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The Tuskegee Nod in American Anthropology

George W. Stocking Jr.

Franz Boas

Klaus Müller, Geschichte der antiken Ethnographie und ethnologischen Theoriebildung, von den Anfängen bis auf die byzantinischen Historiographen (Weisbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1972); and Angel Palerm, Historia de la etnología: los precursores (México: Centro de Investigaciones Superiores, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1974) (a collection of readings).

We encourage others to submit items, especially if grouped by some classificatory principle, although we cannot guarantee to print every item submitted, due to space limitations.

RECENT DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS:

Holtzman, Stephen (University of California, Berkeley, 1970)
"History of the Early Discoveries and Determination of the Neanderthal Race."

Mark, Joan (Harvard University, 1968)
"The Impact of Freud on American Cultural Anthropology, 1909-1945."

(See also Ackerman, supra)

BIBLIOGRAPHIES AND SYLLABI:

Several readers have suggested the possibility of listing mimeographed (or otherwise duplicated) bibliographies and course syllabi. While we are aware of the existence of various materials of this kind, we feel that we should only list such items when the authors or compilers indicate specifically their willingness to respond to all requests for copies. Anyone so willing should write to us with descriptions of the material they have to circulate. Alternatively, individuals interested in obtaining bibliographic materials of a specific sort may indicate their interest in our queries column, thereby allowing scholars with relevant information to respond individually without being swamped with random requests.

CLIO'S FANCY -- DOCUMENTS TO PIQUE THE HISTORICAL IMAGINATION

THE TUSKEGEE NOD IN AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGY

(The following item from the papers of Franz Boas in the American Philosophical Society is reproduced with the permission of the Society.)

Nov. 30, 1904

President Booker T. Washington
Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute
Tuskegee, Ala.

Dear Sir, --

A young gentleman, Mr. J.E. Aggrey, of Livingstone College, Salisbury, N.C., desires to study anthropology at Columbia University. He is a full-blood negro, and, so far as I can learn, his standing is such that he will require at least one year of undergraduate work before he can be admitted to university study. That is to say, it will require at least five years before he could become an independent investigator in the science in which he is interested. From what I hear from my colleagues who made his acquaintance at the session of the summer school, he is a very bright man. He is, however, without means, and will require support in order to complete his studies. I do not know whether it would be possible to obtain this support here in this city, but I do not think it is unlikely. On the other hand, I very much hesitate to advise the young man to take up this work, because I fear that it would be very difficult after he has completed his studies to find a place. On the other hand, it might perhaps be possible for him to study for two or three years and to take his degree of master of arts, and then to obtain a position in one of the higher schools established for his race. I feel that the matter is a rather delicate one, and I do not wish to advise the young man or to assist him in beginning a study which may ultimately put him in a most unfortunate position. I should be very much indebted to you for your advice in this matter.

It is of course evident that if he developed into a good scientist, he could do excellent work particularly in Africa, which would be of the very greatest service to science. This is a consideration which makes me desirous of assisting him. On the other hand, I am very much afraid that it would be almost impossible to find a place for him even in this field. Perhaps by proper application, if he were the right man, it might be possible to get him into Colonial service of one of the European countries that have colonies in Africa.

Yours very truly,

F. Boas

That Boas should have felt it necessary to write such a letter is a reminder of just how much his critique of racist assumption was enmeshed in the context of contemporary racial relations. The reply that came ten days later was archetypically Washingtonian: so many bright young colored men had taken courses without practical value only to end up as

Pullman porters, etc. Although apparently denied entry to anthropology by the Tuskegee nod, Aggrey went on eventually to become a Ph.D. candidate in sociology at Columbia and in the 1920s became involved in the African educational philanthropy of the Phelps-Stokes Fund. He eventually returned to his native West Africa as Assistant Vice-Principal of the University of the Gold Coast, remaining throughout an exponent of Washingtonian educational principles. Eventually, Boas did in fact train black students in anthropology, most notably Zora Neale Hurston.

(We particularly encourage readers to submit items for Clio's Fancy. Both of these have so far come from the same source, who is by no means inexhaustible.)

NEWS AND NOTES

HISTORY OF SCIENCE SOCIETY

The meeting of the Midwest Junto of the History of Science Society at Bloomington, Indiana, on April 11-13 included two papers on the history of American archeology: one by Kevin Hart (Kansas State) on "Government Geologists and the Early Man Problem in North American Archaeology, 1879-1907"; and one by Ralph Dexter (Kent State) on "Historical Aspects of the Calaveras Skull Controversy."

AMERICAN ETHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The meeting of the American Ethnological Society, of April 26-28, focused upon the history of anthropology. The first of three sessions included papers by John R. Cole (Drew) on "Fieldwork, Archeology and Museum Studies: Their Role in the Four-Fold Definition of American Anthropology"; Robert E. Bieder (Newberry Library) and Thomas Tax (Chicago) on "Ethnologists to Anthropologists: A Brief History of the A.E.S., 1842-1871"; Curtis M. Hinsley, Jr. (Smithsonian) on "Amateurism and Professionalism in Washington Anthropology: 1879-1910"; and Arthur Einhorn (Jefferson Community College) on "Franklin B. Hough." In the second session there were papers by Regna Darnell (Alberta) on "Brinton and the Institutionalization of Anthropology in Philadelphia"; Margot Pringle Liberty (Pittsburgh) on "The Native American 'Informants': The Contribution of Francis LaFlesche"; and Alexander Lesser (Hofstra) on "The A.E.S.: The Latter New York Phase." The last session was on Robert Redfield and papers were presented by Ansel Hansen (Alabama) on "The Birth of R. Redfield's Yucatan Project: The Agony of Studying Merida"; Milton Singer (Chicago) on "The Chronological Development of Redfield's Thought: The View from Madras"; and Charles Leslie (New York University) on "The Hedgehog and Fox: Science and History in Redfield's Thought." These papers will be published in a forthcoming Proceedings of the American Ethnological Society.

HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY IN CANADA

Two sessions on the history of Canadian anthropology are scheduled for the August 23-26 meeting of the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association in Toronto, one on "The Early Years" and one on "Regional Studies". The papers include the following: H.T. Epp and L.E. Sponsel, "Major Personalities in Anthropology in Canada, 1860-1940": Richard J. Preston, "Sapir's