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Morgan, Fison, and an Abortive Field Expedition Through Polynesia

George W. Stocking Jr.

Lewis Henry Morgan

Other additions to existing collections include approximately fifty cubic feet of records of the River Basin Surveys, mostly photographic materials. The archives now has over 250 cubic feet of documents covering the period 1946-69 that reflect the history and findings of this large-scale program in salvage archeology. To the papers of the physical anthropologist Ales Hrdlicka have been added approximately forty linear feet of photographic material and a large bibliographic card file that is arranged by subject. A number of small increments to the records of the Smithsonian's Department of Anthropology include several catalogs of early private ethnological collections, correspondence and photographic materials of several early Smithsonian curators, and a small bundle of materials of the Department's Animal Products Section.

Researchers interested in the holdings of the Archives may find useful the recently published Catalog to Manuscripts in the National Anthropological Archives, G. K. Hall and Company, 1975. The cataloged manuscripts represent approximately one-fourth of the holdings. For specific information about the collections described above, researchers should write to the National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C. 20560. Since use of some of the collections is restricted, inquiries concerning their status should be made well in advance of visits.

FOOTNOTES FOR THE HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY

MORGAN, FISON, AND AN ABORTIVE FIELD EXPEDITION THROUGH POLYNESIA

Lewis Henry Morgan's epistolary relationship with the Australian anthropologist Lorimer Fison is well-known in the history of anthropology, and a portion of their correspondence has been easily available since 1930, when Bernhard Stern published "Selections from the Letters of Lorimer Fison and A. W. Howitt to Lewis Henry Morgan" in the American Anthropologist (32:257-277, 419-453). At that time, Morgan's Letters to his Australian disciples were not available in this country, but by the later 1930's copies of these materials were obtained by the University of Rochester Library, whose permission to reproduce the following selections is gratefully acknowledged:

Rochester. May 15, 1877

My Dear Sir:

Our correspondence has reached the flagging stage, and I miss your letters which used to come with regularity. I suppose you are now at the Fiji Islands, and that you find less opportunity for ethnological work there than you did in Australia. But still you are in a great field because the work done to show the organization and plan of life among Savages has been so insufficiently done that one good observer can find enough to work upon in any part of Polynesia.

Since you left Australia I have heard two or three times from Mr. A. W. Howitt. He sent me last year a Report on the Geological Survey of a part of Australia in which I find he is a geologist by profession. I was quite interested in the work and in its high character. The English race in Australia is a repetition of the same race in America as represented by our forefathers, and they are meeting with a similar experience. It is the only race since the Roman, with the power and the faculty to organise and plant society. In the end they will repeat the Roman experience of taking possession of the greater part of the Earth. We feel competent to handle North & South America. And you are likely to hold and possess India, Australia and a good share of Africa.

My book entitled "Ancient Society"...has just made its appearance...and I allow myself to think it has some ethnological value. Whether anybody else will think so I cannot tell. It was a much greater labor to write it than the reader would imagine, particularly the part on the Grecian and Roman gentile organisation.

...A private scientific expedition round the world is to start from New York this fall to be (gone) about two years. It will have six or eight professors and about fifty students. Mr. Woodruff, a gentleman of wealth, is the originator of it, and goes with it. They go first down the American coast around Cape Horn and then to Valparaiso, and then from there westerly to the Papuan Islands. I presume the boat, a steamer, will touch at Fiji. I have asked Mr. Woodruff to take along my Schedules, and get the consanguinity of all these islands. If I see him again I will give him a letter of introduction to you. They will go to Australia, Borneo, and China. I wish you could go with them through these Islands. They return by way of Calcutta, Singapore and the Red Sea to the Mediterranean. The Professors are to make reports which will be published in due time. If you could join the Expedition and go through Polynesia you could take what schedules you have, and the new ones you could obtain, and thus utilize your past work and make a most valuable report. Keep this in mind. I will write to him on the subject, and urge him to give you a place among the Professors, which would give you a salary as well as a membership in the Expedition, and a publisher as well. Whether all this can be done I cannot tell. He make take an ethnologist and philologist with him. If he takes a philologist only that will leave a place open. I enclose a circular sent to me a few days ago which shows the general route of the steamer, etc.

Part III of my book is devoted to the Family in 5 chapters. I have reproduced the explanation of the origin of the system given in systems of consanguinity. I shall be glad to know whether you think my positions are sustained

by the facts. At the end of it is an answer to McLennan, author of "Primitive Marriage", who has attacked this explanation with heat and thus provoked a criticism of his book which otherwise I would not have made. ...

Rochester. July 14, 1877

My Dear Sir:

...A few days ago (Mr. Woodruff) called to see me on his way to New York, when the matter was again referred to. He said at once he would take (you) on and that it would cost you nothing, and he would see what better he could do. Three of the Professors, Philology, Architecture, and Anthropology, cover, after a fashion, "Ethnology"; but I told him it would require a specialist to do the work on consanguinity & affinity and the plan of domestic life of the Island Tribes, with some knowledge of the Polynesian languages. ...If his company fills up and he starts right he will be glad I think to make an arrangement that will be satisfactory to you. I told him you were on a Missionary's Salary, with a family to provide for, and that I did not think you would be free to join the expedition except at a salary. Thus the matter stands. I hope you will get a leave of absence and be ready to improve this opportunity, should it be offered to your satisfaction. Why not continue with the expedition to England if you join it, and make your report on the way? And then return by way of New York and San Francisco, which would take you through Rochester.

...(The) great desiderata are the forms of the family and the plan of domestic life of these tribes. The Polynesian system of consanguinity shows that the family was consanguine when the system was formed; but the family must have advanced into the punaluan form. You can thoroughly test this hypothesis by running out the group united to subsistence, and finding the limits of the theoretical groups which should be even larger. In sections where the Polynesian system verges upon the Turanian...you may expect to find the pairing family. Here the group united for subsistence would be still smaller. The work on the domestic life of savages and barbarians has been so imperfectly done in this respect that we know little about it. The evidence of communism in living appears at many points. It is here that we want thorough work. There is no one so well qualified to do it as yourself. The route of this expedition is through the places and regions where the evidence still exists, if anywhere. Groups larger than the man and wife with their children must be found in any village who live from common stores, and you have only to study the size and organization of this group united for subsistence to get the

run of their scheme of life. At the seaports, where intercourse with Europeans prevails, old usages may have been modified; but in the interior of these Islands which it is the intention of the expedition to visit, the real facts of their condition can be found. It is such a grand opportunity that I cannot express to you how anxious I am to have before the world the results of an investigation of these subjects, which you could make. I think the growth of the family is destined to be a prominent question in Ethnology for some years to come...

Yours truly,

L. H. Morgan

The Woodruff venture was conceived as a combination research expedition and floating college, with a faculty drawn from various disciplines and several major American universities. Despite the endorsement of Joseph Henry, Asa Gray, and the presidents of Cornell, Michigan, Rochester and Yale, the expedition was called off for lack of students. By that time, however, Fison had already indicated that his family obligations would make the project impossible for him. (Cf. Final Announcement of the Woodruff Scientific Expedition Around the World, Indianapolis, 1877; and other letters in the Lewis Henry Morgan papers.)

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

THE FIRST AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Although many of our readers will doubtless be surprised to learn it, the American Anthropological Association which is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year is not the first organization to bear that name. During the first centennial year of American independence, the following printed notice went out from the Midwest announcing the formation of a new national society:

American
Anthropological
Association

Ashtabula, Ohio, U.S.A., October 1st, 1876

Sir:

Obedient to a call signed by several prominent scientific gentlemen, in conjunction with a committee previously appointed by the "State Archaeological Association of Ohio," An INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF ARCHAEOLOGISTS assembled at Philadelphia on the 4th of September, ult. Gentlemen were present from various sections of the United States and from foreign countries; the latter being chiefly persons representing the different commissions connected with the Centennial Exposition.