Michigan, Chicago, Illinois, Ohio, and California.

Of the 49 presidents of the *American Physical Society*, the leading birthstates were Ohio, 8; Massachusetts and New York, 5; Illinois, 3; Connecticut, Indiana, and Michigan, 2 each; 11 states had 1 each (only 1 in the South). Ten were foreign-born (half of the presidents elected since 1943). Universities which were prominent in the training of

physicists were Harvard, M.I.T., Yale, Princeton, Chicago and California. Several were employed by these universities or by Bell Telephone Co. or by the U. S. Bureau of Standards.

Of the 66 presidents of the *Botanical Society of America* 19 were born in New York; 9 in Michigan; 4 each in Massachusetts and Illinois; 3 each in Indiana, Wisconsin, and Iowa; 2 each in Maine, Nebraska and Missouri; and 1 each in 4 states. The South yielded 2; Canada, 2; other foreign lands, 5. The high ranks of New York and Michigan are related to stimulating teaching of botany for decades at Cornell and Columbia and at Michigan and its agricultural college. As to those from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Wisconsin, J. M. Coulter (Chicago) helped train several future presidents.

Of the 47 presidents of the *Ecological Society of America*, Illinois yielded 6; New York, 5; Ohio and Michigan, 4; Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Iowa and Nebraska, 3 each; Minnesota and Texas, 2 each; and 5 states had 1 each. Curious is the fact that only 2 of the 47 ecologists were born in sizable cities, none in Boston, New York, Philadelphia or Chicago, which cities yielded relatively many distinguished men. Only 1 of the ecologists was foreign-born. Ten of the 47 were students of H. C. Cowles at Chicago, who was successively president of the organizations of geographers, ecologists, and botanists here studied.

Of the 78 presidents of the *American Society of Zoologists*, 14 were natives of New York; 8 of Illinois; 5 of Indiana; 4 each of Maryland, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Ohio; 3 each of Connecticut and Iowa; 2 each of Massachusetts and Wisconsin. Three came from the Deep South; 7 were foreign-born (6 of them president since 1946). (Three of Indiana's 5 reflect the influence of David Starr Jordan during his fertile years in Indiana, as do 6 other presidents in education, geology, botany, psychology.)

The *American Psychological Association* has had among its 67 presidents several highly eminent men including William James, John Dewey, Lewis Terman, and 2 presidents of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (Cattell and Thorndike). The leading states are: Pennsylvania, Indiana and Illinois with 6 each; Massachusetts, New York and California, each 5; Ohio and Nebraska, 4; Iowa, 3; Vermont, New Jersey, South Carolina and Minnesota, 2 each; and 1 each from Connecticut, Virginia, West Virginia, Missouri, Wisconsin, Utah, Wyoming, North Dakota; 2 each from Canada and India; and 4 other foreign-born. The relatively high yield from the northeastern states is related to the influence of professors at Columbia, Harvard and Clark. The South yielded 4, 2 from South Carolina. The yield from the West, especially California, is notable (12). Indiana's high rank reflects the influence of W. L. Bryan, president of Indiana University and an early president of this association.

The *Geological Society of America* had of its 73 presidents 14 born in New York (mostly upstate); Massachusetts, 8; Ohio, 5; Pennsylvania and California, 4 each; 3 each from Minnesota and Missouri; and 2 each from West Virginia, Illinois, Wisconsin, Texas and Washington. Nine states each yielded 1. Nine were born in Canada (5 in Ontario).

The states bordering Canada yielded 38; the Midwest 18; the Pacific states 6. Of the 8 born in the South, 2 came from West Virginia, 2 from Texas, and 1 from Kentucky. The eminence of this group of presidents is revealed partly by the fact that 8 of them became president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Many of the geologists were partly trained at Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Yale, Columbia, Chicago, Wisconsin and California. Many of them were partly employed by these universities and by the U. S. or Canadian Geological Survey. Of the 4 born in Europe, Scotland yielded 2, Sweden 1 and northern Germany 1.

Of the 64 presidents of the *Association of American Geographers*, 7 each were born in Massachusetts, New York and Michigan; 6 in Ohio; 5 in Illinois; 3 in Pennsylvania; and 2 each in Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Washington; and 1 in each of 6 western states and 3 others. By latitudinal zones, 3 were born in Canada; the states bordering or near Canada yielded 34 of the 56 native Americans. The most northern tier of Southern states yielded 5; the Deep South 1. The relatively large number from Massachusetts and New York reflects the influence of W. M. Davis at Harvard (the founder of the Association). The Michigan total reflects the influence of a remarkably stimulating teacher at the state normal school at Ypsilanti, Mark Jefferson, 4 of whose students became president. R. D. Salisbury at Chicago contributed to the advanced training of 12.

#### Further Probable Explanations

For each of the groups studied there is an average southward decline in yield which is so significant that possible explanations are well worth consideration.

Southward changes in climate are considerable and have had varied consequences. The climate of the South is more often "enervating" than is that of the North, which is more "stimulating," putting a premium upon human vigor, persistence and planning.

The indirect influences of the climate are vastly more significant than are the direct ones. They have led to differences in the types of agriculture and other methods of winning a livelihood, also in the development of transportation and communication facilities, and in the type of urbanization.

In the U. S. east of the Rocky Mountains there is an appreciable latitudinal difference in social ideals. Many more of the Southerners are "easy-going," sociable rather than aggressive, and far less ambitious to "get ahead" than is true of many of the Northerners. Also certain types of people are relatively more numerous in the North than in the South, including those with some Yankee, Scotch, early German, or Scandinavian ancestry. Conversely, Negroes and "poor whites" are far more numerous in the South than in the North. None of these presidents was a Negro, and almost none were from families which were economically notably below the local average.

Differences in education certainly are a partial explanation of the regional contrasts in the yield. The North has had various colleges and universities which helped train and employ many of these presidents,

while the South had very few such institutions. Exceptionally stimulating university professors have also played an important role.

Areal differences in the people clearly are important. Needed are considerable numbers of ambitious, self-confident, optimistic, able, energetic people who persistently endeavor to progress and assist others to do so. People with these qualities, rare everywhere, are less rare in the North than in the South.

Indiana has ranked lower in the yield of eminent persons in proportion to population than nearby states except Kentucky partly because it has done distinctly less well than these other states in affording advanced education and generous opportunities for its talented young men. The poorer facilities and the loss to other states of most of the eminent people born in Indiana has been costly in various ways including less effective encouragement of talented young Hoosiers.