American Anthropology: Early Years

Savages and Scientists. The Smithsonian Institution and the Development of American Anthropology, 1846–1910. CURTIS M. HINSLEY, JR. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 1981. 320 pp., illus. $19.95.

The work under review deals with the history of the best-known period of American anthropology. The outlines of early intellectual developments in the field are commonly agreed upon and have been set out for some years, although it has only been during the past 20 that the analysis has become fine-grained and that the institutional side of the story has also been investigated. The overarching intellectual development was, of course, the overthrow of the cultural evolutionism that held sway until the end of the 19th century. This came about via a critical empiricism that challenged the schemes and propositions of evolutionism and put forth new views on the nature of man and culture, views that could be characterized as historical, relativistic, and humanistic in contrast to evolutionism's mechanical and ethnocentric discriminations.

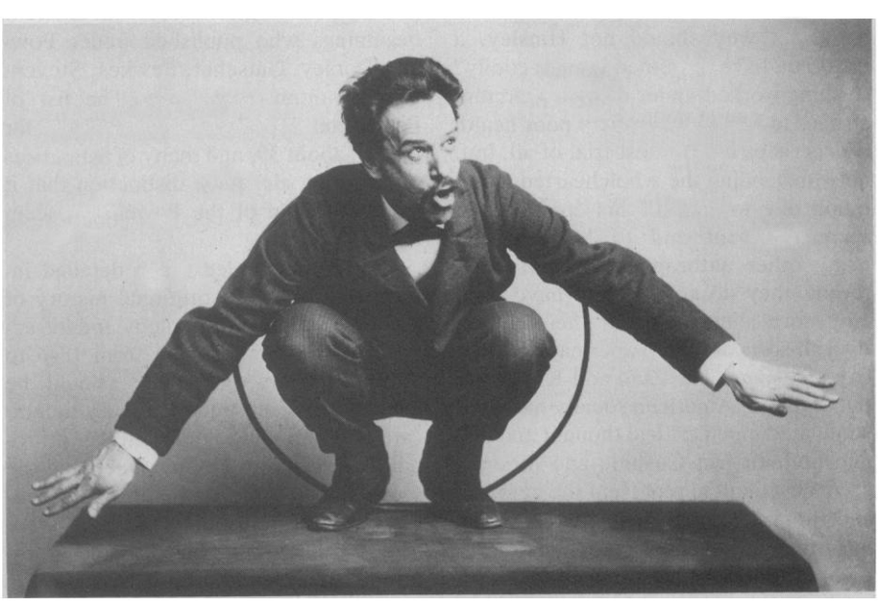
The first two lengthy historical studies we have, Robert H. Lowie's *History of Ethnological Theory* (1937) and T. K. Penniman's *A Hundred Years of Anthropology* (1935), deal with this overall development in international terms that do not sort out the American side of the story from the Continental and especially the English side. Detailed and sophisticated historical studies of the early American period are better dated from A. Irving Hallowell's "The Beginning of Anthropology in America," published in 1960 as an introductory essay in *Selected Papers from the American Anthropologist, 1888–1920* (F. de Laguna, Ed.). It is George W. Stocking, Jr., however, a historian who studied anthropology with Hallowell, who has principally developed the historiography of this period and whose work forms the basis for that of such younger historians as Regna Darnell, Joan Mark, and the present author, Curtis Hinsley, Jr.

Savages and Scientists is the most detailed publication to date on the institutionalized setting of early American anthropology, the Smithsonian Institution and in particular its subsidiary, the Bureau of American Ethnology, from the Smithsonian's founding in 1846 to 1910. Only a quarter of the book concerns the years before the founding of the BAE in 1879, and there is little on the years after 1902, the date of the death of John Wesley Powell, who was the chief of the BAE and the architect of the government-dominated period of U.S. anthropology.

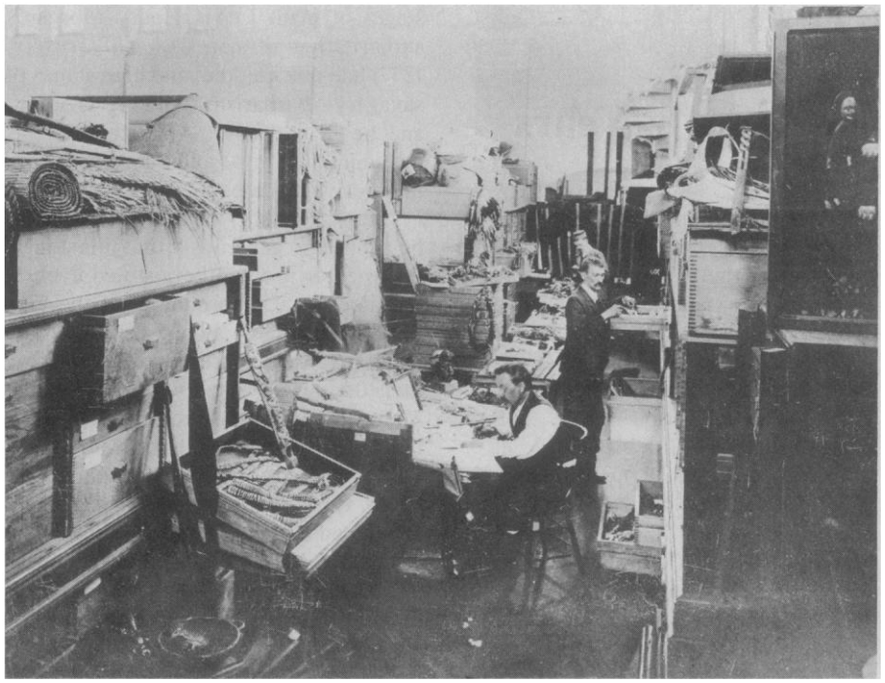
The "savages" of the title are the American Indians, whose existence had had an intellectual impact on the West since the time of Columbus and whose presence gave North American white society intellectual, moral, and occasional practical challenges. Anthropology gradually emerged as the science that dealt with these challenges: questions about the humanity, origins, languages, and cultures of the Indians and their relations with peoples of the Old World. The "savages" of the title also signifies the way in whch many of these questions about the Indians were answered by key American anthropologists. The views of Powell and those he dominated were basically little different from those held in the 18th century, which saw progress from a state of savagery to one of civilization. Herder had said that the Germans had once been Patagonians! However, it was in the last half of the 19th century that a detailed evolutionary scheme was to be worked out for the stages of man. Lewis Henry Morgan's authoritative version (*Ancient Society*, 1877) had low, middle, and high stages of savagery, barbarism, and civilization, and he held that all American Indians including the Mayas and the Aztecs were in the savage state.

The "scientists" of the title seems to be applied so generously that it is doubtful whether it could be justified even at the time for a large number of the men who figure in the book. Certainly the major historical figures were scientists in their day and are still considered such. They were all in their turn presidents of the AAAS—Lewis Henry Morgan in 1880, John Wesley Powell in 1888, and Franz Boas in 1931. Morgan set out a developed and coherent, classic scheme of cultural evolution, and Powell elevated Morgan's ideas as he understood them to official status and saw that they got institutional support. At the turn of the century Boas challenged evolutionism as empirically and logically defective and the anthropology of Washington, D.C., as largely lacking in scientific authority.

Hinsley's aim is to combine biographical history with institutional and intellectual history. His success in this is mixed. Partly because he seems to be obliged to bring everybody ever connected with the Smithsonian or the BAE in the years concerned into the story, the book occasionally reads like a dutiful in-house chronicle, but in general the names and biographical details given are significant. The greatest biographical attention is given to Powell and to two of his BAE anthropologists, Frank Hamilton Cush-



"Franz Boas posing as a Kwakiutl hamatsa dancer for a National Museum diorama, 1895." [National Anthropological Archives, National Museum of American History; reproduced in *Savages and Scientists*]



"Offices of the Department of Ethnology at the National Museum, c. 1890." [National Anthropological Archives, National Museum of Natural History; reproduced in *Savages and Scientists*]

ing and James Mooney. Powell is shown as Western explorer, follower of Morgan's theories, energetic surveyor of Indian languages and tribes, and doctrinaire and autocratic director of BAE research. Cushing and Mooney are presented first of all as prototypical anthropologists who fit the modern ideal type of "homeless hero" or heroic assimilator of an exotic culture at cost of an alienating objectivity about one's own culture. One can see why many anthropologists are rather taken with Susan Sontag's notion of the anthropologist as homeless hero, but why should not Hinsley, a historian, have examined it more coolly? Cushing worked under daunting circumstances in Zuñi, and his own poor health was perhaps his greatest trial of all, but, notwithstanding the wholehearted admiration due to him for his courage and accomplishment and to Mooney and many other anthropologists early and recent, they do not seem to have been any more alienated from their culture than all sorts of other Americans of their day and since. The Zuñi and Kiowa are not required. American society has itself stimulated much critical thought and disaffection. In fact Cushing and Mooney seem best of all to represent the personal and unprofessional fashion in which most men and women got to be anthropologists in the days when the government was the center of anthropological activity, jobs, and status and Powell was the government's arbiter. Both men began as kids interested in Indians and neither had much formal education. Cushing was to be taken up by the Smithsonian in his teens and to soon work himself into favor and a permanent job. Mooney laid siege to a job at the Bureau in his early 20's and was eventually supported in his ethnographic work with first the Cherokee and later the Plains Indians. There are differences of opinion about the value of Cushing's work but not about Mooney's nor that of a number of other BAE "anthropologists," mostly amateurs or with amateur beginnings who published under Powell—Dorsey, Gatschet, Fewkes, Stevenson, Swanton, and Boas. The list of Powell anthropologists is, however, far longer, about 30, and many of the names on it are of such little distinction that it makes the end of the Powell era seem long overdue.

Hinsley has added much detailed information to the institutional history of early American anthropology and his account of the Smithsonian from 1846 to 1910 has unity, yet there should be enough on its subsequent history to indicate its continuing importance. Anthropology became professionalized and the university became its institutional center, but the Smithsonian and BAE were to go on playing a splendid role in anthropological research and publication as it too became professionalized. Hinsley closes his account in 1910, but after that date 11 more monographs were published with the Annual Reports of the Bureau and between that date and 1971 about 160 more Bulletins. Since 1971 we have the series called the Smithsonian Contributions to Anthropology. Many of these publications over the years are of extraordinary value, and in addition to this the Smithsonian has contributed to ethnographic and archeological research and has built one of the great anthropology museums.

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Crustaceans

The Biology and Management of Lobsters. J. STANLEY COBB and BRUCE F. PHILLIPS, Eds. Academic Press, New York, 1980. In two volumes. Vol. 1, Physiology and Behavior. xvi, 462 pp., illus. $55. Vol. 2, Ecology and Management. xiv, 390 pp., illus. $45.

Lobster has a special place in any list of culinary delights. It has been a favorite of the European aristocracy for many centuries, and today's consumers are willing to pay more per kilogram for it than for almost any other major foodstuff. World consumption is at present around 130 million kilograms, but all the signs indicate overexploitation and the probability of future declines in world stocks. The ten-year averages of landings of the clawed lobster *Homarus gammarus* in Europe declined from over 3 million kilograms per annum in the 1950's to under 1.9 million kilograms per annum in the 1970's. The eastern North American catch of clawed lobsters was between 30 and 35 million kilograms per annum in the 1950's but was consistently below 28 million kilograms per annum in the 1970's; during this interval the number of traps fished increased 60 to 70 percent. Decline in catch per unit effort is a strong indicator of decline in stocks. In South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and countries adjacent to the Caribbean area, there are major fisheries for clawless, so-called spiny lobsters. Here again there are indications of overexploitation, for example falling catches in New Zealand and stable catches with increasing effort in Australia.

An international group of specialists in lobster biology met in Perth, Australia, in 1977, and this book is a revised and enlarged version of the proceedings. Lobster anatomy, physiology, and behavior are relatively well understood, for lobsters are excellent experimental ani-