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Book Reviews

Savages and Scientists: The Smithsonian Institution and the Development of American Anthropology 1846-1910. By Curtis M. Hinsley, Jr. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981. 319 pp. \$19.95.

According to Edward Everett Hale, Washington in the 1840s was a "mud-hole." Perhaps, but that did not deter Washington from gaining a scientific jewel, the Smithsonian Institution, and it is with Smithsonian anthropology that Hinsley begins his account of the development of American anthropology in the last half of the nineteenth century. The early years of the Smithsonian Institution were dominated by Joseph Henry, its first secretary. Henry gave invaluable aid to the young science not only by publishing works in archaeology, philology, and ethnology in the Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge—a publication series that won high international praise—but also by providing a haven of congeniality for "anthropologists" where they could study collections, pursue research, and discuss their results.

With the founding of the Bureau of American Ethnology in 1879 as a part of the Smithsonian Institution—but under the directorship of John Wesley Powell—funds were provided for research and the first steps towards professionalization of anthropology were achieved. As director of the B.A.E., Powell assumed a major role in defining the course of American anthropology, one that reflected the intellectual and scientific suppositions of the day.

According to Hinsley, strains in late nineteenth-century society led many Americans to fear the destruction of civilization as they knew it. Powell shared these misgivings and

deplored the ultimate consequences of a disintegrating society. "Powell struggled all his life to compose a philosophy that at once embraced the powerful truths of evolutionary science, preserved unity and purpose in a changing cosmos, and bolstered the faith of human dignity and autonomy" (p. 125). This philosophical view served as the underpinning of Powell's anthropology, wherein a proper attitude towards science, or rather scientific method, was more important than expertise. Those whom Powell gathered around him did not all subscribe to his belief in social evolution. However, they did enthusiastically support the gathering and recording of American Indian culture.

Several years ago, Neil Judd in *The Bureau of American Ethnology: A Partial History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), sketched the lives and contributions of the men and women who considered the B.A.E. their second home, but Hinsley carries us further through his skillful interweaving of personalities and Bureau politics. There was the Swiss born Gatchet, whose ethnological world revolved around the recording of vocabularies; Rev. Dorsey, whose religious musings and battles of conscience did not detract from his sensitive accounts of the Ponca and Omaha; the erratic Cushing, whose career blazed like a comet across the ethnological sky leaving both gems and wreckage in its wake; the outsider Mooney, whose sympathetic and poignant works and pictures of the Sioux, Kiowa and Cherokee caught cultures in the throes of devastating change; and the farm boy from Iowa, McGee, Powell's protege who assumed the acting directorship of the B.A.E. upon Powell's death.

The shifting political scene at the B.A.E. and at the Smithsonian Institution is well presented: the rise of the U.S. National Museum; the sporadic labors expended on the anthropological survey, which finally emerged as the two-volume *Handbook of the American Indians North of Mexico*; and the battles over budgets, power, and autonomy. It is the story of Powell's ability to set priorities in anthropological research and, through his editing of B.A.E. Reports, to reshape the works of others to harmonize with his own philosophical viewpoint.

The demise of the B.A.E. as Powell conceived it came suddenly but not unexpectedly. With Powell's death, a struggle ensued between McGee and the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. Jealousies, acute feelings of distrust, scrambles for

money and power, charges of corruption and graft, "witch hunts," all took their toll on the Bureau's reputation. The crisis brought on by Powell's death, however, was merely a symptom of more fundamental changes in the nature of scientific research.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the pursuit of science was primarily for individual enrichment, but by 1900 that had changed. The "life of science" conceived by Joseph Henry as an "ennobling exercise," a search for wisdom, a spiritual quest, was subordinated to pragmatic goals of research. This pragmatic orientation had been evolving incrementally throughout the century and by 1900 outweighed any spiritual inducements. Universities, especially the newly established graduate schools, increasingly engaged in theoretical scientific research and further eroded the government's role in this area. Moreover, Congress' growing need for data upon which to base policy put pressure on the B.A.E. to abandon theoretical research for more utilitarian goals. A Congress increasingly concerned with practical results from research it funded forced the B.A.E. to reappraise projects and argue their importance in utilitarian terms. Hinsley's study touches upon these points, including the limitations under which anthropologists worked and the clash between scientific goals and public expectations, but the whole issue deserves more extensive coverage. His account of Congressional pressure, however, definitely dispels the notion that anthropological research was guided solely by researchers' whims. That the B.A.E. enjoyed as much independence as it did in allocating funds to projects, Hinsley attributes to the reputation and preeminence of Powell.

But what of Native Americans? After all, the intellectual scaffolding of American anthropology was erected on the study of their cultures. Unfortunately, while Native American cultures were central to the development of American anthropology, Native Americans do not form an integral part of *Savages and Scientists*. While Indians are depicted sensitively throughout the book, they are nevertheless treated as passive objects studied by anthropologists. The use of "savages" in the title initially seems an unfortunate choice, but upon further consideration does mirror the attitudes of nineteenth-century anthropologists who lived in a society that believed the celebration of civilization could best be appreciated by "exhibiting the inferiority of other peoples" (p. 83). Since most Americans believed the cultures of Indians to be inferior, it was easy to equate such cultures with savagism.

Mentioned above is the desire to know more about the influence of Congress on anthropological research; another is to have more information about anthropologists not connected with the Washington establishment. For example, did Alice Fletcher, Daniel Brinton, and Frederick W. Putnam have any influence on research interests at the B.A.E.? Did they follow the directions for anthropology as defined in the Bureau or did they go their own way? Albeit, the book's thesis is Washington anthropology, but by considering briefly other anthropologists and their works, the B.A.E. contributions to anthropology would have been better illuminated. Hinsley does discuss briefly the career of Franz Boas, a topic covered more extensively in George W. Stocking's *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1968), and *The Shaping of American Anthropology, 1883-1911: A Franz Boas Reader* (New York: Basic Books, 1974). Hinsley's account, however, is valuable in that it fleshes out Boas' Washington connection.

Yet, despite these reservations, *Savages and Scientists* is a valuable book and the best one we have on this topic. It is a solid contribution to both intellectual and social science history and is as splendidly researched as it is elegantly written.

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Holy Wind in Navajo Philosophy. By James Kale McNeley. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1981. 133 pp. \$6.95 paper; \$14.95 cloth.

More often than not, when the term "philosophy" is used, it is in one of two senses. By "philosophy" we might be referring to the academic discipline whose full-blown development in the West comes first with the work of Plato. "Philosophy" in this sense, or "academic philosophy," is the pursuit of certain kinds of questions which are unanswerable by either science or religion in terms of the principles of reason. Academic philosophy is seldom practiced outside the realm of the college or university. "Philosophy," however, is frequently used in the second way. "Philosophy," in this second sense, means some-