

THE VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

STATISTICS

Summary for the United States, with urban-rural classification.—A general summary of the statistics for The Volunteers of America for the year 1926 is presented in Table 1, which shows also the distribution of these figures between urban and rural territory.

The local station or post is the statistical unit in the report of The Volunteers of America, and the membership includes those who are active in the service as officers and workers, as well as those who, being in accord with the aims, teachings, and doctrines of the society, regularly attend the meetings and observe the sacraments at Volunteer missions and contribute to the support of the work.

TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR STATIONS IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, 1926: THE VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

ITEM	Total	In urban territory ¹	In rural territory ¹	PER CENT OF TOTAL ²	
				Urban	Rural
Stations (local organizations).....	133	127	6	95.5	4.5
Members	23,756	26,747	2,009	93.0	7.0
Average per station.....	216	211	335		
Membership by sex:					
Male.....	21,539	19,530	2,009	90.7	9.3
Female.....	7,217	7,217		100.0	
Males per 100 females.....	298.4	270.6			
Membership by age:					
Under 13 years.....	2,331	2,331		100.0	
13 years and over.....	26,414	24,405	2,009	92.4	7.6
Age not reported.....	11	11			
Per cent under 13 years ³	8.1	8.7			
Station buildings:					
Number.....	27	27			
Value—Stations reporting.....	25	25			
Amount reported.....	\$573,809	\$573,809		100.0	
Average per station.....	\$22,952	\$22,952			
Debt—Stations reporting.....	16	16			
Amount reported.....	\$154,476	\$154,476		100.0	
Stations reporting "no debt" on buildings.....	8	8			
Expenditures during year:					
Stations reporting.....	102	102		100.0	
Amount reported.....	\$728,612	\$728,612		100.0	
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$321,754	\$321,754		100.0	
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$215,003	\$215,003		100.0	
Not classified.....	\$191,855	\$191,855		100.0	
Average expenditure per station.....	\$7,143	\$7,143			
Sunday schools:					
Stations reporting.....	80	77	3		
Officers and teachers.....	761	724	37	95.1	4.9
Scholars.....	9,942	9,569	373	96.2	3.8

¹ Urban territory includes all cities and other incorporated places which had 2,500 inhabitants or more in 1920, the date of the last Federal census; rural territory comprises the remainder of the country.

² Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

³ Based on membership with age classification reported.

The data given for 1926 represent 133 active stations or posts of The Volunteers of America, with 28,756 members. The classification of membership by sex was reported by all of the stations, and the classification by age was reported by 122 stations, including, however, only 68 which reported any members under 13 years of age. No buildings used exclusively as parsonages were reported.

Comparative data, 1906-1926.—Table 2 presents, in convenient form for comparison, a summary of the available statistics of this denomination for the censuses of 1926, 1916, and 1906.

TABLE 2.—COMPARATIVE SUMMARY, 1906 TO 1926: THE VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

ITEM	1926	1916	1906
Stations (local organizations)	133	97	65
Increase over preceding census:			
Number.....	36	32	
Per cent ¹			
Members	28,756	10,204	2,194
Increase over preceding census:			
Number.....	18,552	8,010	
Per cent.....	181.8	365.1	
Average membership per station.....	216	105	34
Station buildings:			
Number.....	27	16	10
Value—Stations reporting.....	25	13	10
Amount reported.....	\$573,809	\$226,950	\$83,521
Average per station.....	\$22,952	\$17,458	\$8,352
Debt—Stations reporting.....	16	9	6
Amount reported.....	\$154,476	\$93,516	\$40,621
Expenditures during year:			
Stations reporting.....	102	67	
Amount reported.....	\$728,612	\$232,010	
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$321,754	\$134,256	
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$215,003	\$97,754	
Not classified.....	\$191,855		
Average expenditure per station.....	\$7,143	\$3,463	
Sunday schools:			
Stations reporting.....	80	26	36
Officers and teachers.....	761	128	223
Scholars.....	9,942	1,483	1,736

¹ Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

State tables.—Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 present the statistics for The Volunteers of America by States. Table 3 gives for each State the number and membership of the stations classified according to their location in urban or rural territory and the total membership classified by sex. Table 4 gives for selected States the number and membership of the stations for the three censuses from 1906 to 1926, together with the membership for 1926 classified as under 13 years of age and 13 years of age and over. Table 5 shows the value of property and the debt on such property, for 1926 alone. Table 6 presents the expenditures for 1926, showing separately the amounts expended for current expenses and improvements, and for benevolences, etc., and also gives the data for Sunday schools. Separate presentation in Tables 5 and 6 is limited to those States in which three or more stations reported the principal items shown (values or expenditures), in order to avoid disclosing the financial statistics of any individual station. The States omitted from these tables can be determined by referring to the complete list which appears in Table 3.

Territorial divisions.—Table 7 presents, for each regiment in The Volunteers of America, the more important statistical data shown by States in the earlier tables, including number of stations, membership, value of station buildings, debt, expenditures, and Sunday schools.

TABLE 3.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF STATIONS IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, AND TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX, BY STATES, 1926: THE VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION AND STATE	NUMBER OF STATIONS			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	Males per 100 females (¹)
United States.....	133	127	6	28,756	26,747	2,009	21,539	7,217	298.4
New England:									
Massachusetts.....	4	4	—	297	297	—	132	165	80.0
Rhode Island.....	1	1	—	36	36	—	14	22	—
Connecticut.....	1	1	—	18	18	—	7	11	—
Middle Atlantic:									
New York.....	14	14	—	1,900	1,900	—	1,463	437	334.8
New Jersey.....	7	7	—	1,243	1,243	—	1,039	204	509.3
Pennsylvania.....	9	9	—	1,749	1,749	—	1,054	695	151.7
East North Central:									
Ohio.....	9	9	—	3,398	3,308	—	2,425	973	249.2
Indiana.....	8	8	—	1,301	1,301	—	555	746	74.4
Illinois.....	10	10	—	1,228	1,228	—	915	313	292.3
Michigan.....	7	7	—	658	658	—	386	272	141.9
Wisconsin.....	1	1	—	110	110	—	38	72	—
West North Central:									
Minnesota.....	4	4	—	350	350	—	123	227	54.2
Iowa.....	1	1	—	78	78	—	34	44	—
Missouri.....	1	1	—	400	400	—	300	100	300.0
South Dakota.....	1	1	—	210	210	—	75	135	55.6
Nebraska.....	1	1	—	160	160	—	40	120	33.3
Kansas.....	3	2	1	1,050	950	100	1,050	—	—
South Atlantic:									
Delaware.....	2	2	—	4,821	4,821	—	3,671	1,150	319.2
Maryland.....	1	1	—	250	250	—	250	—	—
District of Columbia.....	1	1	—	11	11	—	6	5	—
Virginia.....	2	1	1	136	36	100	114	22	—
West Virginia.....	1	1	—	250	250	—	250	—	—
Georgia.....	3	3	—	646	646	—	506	140	361.4
Florida.....	1	1	—	102	102	—	57	45	—
East South Central:									
Kentucky.....	2	2	—	272	272	—	142	130	109.2
Tennessee.....	3	3	—	341	341	—	145	196	74.0
Alabama.....	1	1	—	38	38	—	18	20	—
West South Central:									
Louisiana.....	4	4	—	1,090	1,090	—	1,029	61	—
Oklahoma.....	1	1	—	34	34	—	16	18	—
Texas.....	8	7	1	781	687	94	469	312	150.3
Mountain:									
Colorado.....	2	2	—	243	243	—	222	21	—
Arizona.....	1	—	1	225	—	225	225	—	—
Utah.....	1	1	—	80	80	—	65	15	—
Pacific:									
Washington.....	4	4	—	2,296	2,296	—	2,081	215	967.9
Oregon.....	2	2	—	353	353	—	276	77	—
California.....	11	9	2	2,601	1,111	1,490	2,347	254	924.0

¹ Ratio not shown where number of females is less than 100.

HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION ¹

HISTORY

General and Mrs. Ballington Booth, in the spring of 1896, after having accomplished an evangelistic and benevolent work of national proportions, were persuaded, by friends who had witnessed their former success, to organize a Christian and benevolent movement that should be American in its principle and conduct, with its governing officers and headquarters in this country.

In response to this ever-growing call, General and Mrs. Booth held their first public meetings in March of that year, and almost immediately the new society, under the name of The Volunteers of America, became active in many parts of the country. Subsequently, in November, 1896, the organization was incorporated under the laws of the State of New York.

¹ This statement, which is substantially the same as that published in Part II of the Report on Religious Bodies, 1916, has been revised by Col. James W. Merrill, secretary of The Volunteers of America, and approved by him in its present form.

TABLE 4.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF STATIONS, 1906 TO 1926, AND MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, 1926, BY STATES: THE VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more stations in either 1926, 1916, or 1906]

STATE	NUMBER OF STATIONS			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, 1926			
	1926	1916	1906	1926	1916	1906	Under 13 years	13 years and over	Age not reported	Per cent under 13 ¹
United States.....	133	97	65	28,756	10,204	2,194	2,331	26,414	11	8.1
Massachusetts.....	4	3	3	297	154	66	76	221		25.6
New York.....	14	11	7	1,900	1,153	298	37	1,863		1.9
New Jersey.....	7	6	3	1,243	373	273	14	1,229		1.1
Pennsylvania.....	9	8	7	1,749	506	133	221	1,528		12.6
Ohio.....	9	6	5	3,398	650	135	286	3,112		8.4
Indiana.....	8	3	3	1,301	134	124	534	767		41.0
Illinois.....	10	5	7	1,228	1,112	214	63	1,165		5.1
Michigan.....	7	1	3	658	19	60		658		
Minnesota.....	4	1	2	350	50	200	15	335		4.3
Iowa.....	1	3	2	78	388	14	11	67		
Nebraska.....	1	2	3	160	227	70		160		
Kansas.....	3	2		1,050	710			1,050		
Georgia.....	3	1		646	39		175	471		27.1
Tennessee.....	3	3		341	530		127	214		37.2
Alabama.....	1	3		38	156		12	26		
Louisiana.....	4	2		1,090	659		10	1,080		0.9
Texas.....	8	1		781	112		129	652		16.5
Washington.....	4	6	4	2,296	461	260	39	2,257		1.7
California.....	11	5	4	2,601	594	112	87	2,514		3.3
Other States.....	22	25	12	7,551	2,177	235	495	7,045	11	6.6

¹ Based on membership with age classification reported; not shown where base is less than 100.

TABLE 5.—VALUE OF STATION BUILDINGS, AND DEBT, BY STATES, 1926: THE VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more stations reporting value of buildings]

STATE	Total number of stations	Number of station buildings	VALUE OF STATION BUILDINGS		DEBT ON STATION BUILDINGS	
			Stations reporting	Amount	Stations reporting	Amount
United States.....	133	27	25	\$573,809	16	\$154,476
Pennsylvania.....	9	4	4	101,459	3	31,934
Ohio.....	9	3	3	77,000	2	20,742
Indiana.....	8	3	3	108,000	3	22,200
Illinois.....	10	3	3	94,000	3	43,000
Other States.....	97	14	12	193,350	5	36,600

From the beginning the organization has been declared to be an auxiliary of the church, and converts have been encouraged to unite with churches of their preference, so that a large growth in membership has neither been expected nor realized.

Those who have felt the call to engage in the work have been stimulated and trained to carry to others the redemptive message they have themselves received. The Volunteers of America have continually endeavored to work along lines that do not conflict with any other religious society.

TABLE 6.—EXPENDITURES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY STATES, 1926: THE VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more stations reporting expenditures]

STATE	Total number of stations	EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR					SUNDAY SCHOOLS		
		Stations reporting	Total amount	For current expenses and improvements	For benevolences, missions, etc.	Not classified	Stations reporting	Officers and teachers	Scholars
United States.....	133	102	\$728,612	\$321,754	\$215,003	\$191,855	80	761	9,942
Massachusetts.....	4	4	21,178	10,349	10,829	-----	1	3	28
New York.....	14	11	80,084	31,505	7,299	41,280	9	40	776
New Jersey.....	7	6	42,792	12,019	85	30,688	5	114	1,264
Pennsylvania.....	9	8	36,035	21,834	14,201	-----	7	50	1,164
Ohio.....	9	6	59,927	55,475	4,452	-----	6	61	653
Indiana.....	8	7	29,946	13,923	16,023	-----	4	52	560
Illinois.....	10	6	21,193	2,769	-----	18,424	9	120	1,352
Michigan.....	7	5	41,740	-----	2,875	38,865	6	66	815
Minnesota.....	4	4	86,226	-----	36,004	50,222	4	42	591
Tennessee.....	3	3	18,220	12,873	5,347	-----	2	19	300
Texas.....	8	6	16,259	9,761	6,498	-----	4	17	273
Washington.....	4	4	46,096	21,423	24,673	-----	2	10	120
California.....	11	9	85,503	62,720	22,783	-----	3	25	280
Other States.....	35	23	143,413	67,103	63,934	12,376	18	142	1,766

TABLE 7.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF STATIONS, VALUE OF BUILDINGS, DEBT, EXPENDITURES, AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY REGIMENTS, 1926: THE VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA

REGIMENT	Total number of stations	Number of members	VALUE OF STATION BUILDINGS		DEBT ON STATION BUILDINGS		EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR		SUNDAY SCHOOLS	
			Stations reporting	Amount	Stations reporting	Amount	Stations reporting	Amount	Stations reporting	Number of scholars
Total.....	133	28,756	25	\$573,809	16	\$154,476	102	\$728,612	80	9,942
Central.....	23	8,193	9	199,459	6	58,676	23	159,152	17	2,270
Great Lakes.....	21	1,574	8	216,000	4	49,000	17	160,257	20	2,442
Inter-Mountain.....	4	357	-----	-----	-----	-----	4	7,409	3	157
Metropolitan and Eastern.....	12	714	-----	(1)	-----	(1)	12	73,691	10	626
Mid-west.....	3	770	-----	(1)	-----	(1)	3	31,561	1	125
New England.....	5	333	-----	-----	-----	-----	5	28,908	2	90
Northern Pacific.....	5	2,399	-----	(1)	-----	-----	5	49,837	3	235
Southeastern.....	12	1,789	4	120,000	3	22,200	12	50,635	7	1,010
Southern.....	12	1,243	-----	-----	-----	-----	12	81,659	5	254
Southern Pacific.....	9	1,111	-----	(1)	-----	(1)	9	85,503	3	280
Volunteer Prison League.....	27	10,273	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	9	2,453
Combinations ²	-----	-----	4	38,350	3	24,600	-----	-----	-----	-----

¹ Amount included in the figures shown on the line designated "Combinations," to avoid disclosing the statistics of individual stations.

² The figures for value and debt represent data for stations in the Metropolitan and Eastern, Mid-west, Northern Pacific, and Southern Pacific regiments

DOCTRINE

In doctrine The Volunteers are in harmony with the evangelical churches on all essential points. Their principles are stated in a book of rules, known as The Volunteer Manual, issued by order of the grand field council, and those who make application to join as officers subscribe to these doctrines, outlined in brief on an application form. They include belief in one supreme, triune God; in the Bible as given by inspiration of God, and the divine rule of all true godly faith and Christian practice; in Jesus Christ as truly man and yet as truly God. They believe that Jesus Christ, by sacrifice of His life, made atonement for all men; that in order to obtain salvation it is necessary to repent toward God, believe in Jesus Christ, and become regenerated through the Holy Spirit; that the Holy Ghost gives to each person inward witness of acceptance; that it is possible for those who have been accepted by God to fall from grace and, except as restored, to be eternally lost; that it is possible for Christians to be so cleansed in heart as to serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness throughout life; that the soul is immortal; and that the punishment of the wicked and the reward of the righteous are eternal.

The Volunteers believe in the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and give opportunity for the observance of these rites at the various stations. They also ordain their officers to the gospel ministry after due preparation and a satisfactory examination upon the prescribed course of study.

ORGANIZATION

The government of The Volunteers of America is democratic. The term "military," appearing in the manual, is applied only in the bestowing of titles, the wearing of uniforms, and the movements of officers. As a corporate society the government is vested in the grand field council, which is composed of the officers of, or above, the rank of major. This council elects the directors, nine in number, who are the responsible financial officers, and who act as trustees and custodians of the property.

The commander in chief, or general, is elected for a term of five years. The officials forming his cabinet or staff are the secretary, with the title of colonel; the treasurer, with the title of colonel; and the regimental officers. The departments or sections are usually under the command of an officer of the rank of colonel. They comprise 2 or more districts, each under the command of a sectional officer, who may have 20 or more stations under his control.

A post consists of an officer in charge, assistants, secretary, treasurer, trustees, sergeants, corporals, and soldiers. There is no limit to the membership of a post in point of numbers. The commissions are issued by the commander in chief and countersigned by the head of the division and the secretary of the field department.

WORK

While the aim and object of The Volunteers of America is primarily to prosecute evangelistic work with a view to reaching the out-of-church and neglected classes, yet it was found that it became essential to minister to the physical and social requirements of those it sought to help and uplift. In pursuance of this desire a number of benevolent undertakings have been successfully inaugurated and are doing a creditable and worth-while work.

The Volunteers of America have established homes for the unbefriended and underprivileged working girl. These homes are not in any sense "rescue homes." They are to meet the emergency of a young woman who, through the loss of the family breadwinner, or other calamity, is thrown upon her own resources and experiences loneliness and danger. These homes have proved a veritable haven

to thousands of working girls. The Volunteers of America have such institutions in several of the large cities. The majority of these homes are the property of the organization.

The Volunteers of America undertake the work of providing homes for the guardianship and care of needy city children. They take the children from the city's squalor-ridden and injurious surroundings to the all-year-round homes, where in country environment they develop the child heart, the child mind, and child life. These homes are under the supervision of Volunteer officers.

A prison work of considerable magnitude is maintained throughout the country. This is known as The Volunteer Prison League. It is under the supervision of Mrs. Ballington Booth, who was the pioneer in this work in America. So far this branch of Volunteer endeavor has been largely confined to the State and Federal prisons of the country.

Meetings are held in the prison chapels, always in cooperation with the chaplain, and the prisoners, upon signing certain declarations (one of which is to be faithful in the observance of prison rules and discipline) may be enrolled in The Volunteer Prison League. Upon being discharged from prison the chaplain provides the ex-prisoner with a letter of introduction to one of the Volunteer headquarters. This letter also serves as a pass to a home for discharged prisoners, generally known as a Hope Hall. These homes are maintained for ex-prisoners only, and the inmates are under the supervision and influence of the superintendent. When these men prove their worthiness and physical fitness, positions are obtained for them by The Volunteers, who generally keep in touch with them for many months and years thereafter. As an indication of the value of the work, a considerable portion of the income for its maintenance comes from those who have been its beneficiaries.

Fresh-air camps are maintained throughout the country by The Volunteers of America to which thousands of mothers and children are taken annually from the cities.

In connection with Volunteer Mission work, there is a diversity of benevolent efforts, such as summer excursions, distribution of clothing, providing food for poor families, wood yards, sewing classes, and a mammoth Christmas distribution of food, clothing, and toys, throughout the country.