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The National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

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SOURCES FOR THE HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY

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The National Anthropological Archives of the Smithsonian Institution is a mine of vast, untapped resources in the history of American anthropology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The official records and correspondence of the Bureau of American Ethnology, from its founding in 1879 to its dissolution in 1965, form the central collection of the Archives. These records not only tell the story of the Bureau but also trace developments in every field of American anthropology for nearly a century. The records of the first thirty years (1880 to 1910), when the Bureau was the undisputed center of anthropological activity in the western hemisphere, are particularly critical for examining the professional development of American anthropology. From 1879 to 1906 outgoing correspondence is filed in various series of letterbooks, some according to official -- John Wesley Powell, Frank Hamilton Cushing, W.J. McGee, and William Henry Holmes -- and others according to topic; incoming correspondence for the same period is filed according to correspondent. After 1906 incoming and outgoing correspondence is filed together according to year and correspondent. The BAE correspondence books are supplemented by large collections of field notes and personal correspondence of early Bureau workers: Cushing, Matilda Coxe Stevenson, James Mooney, Garrick Mallery, Cyrus Thomas, Alice Fletcher, Francis LaFlesche, and others. In addition to these papers the Archives has inherited the collection of manuscripts of North American linguistics and mythology begun in the middle decades of the nineteenth century by Joseph Henry and George Gibbs and continued by Powell's Bureau.

In this century, in addition to the official correspondence of the Bureau the Archives holds the massive papers, notes and correspondence of John P. Harrington as well as the field notes and manuscripts of other anthropologists such as Neil Judd, F.H.H. Roberts, William Duncan Strong, James A. Geary, Frank M. Setzler, Sister Inez Hilger, and the recently acquired papers of Ethel Cutler Freeman. Other major collections include the state reports of the Works Progress Administration archeological projects (1934 to 1942) and the extensive records of the River Basin Survey.

The Archives is also the repository for the intermittent records of the Department of Anthropology of the United States National Museum from 1885 to the 1950s. The recently unearthed records for the first twenty-five years, which consist chiefly of the notebooks and correspondence of Otis T. Mason and Walter Hough, are the most complete; they provide valuable insight into the early development of museum anthropology in Washington. The extensive papers of Ales Hrdlička, covering the first four decades of this century, are important for the study of physical anthropology in America in the early twentieth century, and of the development of the National Museum's Division of Physical Anthropology in particular.

The Archives holds the official records of a number of anthropological organizations. Locally, the records of the Anthropological
Society of Washington from its founding in 1879 to the 1960s includes correspondence, minutes of meetings, and membership information. The ASW, which founded the American Anthropologist in 1888, was particularly significant on a national scale in its first thirty years, and the records for this period are most complete. The Archives also recently acquired the official records of the American Anthropological Association from 1917 to 1967. In addition, the Archives has partial records of the American Ethnological Society (1925 to about 1950), the American Society for Ethnohistory (1955 to 1970) and the Society for Historical Archaeology (1968 to 1972).

In the last two years, under the direction of Dr. Herman J. Viola, the National Anthropological Archives has undertaken a program of reorganization and expansion, with the object of both increasing its collections and making them more accessible to scholars. The result has been a large amount of new accessions as well as some remarkable discoveries within present holdings. Any research planning a project in the history of late nineteenth or twentieth century American anthropology should check the holdings of the Archives. Inquiries should be addressed to: National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560.

FOOTNOTES FOR THE HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY

RADCLIFFE-BROWN AND THE AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST: A RECORD OF THEORETICAL IMPACT IN THE UNITED STATES

Elvin Hatch

When A.R. Radcliffe-Brown died in 1955, he was one of the most prominent anthropologists in the world. Nevertheless, some of the details of his professional trajectory are still somewhat obscure. For example, when did his name become prominent among American anthropologists?

To answer this question, I scanned the American Anthropologist (AA) from 1909, the date of his first publication, through 1950, noting every instance in which his name or his work was mentioned. Some references were undoubtedly missed in this reading, but the pattern which emerged is clear (see the accompanying chart). Citations to his work do not begin until 1928 and then are almost entirely to his data on the Andaman Islanders and the Australians. In 1931 the nature of the references begins to change; increasingly they refer to the theoretical elements of his scheme rather than to the data he gathered in field research.

The lack of citations prior to 1928 reflects in part the strong ethnographic focus of American anthropology before about 1930. American anthropologists devoted virtually all their research energies to the North American Indians prior to that time, and although they may have kept abreast of ethnographic research in other parts of the world, they gave scant attention to such places as Australia or the Andaman Islands in their scholarly works. American anthropologists were also impatient with theory, and consequently unlikely to be stimulated by Radcliffe-Brown's functionalism when it first appeared in the early 1920s. This