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Frederick Ward Putnam Papers

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This mammal, 'tis said, had a pedigree too.
The marsupial order here comes into view.
Se we'll trace him, I think, to a big kangaroo.

This kangaroo's sire was most likely a bird
Or an ornithorhyncus would not be absurd;
Then to frogs & strange fishes we're backwards referred.

Thus far Darwin says. But the root of the tree,
What it was, when it came, & what caused it to be,
Is a puzzle to him quite as much as to me.

The text, from Fison's "Extracts Book" in the Fison Papers, Tippet Collection, St. Mark's Library (Canberra) is not dated, but on the evidence of adjacent entries would seem to be 1872 or 1873--at a point when Fison had not yet become seriously engaged in Morgan's project. The phrases bracketed above are alternative passages interlineated in the original manuscript. There is also a version of this (basically the same text, minus verses 2, 5, and 6), in Fison's unpublished manuscript, Study of Ancient Society (also in the Tippet Collection, but probably mid 1890s). A letter from Fison to Howitt, dated 5/20/1876 (Fison letterbook 5:64-65) offers a prose elaboration of his position:

I believe in Evolution. Only I don't believe in the Evolutionists. And moreover I cannot find proof that a number of successive stages forming an ascending series compels me to accept a lower than the lowest. There may have been--in all probability there was--a lower than the lowest I have yet seen, but was there a lower than that? Who can say? I see the upper part of a ladder reared against an adjoining building, & take it for granted that there are a number of rungs below the lowest which my window allows me to behold; but I know there is a foot to the ladder, & that the rungs end somewhere. . . Evolution must begin somewhere, & the farther back we push that somewhere the greater the wonders which lie within it, &, as it seems to me, the stronger the proof of Somebody (if on may so speak) behind it. An atom with the certainty of a Universe within it proves to me the existence of a God).

SOURCES FOR THE HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY

I. Frederick Ward Putnam Papers-The papers of Ralph W. Dexter in the Kent State University Archives contain six boxes of important materials relating to the career of Frederick Ward Putnam, who was the subject of numerous short publications by Dexter during several decades before the latter's death. Among the Putnam materials are a cache of wonderful photos of Putnam, his family, and the houses they lived in; sketches, and letters (1858-60) from Putnam to his first wife, Adelaide, before they were married. There is also material (originally in the American Museum of Natural History Department of Anthropology, and transmitted to the Harvard University Archives in 1944) relating to Putnam's career at the AMNH. These include

many letters from Franz Boas (notably a series written from British Columbia in 1897. which was almost certainly not copied anywhere else) There is also at least one very long letter, written in 1895 from South America, from Adolphe Bandelier, and much more--including Putnam's personal scrapbook of newspaper articles and notices about himself, his work, and anthropology--
-C. H. Hinsley.

II. Lewis Henry Morgan's Library--Thomas Trautman, intellectual biographer of Lewis H. Morgan, and Karl Kabelac, Manuscripts Librarian of the Rush Rhees Library, Rochester University, where the Morgan papers are preserved, have recently published a 336 page volume describing The Library of Lewis Henry Morgan and Mary Elizabeth Morgan. The volume (which constitutes parts 6 and 7 of volume 84 of the Transactions of the American Philosophical Society) includes a preface by Trautman, a 57 page "Introduction," an "Inventory" prepared by Morgan himself, a "Catalogue" with full bibliographic information on each of the 1196 items, and a "Register" of the Morgan papers in the Rare Books and Special Collections department of the Rush Rhees Library.

III. Preservation of the Anthropological Record--belatedly, we note that papers from the conference held early in 1992 (HAN 19, #2:11-12) were published later that year by the Wenner-Gren Foundation. Edited by Sydel Silverman and Nancy Parezo, and entitled Preserving the Anthropological Record, the volume includes papers on specific archives (The National Anthropological Archives and the Melanesian Archive), on "Discipline History Centers in the Sciences," on the role of museums, and on the preservation of records in archeology and in applied anthropology. There are also "guidelines" for individuals and institutions, as well as discussions of problems of physical preservation, the role of computers, the future uses of the record, and "the next steps" in its preservation.

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Claude Blanckaert of the Équipe de Recherche "Les institutions anthropologiques en France de 1800 à 1940" is planning a volume on this subject, to appear in 1996. The address is: Dr. Claude Blanckaert, Centre Alexandre Koyré, Histoire des Sciences et des Techniques, EHESS - MNHN, UMR 48 du CNRS, Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Pavillon Chevreul, 57 rue Cuvier, 75231 Paris Cedex 05, France.

Hilary Lapsley, Senior Lecturer in Women's Studies, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand, is writing a book about the friendship between Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict, from the point of view of their bisexual and lesbian identities.

H. Glenn Penny III, a graduate student in history at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, is working on a dissertation treating German ethnographic museums as the site of an investigation into the process of "identity formation" in Wilhelmine Germany, in which "scientific schemes of classification were used to reorder the world and to fashion tangible identities for Germans as well as other peoples."