Acknowledgments

A work such as this could not have been accomplished without the engagement and support of individuals who know the records, key events, and issues of the Association, especially over the past several decades. The Introduction, which includes a summary of the sources and methodology used to conduct the analysis, emphasizes the use of published ASA sources (Council minutes, articles in Footnotes, and so forth) as the primary records for this analysis. Yet the insights and diligent pursuit of facts and verification of data by past and present ASA members and staff helped to clarify inconsistencies and identify gaps in the data.

The reflections of the Executive Officers who served since 1981—Russell R. Dynes (1977–1982), William V. D’Antonio (1982–1991), and Felice J. Levine (1991–2002)—were invaluable to this publication. In addition to thoughtful reviews of an early draft of the manuscript, they were always available to comment on or corroborate information, raise questions, and clarify sequences of events and outcomes discussed in the text. They searched through their personal records and files and provided additional detail and precision where information in published records was limited. Although any interpretations in the text are those of the author, the three Executive Officers were essential partners in the effort to ensure complete documentary data. We greatly appreciate their contributions and the spirit in which they gave of their time and recollections to this effort.

The commitment and support of the current ASA Executive Office staff was also key to the success of this project. It especially benefited from the extraordinary circumstance of having three senior level staff members in the Executive Office whose tenure at ASA spans the entire period of this history. In 2005, Janet L. Astner marks her 30th year in the ASA Executive Office, Karen Gray Edwards celebrates her 25th year, and Carla B. Howery her 24th. In addition to their commitment and contributions to the ASA over the years, these staff members provide an invaluable institutional memory for ASA staff, officers and members—one that was essential in preparing the history of ASA in this period. The information they provided on documentary sources, issues, people, and events as well as their insights and recollections of the last quarter century added significantly to the writing of this history. We are grateful to them for their contributions that enriched this “story” of ASA at the end of the 20th Century.

It is important to note that these three staff members were involved in key areas of Executive Office and Association programmatic activities at a time of significant change and growth. In 2004, Janet Astner concluded the 25th ASA Annual Meeting for which she has been responsible, an unprecedented success in what is undoubtedly the singular most important event in the ASA annual calendar and, indeed, in the calendar of many sociologists in the U.S. For more than two decades, Karen Gray Edwards has been the mainstay of ASA’s publishing program with a command of the scholarly publishing business that has enabled the ASA Committee on Publications, editorial offices and Council to meet the complex demands of ASA as a major publisher in the print and now in the newly emerging electronic world of scholarly publishing. Carla Howery has been the face of the ASA in both its outreach and its commitment to higher education for more than two decades, 13 of which she has served as Deputy Executive Officer. Since 1995, as Director of the Association’s Academic and Professional Affairs Program (and prior to that the Teaching Services Program), her work at ASA has helped the profession face the challenges of the 21st century through testing new forms of pedagogy, new interdisciplinary partnerships in teaching and research, and new technologies for learning and communicating.

Other staff members at ASA also provided essential assistance to this effort. ASA Archivist Michael Murphy was a key source of information, records, and critical support throughout the entire project.
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Because the records used for this analysis are on site at the ASA headquarters, at its off-site storage location in Maryland, and in the archive at Pennsylvania State University, the author relied on staff cooperation for access to relevant documents. Roberta Spalter-Roth, Mercedes Rubio, Lee Herring, and Johanna Ebner not only made this process seamless, but also provided data and information for the appendices as well as valuable interpretation of some materials. Les Briggs reviewed the budgetary and financial data referenced in the text, and verified facts and figures by searching old financial and personnel records. Kevin Darrow Brown gave information on technical specifications for the information technology descriptions and also provided essential support on the computer systems. This was particularly important since all the documents extracted for the analysis were scanned and are now stored on the ASA computer network. Much of this document preparation took place in the ASA Executive Office where David Matthews has managed production services for more than 18 years, ensuring the smooth and efficient operation of ASA “backstage.”

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Because some of the period under consideration is relatively recent, the research process itself highlighted the value of preserving the Association’s historical records. In addition to a description of key events over the past several decades, this volume has resulted in a compilation of a great many facts and documents about the Association’s recent history. We hope this publication will not only become a useful resource, but that it will also serve as a stimulus for other investigations and more in-depth organizational analysis of the ASA and its place in the profession.

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