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## FOOTNOTES FOR THE HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Putnam, Boas, and Holmes--

Establishing Anthropology at the Field Columbian Museum

Donald McVicker  
North Central College

The Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 brought Franz Boas to Chicago as chief assistant to Frederick Ward Putnam, head of the Fair's Department of Ethnology. When the Field Columbian Museum was founded at the end of the Fair, Boas remained in Chicago to work for the new Museum. However, in February of 1894 Boas "declined to work for the Museum any longer under the present terms" (FMA:Boas to Skiff 2/19/94), and left the Museum in May of that year.

Why Boas left the Museum, and the impact of his departure on the development of anthropology in Chicago has been a matter of speculation for decades. Nearly twenty years ago Donald Collier (1972:8) wrote

It is intriguing to speculate on the course of American anthropology if Boas, who is generally considered the greatest of its founders, had remained at Field Museum and had taught at the young University of Chicago.

Unfortunately, speculations concerning what might have been are impossible to document. However, documents revealing why Boas left, and whether he was ousted or quit, are available.

Boas' own version of the events at Field Museum was recorded by Kroeber (1943:13). According to this "confidential account" Boas was the leader of a revolt by the scientific staff against the tyrannical rule of Museum director F. J. V. Skiff. "But when it came to the firing line, Boas alone went forward, and fell."

Collier (1972:8) goes beyond Boas' account of the precipitating event. He suggests that Boas resigned under pressure because of a "long-standing and bitter conflict dating back to 1891 between Putnam and Harlow Higginbotham, President of the Exposition and an influential Trustee of the