

This PDF is a selection from an out-of-print volume from the National Bureau of Economic Research

Volume Title: The Changing Position of Philanthropy in the American Economy

Volume Author/Editor: Frank G. Dickinson

Volume Publisher: NBER

Volume ISBN: 0-87014-209-7

Volume URL: <http://www.nber.org/books/dick70-1>

Publication Date: 1970

Chapter Title: Preface

Chapter Author: Frank G. Dickinson

Chapter URL: <http://www.nber.org/chapters/c3326>

Chapter pages in book: (p. 33 - 34)

*The Changing Position
of Philanthropy in
the American Economy
1929–59*

FRANK G. DICKINSON

To Cherry

patient wife,
nurse, and critic

Preface

At the very outset, two points must be stressed. First, the period covered by this report, 1929 through 1959, witnessed unusual, it might be said almost revolutionary, changes in philanthropy, and indeed in many of our great social institutions, as the public sector of the economy grew rapidly. Second, one of the reports on philanthropy in the current series, the report on the conference held at the Merrill Center for Economics, should be examined by readers of this volume.¹ The conference report provides the reader with a broad view of the problem and sets forth some of the controversies that arose during the conference regarding the boundaries of philanthropy. Because philanthropy is not a market-place concept, its boundaries, particularly in a period of rapid economic and social change, are very difficult to fix. Those I have chosen to employ here would not necessarily be accepted by every group of economists, for the reasons stated in the conference volume and restated herein.

Ralph L. Nelson provided much help in the preparation of the estimates of the income of private domestic philanthropy and in the

¹ *Philanthropy and Public Policy* (Frank G. Dickinson, ed.), New York, National Bureau of Economic Research, 1962. One of my two articles in it, "The Highlights of the Conference," summarizes various opinions regarding a definition and the scope of philanthropy.

particularly difficult task of trying to estimate the incomes of religious institutions, which are not required to report their income under our tax laws.

I am also indebted to those who took part in the Conference on Philanthropy and to three of my colleagues on the research staff of the National Bureau of Economic Research—Gary S. Becker, C. Harry Kahn, and Raymond W. Goldsmith—for helpful suggestions. In the computation of the tables in Chapters 7, 8, and 10, I was assisted by Joyce Goldy Skeels, Stephen M. Munsinger, and David P. Evans. Natalie Nayler served in many capacities in this study, and Maude Pech of the National Bureau staff has been invaluable in the later stages. James F. McRee, Jr., and Joan R. Tron edited the manuscript.

Most of all, I am indebted to Solomon Fabricant and Geoffrey H. Moore for the direction of this study from its inception.

Frank G. Dickinson

Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois