



History of Anthropology Newsletter

Volume 19
Issue 2 December 1992

Article 1

January 1992

Volume 19, Issue 2

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Recommended Citation

(1992) "Volume 19, Issue 2," *History of Anthropology Newsletter*. Vol. 19 : Iss. 2 , Article 1.
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History of **A**nthropology **N**ewsletter



XIX:2
1992



History of Anthropology Newsletter

VOLUME XIX, NUMBER 2

DECEMBER 1992

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CLIO'S FANCY: DOCUMENTS TO PIQUE THE HISTORICAL IMAGINATION

'One does not get as much from the girls':

Franz Boas and Women Students

Douglas Cole
Simon Fraser University

As the adjective Boasian suggests, Franz Boas is almost as well known for his students as for his own work. Among these were a large number of women, including Ruth Benedict, Gladys Reichard, Ruth Underhill, Margaret Mead, Ruth Bunzel, Gene Weltfish, Erna Gunther, Viola Garfield, and Frederica de Laguna. But encouraging to women as he was to become in the 1920s and 1930s, it was not always so.

In the fall of 1900 Boas returned from a field trip to British Columbia to discover that fifteen women had enrolled in his introductory undergraduate course--a consequence of students from Barnard College, the women's affiliate of Columbia University, having been that year admitted as regular students to Columbia's courses. Writing to his mother, Sophie, Boas described the sudden appearance of so many women in his class as "terrible" (BFP: FB/SB 10/15/00). His next letter expanded on the subject:

My introductory course this year is overrun with women students. I wish I could get rid of some of them and exchange them for men, not because I have anything against women, but because men students simply will not come into the course. I have 16 in total, so I have 12 women and 4 men. In my advanced courses, there are no women at all (BFP: FB/SB 10/12/00)

His mother, who since her youth had strong feminist sentiments (Herzig 1980:107-08), responded with the hope that he was not making a mistake, to which Boas replied:

You did not take my remark about too many women [Frauenzimmerischen] in class quite right. I have nothing against it that women also learn where they wish, but male students do not come where there are a lot of females. On the whole, one does not get as much from the girls (Mädchen) as from the young men (Männer), who have greater independence of thought than the girls. Therefore I would only naturally not want to have the men chased away, and I think that next year I will arrange that the course be given separately for the women. In the 5 years which I have been here, I have, in total about 16 serious students, among whom there were no girls. Of the 16, about 4 or 5 actually studied anthropology as a major subject and of these three went to their doctorate. You see, then, that it is no prejudice if I prefer not to have women take part in the general course. (BFP:FB/SB 11/14/00)

Later that year, Boas wrote to the acting dean of Barnard College: "Owing to the peculiar character of anthropological subject mater, I consider it much preferable to give this course to Columbia students and Barnard students separately"--although the same objection did not apparently hold true in his senior year course in American ethnology (AMNH: FB/J.H. Robinson 2/2/01]. Boas' recommendation was not acted upon until 1903, by which time Boas had stopped giving the introductory course himself; that year Anthropology 1 was given separately by Livingston Farrand to 27 Columbia men and 36 Barnard women.

These fragmentary pieces suggest a certain complexity to Boas' attitude toward women students. It seems likely that Columbia's men students might have tended to avoid courses in which Barnard women formed a majority. This certainly was a common perception of their conduct at the time and one of the reasons for moves (such as Chicago's two years later) to establish more segregated classes at coeducational institutions. It is also the case that in the moral climate of the day, some subjects did not lend themselves comfortably to teaching before a mixed class. Boas' position might thus be glossed as reflecting a realistic attitude. On the other hand, it is not easy to reconcile Boas' professed lack of prejudice with his generalization about women students' lesser independence of mind or his statement that there had been not a single "girl" student among sixteen serious students in five years. There would seem to be a tension, too, with his earlier pronouncement that despite a smaller brain, "the faculty of women is undoubtedly just as high as that of men" (1894:233). There is also the issue of language: while "Frauenzimmerischen" [literally, "women-roomish"] did not perhaps carry quite the same connotative burden as today, it had long been tinged with contempt--though Boas much later used it, about Margaret Mead, in a context of endearing praise: "Die Kleine ist ein tüchtiges Frauenzimmer" ["The little one is a capable Frauenzimmer"] (BFP: FB/Antonia Wohlauer 5/30/27).

There is, of course, also the larger professional context of Boas' anthropology in this period: his desire to create a cadre of young, academically-trained anthropologists who would carry out his field projects and staff museum, university, and government positions. Although there had in fact been several women anthropologists associated with the Bureau of American Ethnology, as well as wealthy women who supported anthropological research, it was no doubt realistic in the pre-World War I period to expect that such a professional cadre would be overwhelmingly male. To prevent Barnard students from obstructing that goal, Boas sought separate classes at the introductory level. This freed him from the presumed constraints of mixed classes without denying women an introduction to anthropology. And although Columbia policy would have permitted it, he did not exclude women from his advanced and graduate courses--except in the case of his physical anthropology course at the medical school, from which they were barred by administrative regulation.

Women students remained a problem, however, elsewhere in the anthropology division at Columbia. Farrand did "not like to have women take part" in Anthropology 7, his course on primitive culture, because the subject matter was "not adapted to treatment in a mixed class." And in fact they were not allowed in, although Farrand would have given this course (as he did Anthropology 1) as a separate course, if Barnard had been willing to pay the cost (BPP:FB/E.D. Perry 5/10/04; American Anthropologist 1905).

When and why Boas began to take women students more seriously is a topic for further investigation. It was, however, certainly not when the first women came into his graduate classes. Two who enrolled in 1904 did not perform well: "They are, I fear, stupid," he commented, and wondered why they had bothered (BFP: FB/SB 12/9/04, 1/6/05). His attitude may have been affected, beginning the following year, by the experiences of his own daughters at Barnard and Columbia. Or it may have been the influence of Elsie Clews Parsons, whom he got to know well a few years later. It may also have been his own closer association with Barnard, forced on him by his war-time difficulties with President Nicholas Murray Butler. Most likely, however, it was his own discovery of women students of independent thought who gave at least as much as the men. "I have had a rather curious experience in graduate work during the last few years," he wrote with apparent surprise in 1920. "All my best students are women" (BPP:FB/B. Laufer 7/23/20).

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The research for this note was done for a biography of Boas, the first volume of which, to about 1906, is more-or-less complete.

FOOTNOTES FOR THE HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY

The Emergence of "Ethnography" ca. 1770 in Göttingen

Han F. Vermeulen
University of Leiden

[Because of space limitations and time constraints, this article has been somewhat shortened without consultation with the author-- hopefully, without compromising either fact or argument--G.W.S.]

If disciplines may be said to exist when they are named, then ethnography emerged as early as 1771, when the term "Ethnographie" was introduced in a publication by the German historian, linguist and political scientist August Ludwig Schlözer (1735-1809), who worked at the newly established university of Göttingen in the kingdom of Hannover in northern Germany. Schlözer used the term and its equivalent "Völkerkunde" in a book he had worked on since 1766, the Allgemeine Nordische Geschichte, or "General History of the North," which was published in Halle in 1771. The book offered a new outlook on the history and languages of northern Europe and northern Asia, from Iceland in the west to Kamchatka in the east, and from Lappland and the Samoyeds in the north to the Southern Slavs and the Kirguz, Kalmuks, and Mongols in the south. Although Schlözer was not in this book concerned with the Middle East (an area which had occupied him from 1759-61), he did mention the old problem of the "vagina gentium"--the area around the Black Sea which Leibniz and others had considered the migration tunnel of numerous nations.

Supplanting earlier "myths" with fresh new ideas on the origin, kinship, and migration of nations, Schlözer's work succeeded in destroying ancient views on the origin and relationships of numerous peoples, both in Europe and in Asia (which he suggested should begin with the Urals). He insisted that the history of peoples could only be reconstructed by the careful study of the relationships of languages and language groups, instead of mere etymologies and/or uncertain passages in obscure chronicles. In the course of his argument, Schlözer introduced, as if in passing, the concepts "Völkerkunde," "Ethnographie," "Ethnographisch," and even that of "Ethnograph" (i.e., ethnographer). The effect of this discovery is two fold: to push back by several years the introduction of these concepts, and to suggest the importance of different intellectual influences than have previously been argued.

In 1970, Hans Fischer suggested that the earliest appearance of the terms "Völkerkunde" and "Ethnographie" was in 1775 in a book by Schlözer's elder colleague Johann Christoph Gatterer (1727-99) entitled Abriss de Geographie; this was followed in 1787 by the

term "Ethnologie," in a book by the Swiss theologian Alexandre-César Chavannes (as in fact Paul Topinard had pointed out in 1891). Fischer emphasized that the concepts emerged within a geographical context, suggesting that they were probably coined after the German words "Erdkunde" and "Geographie," and that they were used extensively in the 1780s and 90s in German-language textbooks on geography, as well as in compilations of travel accounts.

In 1974, Justin Stagl pointed out that the concepts had already been used in an earlier publication by Gatterer's younger colleague Schlözer, in a textbook on general history entitled Vorstellung seiner Universal-Historie (1772, second vol. 1773). Stagl also proposed a widening of the framework in which the formation of the discipline is to be interpreted: from geography to world history and the discipline called "Statistik" or "Statenkunde"--i.e. a comparative study of states. Stagl suggested that the occurrence of the new concepts was related to Schlözer's general historical and statistical program, in which an "ethnographical method" was one of the four methods of world history.

Without denying the importance of these influences, it can now be suggested that the concepts "Völkerkunde" and "Ethnographie" occurred originally in a somewhat different context, in which the central problem was the origin, descent and migration of diverse nations in the Nordic world. Using a theory of comparative linguistics that goes back as far as Leibniz, Schlözer sought the solution to this problem through a critique of the Mosaic interpretations that had previously been suggested by generations of "etymologists." His enterprise was biblical-historical insofar as the Bible placed a constraint on history (cf. Stocking 1989 on the "biblical/ethnological" and other paradigmatic traditions). Schlözer, however, argued that the peoples discovered in the remote parts of the Russian empire (as well as the users of the ancient Runic script) were not included in the genealogical tables in the tenth chapter of Genesis, and that Moses, their presumed author, had "no concrete knowledge of the peoples of the European and Asiatic North"--thereby rendering senseless any speculation on the historical relationships of these peoples in the four thousand years allowed by the biblical chronology. Drawing on ideas propounded by his teacher Johann David Michaelis, Professor of Hebrew and Oriental languages in Göttingen, and on Leibniz's insistence that linguistic comparison was "the only certain means of reconstructing the unknown early history of the world's nations," Schlözer offered a classification of the languages of the peoples of the north which, judged by modern standards is still in essence correct.

Although Schlözer did not offer a definition of "Völkerkunde" or "Ethnographie," it is worth noting that he used the new terms

in connection with the concepts of "Völkerhistorie" and "Völkersystem" (or Systema Populorum, which seems a clear reference to Linnaeus), as well as with "Weltkund" and "Erdekunde" (or "Kosmographie" and "Geographie"). This suggests that he felt a conceptual gap, the filling of which opened a field which in Germany and surrounding countries was to be exploited intensively in the years that followed. During the next two decades forty references have been traced. As early as 1772 the concept was criticized and amended by Herder; in 1782 the related concept "Volks-Kunde" appeared in Göttingen; in 1787, the concept "Ethnologie" appeared in Lausanne and in Halle. In 1781, also in Halle, Johann Reinhold Forster and Matthias Christian Sprengel launched the field's first journal, Beiträge zur Völker- und Länderkunde (27 vols., 1781-93 [cf. Vermeulin, forthcoming]).

By coining the term "Ethnographie" (i.e., nation-description) as the Greek equivalent to "Völkerkunde," it seems clear that Schlözer conceived them as referring to a generalized descriptive discipline of peoples or nations, and his books make clear that no peoples of the world were excluded from it. However, as Gatterer indicated as early as 1773, this inclusiveness was a problem insofar as some peoples had no written history at all, and could not therefore be handled by the mother discipline of history. It is perhaps for this reason that Gatterer, in his Abriss der Geographie, proposed a classification of the geographical sciences in which, for the first time, the subject of "Menschen- und Völkerkunde (Anthropographia und Ethnographia)" was suggested as one of the subjects in need of development. Gatterer thus saw these two inquiries as a subfield of geography, which was itself an auxiliary discipline of history--in contrast to Schlözer, who regarded Völkerkunde as a subfield of history, and saw the "ethnographical method" as a means of revolutionizing history in general and the history of nations in particular. Whereas Gatterer was influential in originating the trend of "Länder-, Völker- und Statenkunde" described by Fischer, Schlözer was influential in stimulating research on the ethnic or national bases of historiography--in an historical and descriptive manner which contrasted with the comparative approach of Dèmeunier and Goguet.

In seeking the origins of the discipline which eventually was to become cultural or social anthropology, this moment in the 1770s and 80s takes on great significance. "Anthropologie" (in a philosophical/theological sense) had been around as a concept since the sixteenth century; "Ethnologie" was yet to be born as an adaptation of "Ethnographie." Prior to the nowadays frequently discussed period of "institutionalization" of anthropology in the nineteenth century, there was an earlier eighteenth century moment of conceptualization and classification. Retrospectively, it might be argued that the discipline started off in the second half of the eighteenth century, was established in learned

societies and museums in the first half of the nineteenth, underwent a terminological transformation in the 1870s (when the "ethnological" societies were rebaptized as "anthropological") and emerged in its modern form only in the twentieth.

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This article is based on research carried out in 1984-88 as part of a masters thesis in cultural anthropology at the University of Leiden (Vermeulen 1988) as well as further research in Göttingen in 1991. The work is currently being continued with a doctoral grant from the Centre of Non-Western Studies at Leiden University.

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RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Jeffrey Abt (Art History, Wayne State University) has received a grant from the Rockefeller Archive Center for his project "Institutionalizing the Ancient Middle East: James Breasted's Oriental Institute."

Edgar S. Gutiérrez Mendoza (Anthropology, Universidade de Brasilia) is beginning doctoral research on the history of the department of anthropology at the University of Brasilia.

Ira Jacknis (Hearst Museum of Anthropology, UC-Berkeley) is doing research on the history of the department and museum of anthropology at the University of California at Berkeley, especially on Alfred Kroeber, Samuel Barrett, Edward Gifford, Robert Heizer and other scholars of California Indians.

Richard Price has received a grant from the NEH for a project entitled "Musée, Museo, Museum: The Poetics and Politics of Anthropological Representation"; he and Sally Price are conducting a "Comparative Study of Anthropological Museum Display",

Diederick Raven (Cultural Anthropology, University of Utrecht) is planning to do research on the transition from ethnology to anthropology in early Victorian Britain.

Barnett Richling (Anthropology, Mount St. Vincent University, Halifax, N.S.) is working on a biography of Diamond Jenness and the history of anthropology at the National Museum of Canada between the wars.

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II. Recent Work by Subscribers

[Except in the case of new subscribers, for whom we may include one or two orienting items, "recent" is taken to mean within the last two years. Please note that we do not list "forthcoming" items. To be certain of dates and page numbers, please wait until your works have actually appeared before sending offprints (preferably), or citations in the style used in History of Anthropology and most anthropological journals]

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III. Suggested by our Readers

[Although the subtitle does not indicate it, the assumption here is the same as in the preceding section: we list "recent" work--i.e., items appearing in the last several years.]

Note: all entries by C.E.G. are from Abstracts in German Anthropology 14 (1992), where English summaries are offered.

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A.L.C.= Andrew L. Christenson

B. K. = Bruce Koplin

C.E.G.= Christian E. Guksch

D.M.S.= David M. Schneider

G.W.S.= George W. Stocking

I. B. = Ira Bashkow

I. S. = Ivan Strenski

J. J. = Jean Jamin

M.C.M.= Miriam Claude Meijer

P. H. = Pieter Hovens

R.D.F.= Raymond D. Fogelson

R.B.W.= Richard B. Woodbury

W.C.S.= William C. Sturtevant

W. J. = Walter Jackson

GLEANINGS FROM ACADEMIC GATHERINGS

American Anthropological Association--The 91st meeting in San Francisco, December 2-6, included a session on "American Indians as Anthropologists" with papers on Louis Shotridge (M. Milburb, U. British Columbia), John Stands-in-Timber (M. Liberty, Trail End Museum), Edward Dozier (M. Norcini, U. Arizona), Dennis Parker (J. Levy, U. Arizona), J. N. B. Hewitt (E. Tooker, Temple), J. N. B. Hewitt (B. Rudes, Research Triangle Inst.), George Hunt (Judith

Berman, U. Penn.), James Murie (D. Parks, Indiana U.), Francis La Flesche (J. Koontz, Colorado-Boulder), Ella Deloria (R. De Mallie, Indiana U.), Parker MacKenzie (L. Watkins, Colorado C.), and a general overview by R. Darnell (Western Ontario). The session on "Museum Anthropology in California: 1889-1939," organized by Ira Jacknis and Margot Schevill of the Hearst Museum, included (among others) papers on Joseppa Dick, Roland Dixon, Isabel Kelly, A.L. Kroeber, Charles Lummis, C. Hart Merriam, and Lila M. O'Neal. The session on "Anthropology, Colonization and Decolonization," organized by Leslie Sponsel (Hawaii) also included several historical papers. There was a session on Margaret Mead organized by Dana Raphael (Human Lactation Center, Ltd.), as well as festschrift sessions for John Collier, Jr., Sylvia Forman, John Gomperz, Clark Howell, and a centenary session devoted to V. Gordon Childe. Also worth noting was a paper by Susan Parman (Cal. State, Fullerton), on "Occidentalism and the Study of Europe in Anthropological Discourse: American Anthropologist, 1888-1992."

Boas Symposia--Two recent symposia were held on the life and work of Franz Boas, one at Barnard College, the other in his birthplace, Minden, Germany. "Fifty Years Later: The Legacy of Franz Boas," held at Barnard on October 10, included papers by Douglas Cole (on Boas' education); Alice Kehoe (on evolutionism in American archeology); Regna Darnell (on text-based fieldwork); Judith Berman (on the Hunt/Boas relationship); George Stocking (on the Boasian and Tylorian paradigms); Dirk Obbink (on myth); Irving Goldman (on myth); Ira Jacknis (on the ethnographic object); Aldona Jonaitis (on Boas and art history). For information on the papers, contact Paula Rubel of the Barnard Department of Anthropology.

The Minden event consisted of evenings devoted to various topics: Boas as anti-evolutionist (W. Kummer, Univ. Bielefeld, Oct. 16); Boas as cultural anthropologist (J. Freese, Univ. Bielefeld, Oct. 30); Boas as scientist and patriot in two countries (D. Cole, Simon Fraser, Nov. 4); Boas as founder of anthropological linguistics (R. Schott, Univ. Munster, Nov. 11); Boas' research among the Inuit (L. Müller-Wille, McGill Univ., Dec. 15).

Canadian Anthropology and Linguistics--A symposium on "Writing Departmental Histories," organized by Richard Pope (Regina), was held on May 10th at the meetings of the Canadian anthropological society. Papers on various Canadian anthropology departments were given by Pope (Regina), S. P. Sharma (Saskatchewan), J. S. Matthinsson (Manitoba), J. H. Barkow (Dalhousie), W. Whittaker (UBC-Vancouver), K. Siecechowicz (Toronto), G. Dubreuil (Montreal), M.-A. Tremblay (Laval), and Regna Darnell (Western Ontario-London), who offered an historical overview. On August 11, at the meetings of the International Congress of Linguistics in Quebec City, there was a session on "The History of the Study of the Native Languages of Canada," organized by Konrad Koerner (U.

of Ottawa) at which Regna Darnell gave a paper on textbased grammars and ethnographic description and Marthe Faribault gave a paper on early missionary linguistics in New France.

Gordon Childe Centennial--a conference organized by the Prehistorical Society and the Institute of Archaeology was held in Australia on May 8-9, 1992 with talks by Bruce Trigger, Michael Rowlands, John Mulvaney, Leo Klejn, Kent Flannery, and Colin Renfrew. A report is contained in Past: Newsletter of the Prehistoric Society 13:12-13.

The History of European Anthropology--During the second biennial conference of the European Association of Social Anthropologists in Prague, Aug.28-31, there was a workshop on this topic, organized by R. Jerábek, A.A. Roldán, and H. F. Vermeulen. In contrast to the first such workshop, organized by F. Estevez and A. Roldán at the EASA's Coimbra conference in 1990, where there were eight papers given to an audience of thirty people, at Prague there was an audience of forty for the eighteen papers given in two sessions. The first session included papers on 16th and 17th century European images of the world (J. Stagl); ethnographic description in early modern German travel accounts (M. Harbsmeier), Monboddo's views on men and apes (A. Barnard); the discovery of the whole of mankind (G. Geana); early German legal anthropology (H.-J. Hildebrandt); the work of A. Bastian (K.-P. Koepping); Nieboer on slavery (J. de Wolf); Malinowski's ethnographic method (A. A. Roldán); Malinowski and Witkiewicz (P. Skalnik); as well as a report on a film about Raymond Firth by R. Husmann. The second session included papers on the origins of ethnology and ethnography (H. Vermeulin); the development of Czech folklore (R. Jerábek), Swedish ethnology, folklore, and anthropology (T. Gerholm); Slovenian anthropology (Z. Smitek and B. Jezernik); Polish anthropology (Z. Jasiewicz); Jozef Obrebski (E. Nowicka); the influence of Spanish social anthropology in Mexico (E. H. García Valencia); historical anthropology in Germany (N. Bock); and the history of the anthropology of Europe (T. Schippers). Twenty-one of the scholars present at the Prague meeting established an EASA-Network on the History of European Anthropology, with the aim of organizing scholars into workshops and publications. The secretary of the network is Dr. Jan J. de Wolf (Department of Cultural Anthropology, University of Utrecht, P.O. Box 80.140, 3508 TC Utrecht, The Netherlands).

History of Anthropology in Germany. The results of the workshop organized by Han Vermeulin and Annemarie Fiedermutz on the history of ethnology which took place in Munich in October 1991 will shortly appear in conference volumes edited by M. S. Laubscher (Völkerkunde Tagun München 1991, Munich: Anacon-Verlag, Vol. 2).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

At the twice yearly conference of the German Society of Ethnology, to be held October 3-9, 1993 in Leipzig, there will be a second workshop on the history of ethnology. Interested scholars should write to Dr. H.-J. Hildenbrandt (Institut für Ethnologie und Afrika-Studien, Postfach 3980, 6500 Mainz 1, Germany). or Drs. H. F. Vermeulen (CNWS, P.O. Box 9515, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands).

The annual meeting of Cheiron: The International Society for the History of the Behavioral Sciences will take place at the University of New Hampshire, between June 23rd and 27th, 1993. For details, contact the Program Chair, Alfred H. Fuchs, Department of Psychology, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, 04011.