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**Walter Meyer\*** (meyer@adelphi.edu), Dep't. of Mathematics and Computer Science, Adelphi University, Garden City, NY 11530. *Mathematics and the Social Sciences: The Origins of Finite Mathematics.*

The half century following the Second World War was a remarkable era in America's history and, perhaps accordingly, there was a great deal of ferment in the mathematical education of undergraduates. The first significant postwar novelty was the creation of the finite mathematics course, now enjoying its 50th birthday. This course grew out of significant advances in applying mathematics to the social sciences. A number of these advances were subsequently the basis for Nobel Prizes in Economics. Leading figures of the undergraduate mathematics teaching community, including W. Duren, E. J. McShane, G. Baley Price, and A. W. Tucker who were all at one time or another presidents of MAA, became active in the goal of providing better mathematical support for the social sciences in undergraduate education. Alongside this blue-ribbon group of leading figures, a trio of Dartmouth professors just out of graduate school, John Kemeny, J. Laurie Snell and Gerald L. Thompson, had a different idea about how to proceed, an idea which turned out to prevail. This talk will attempt to recall this era and to sketch briefly what happened to the finite mathematics course and to the impulse toward the social sciences. (Received July 12, 2005)