

**AN EXPLANATORY NOTE FROM  
THE PUBLISHER REGARDING  
MR CHARLES BOOTH'S INQUIRY.**

Charles Booth's Inquiry, undertaken between 1886 and 1903, offers unrivalled insight into the lives and living conditions of Londoners. The final product of his Inquiry – the seventeen-volume *Life and Labour of the People in London*, published 1902–03 – is structured around the three key themes of poverty, industry and religious influences. Remarkable as the wealth of data provided within these volumes is, it is the first-hand research that Booth's team of investigators carried out, recorded within 450 notebooks, that colours stark statistical analysis with detailed description. Living and working conditions, the organization of trade and industry, the effects of national and international migration, leisure activities, religious practices and more are all revealed within their pages. References to the notebooks adhere to the LSE Booth archive lettering and numbering system, followed by the specific notebook page. However, the most important and pioneering part of Booth's Inquiry is, of course, the colour-coded maps. Meticulously coding every street in London with one of seven colours to indicate the level of poverty found there, they are an unmatched visualization of social class in the capital.

The first map Booth created covered 'East London & Hackney', and was published in 1888; it features only six social classification colours solely owing to the absence of the seventh (wealthiest) class in the East London area. This first map was presented at the Royal Statistical Society in 1888, and published as 'Descriptive Map of East End Poverty' in the first edition of *Life and Labour of the People*, Vol. 1 (1889). The very first set of maps, four in number, dates from 1889 and was presented in the appendix to the renamed *Labour and Life of the People*, Vol. 2 (1891). These maps – known as 'Descriptive Map of London Poverty, 1889' – cover an area from Kensington in the west to Poplar in the east, Kentish Town in the north and Stockwell in the south. The information used to create these maps was gathered by interviewing School Board Visitors, and came to be known as the Poverty survey.

In 1891 Booth began the Industry survey. His investigators interviewed both employers and employees from a variety of different industries across London. The information gathered featured alongside the Poverty survey in a nine-volume second edition of the Inquiry, now called *Life and Labour of the People in London*, published between 1892 and 1897. The original four maps from 'Descriptive Map of London Poverty, 1889' were also reissued with this edition.

The Religious Influences survey was begun in 1897 – interviewing members of religious institutions. Booth also decided to update and expand the information in his four original maps. To this end, his team of investigators accompanied policemen on their beats across London. They recorded a wealth of information on the streets they visited in order to assign each street a colour code for a new set of maps. Sixty hand-coloured maps were created from this exercise, in preparation for a final set of twelve printed maps. This last set of printed maps is known as 'Maps Descriptive of London Poverty, 1898–1899'. They cover an area slightly smaller than Zone 2 of the modern Underground map and were issued with the final, seventeen-volume edition of *Life and Labour of the People in London*, published 1902–03.

This book presents both the sixty hand-coloured preparatory maps and the twelve, final printed maps from the 1902–03 edition. They have been organized into the twelve geographical districts that Booth used to divide London: Eastern, North-Eastern, Northern, North-Western, East Central, West Central, Inner Western, Outer Western, Inner Southern, South-Western, Outside Southern and South-Eastern. Within each district is both the relevant printed map from 'Maps Descriptive of London Poverty, 1898–1899', together with the selection of hand-coloured maps created in preparation. Mary S. Morgan's introduction elucidates the method behind the creation of the surveys and the maps, and explores Booth's understanding of the causes of poverty as well as the reception of his landmark Inquiry. Interspersed between the geographically organized maps are six self-contained thematic essays, analysing and contextualizing Booth's published volumes and his research contained in the investigators' notebooks. The themes of housing, immigration, religion, trade, morality and leisure are explored in turn, each illuminating the findings of Booth's work and offering a fresh view of the diversity of life in late Victorian London.

**TIMELINE.**

