

Field notebooks and anthropometric data
ca. 1883-1912
Mss.B.B61.5

American Philosophical Society
3/2002
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Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Background note	4
Scope & content	6
Administrative Information	7
Related Materials	7
Indexing Terms	8
Bibliography	8
Collection Inventory	10
Field notebooks and anthropometric data.....	10

Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Creator	Boas, Franz, 1858-1942
Title	Field notebooks and anthropometric data
Date [inclusive]	ca. 1883-1912
Call number	Mss.B.B61.5
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Location	LH-B-14-3
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Abstract	Anthropometric data from various Native American groups, language materials from the Northwest Coast and Mexico, typescripts of papers, a diary of a field trip to Baffin Island (N.W.T.), Canada, and genealogical data
Preferred Citation	Cite as: Franz Boas field notebooks and anthropometric data, American Philosophical Society.

Background note

Born in Minden, Germany, on July 8, 1858, the anthropologist Franz Boas was the son of the merchant Meier Boas and his wife, Sophie Meyer. Raised in the radical and tradition of German Judaism, Franz's youth was steeped in politically liberal beliefs and a largely secular outlook that he carried with him from university through his emigration to the United States.

At the universities of Heidelberg and Bonn, Boas studied physics and geography before completing a doctorate in physical geography at Kiel in 1881. Intending on testing then-current theories of environmental determinism, he signed on to an anthropological expedition to Baffin Island in 1883-1884, expecting that he would document the close adaptative fit of Central Eskimo cultures to their extreme climate. His experiences in the arctic, however, led him to the contrary conclusion: that social traditions, not environmental, exerted a dominant influence over human societies, and from this point onward, he was led to pursue the cultural over than physical dimensions of humanity.

Although he returned to Berlin after the expedition, Boas emigrated to the United States in 1885 to assume an editorial position with the journal *Science*, hoping to use it as a stepping-stone to an academic appointment. In 1886, he embarked upon a second major field excursion into what would become his most famous ethnographic project, working among the Kwakiutl (Kwakwaka'wakw) Indians of the Northwest Coast, after which he secured his first academic position in 1889, at Clark University in Worcester, Mass. After three years at Clark and a failed appointment at the Field Museum in Chicago in 1892 (during which he played a part in organizing the anthropological exhibits for the Columbian World's Fair), Boas moved to New York City.

The restless activity of Boas's early years slowed in New York. Hired by the American Museum of Natural History (1895-1905), which became the recipient of the amazingly rich anthropological collections he accumulated on the Northwest Coast, Boas began to teach classes at Columbia University in 1896, where three years later he was appointed Professor of Anthropology. For the next 37 years, Boas ruled the anthropological roost at Columbia, accruing unprecedented power in his discipline, wielding grants, recommendations, and appointments with remarkable dexterity, and collecting about him a remarkable group of younger scholars as students and colleagues.

Distancing himself from some of the main currents of contemporary anthropological thought in the United States, and particularly from the evolutionist assumptions that riddled the discipline, Boas championed an anthropology that viewed human cultures as shaped more by historical "tradition" than biological propensity. Claiming to resist any overarching, synthetic theories of human relations, and particularly evolutionary theories of sociocultural development, Boas laid the theoretical groundwork for what became modern cultural relativism. In the process, he helped to clarify the demarcation between the concepts of culture and race and its expression in the divergence of the four fields in anthropology -- linguistics, ethnography, physical anthropology, and archaeology.

Boas's relatively few forays into physical anthropology included a pioneering anthropometric study in 1910-1911, demonstrating that the alleged mental and physical inferiority of immigrants disappeared statistically by the second generation. Opposed to immigration quotas and disdainful of the claims to

science used to justify them, Boas was a consistent, strident opponent of racial determinism in intellect or behavior. A committed, politically active Socialist, he was frequently an outspoken critic of American policy. During the First World War, he spoke out against the treatment of German Americans and "enemy aliens" -- to the point of putting himself at risk -- and the rise of the Nazi party in Germany proved an even greater crusade. Despite his age, Boas took an active role in the anti-fascist struggle in the United States and was involved with numerous committees to assist refugee scholars. He was equally ardent in his efforts to criticize racial and ethnic bigotry in the United States.

As a mentor, Boas had a reputation of being directive, at times overbearing, and at the same time of doing too little to prepare his students for the rigors of fieldwork. The extraordinary number of students coming out of Columbia under his care, however, has arguably done as much to extend the Boasian approach than Boas's own writing. Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, Elsie Clews Parsons, Alfred Kroeber, Frank Speck, Edward Sapir, Zora Neale Hurston, Ella Deloria, Melville Herskovits, Leslie Spier, Paul Radin, and Ashley Montagu are all students of Boas. Many continued in the same intellectual stream, some diverged, yet all bore traces of Boas's influence. He left a mark as well on the institutions of the discipline, as one of the founders of the American Anthropological Association and of the *International Journal of American Linguistics*.

Scope & content

Anthropometric data from various Native American groups, language materials from the Northwest Coast and Mexico, typescripts of papers, a diary of a field trip to Baffin Island (N.W.T.), Canada, and genealogical data.

The Series also includes a small number of essays by Boas, including his "Darwin in relation to anthropology."

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society 3/2002

Provenance

Acquisition Information

Gift of Northwestern University Library, 1979 (accession number 1979-1592ms).

Related Materials

Related Material

Other Franz Boas Collections

Franz Boas Papers, 1862-1942 (Mss B B61)

[View Collection](#)

Franz Boas Professional Papers, ca. 1860-1942 (Mss B B61p)

[View Collection](#)

Boas Family Papers, 1862-1942 (Mss B B61f)

[View Collection](#)

Boas-Rukeyser Collection, 1869-1940 (Mss B B61ru)

[View Collection](#)

United States Federal Bureau of Investigation Files, 1939-1950 (Mss B B61f.1)

[View Collection](#)

The American Council of Learned Societies Committee on Native American Languages, Franz Boas Collection of Materials for American Linguistics ([Mss 497.3.B63c](#)) is a large collection of primary materials on Native American languages assembled, in part, under Boas's supervision, and including a large quantity of material written by Boas himself.

Boas appears as a correspondent in numerous APS collections, and in addition to its rich collections for the history of anthropology, the library houses the papers of several of Boas's former students and proteges, including Frank Speck ([Mss. Ms. Coll. 126](#),), Elsie Clews Parsons ([Mss. Ms. Coll. 29](#),), John Alden Mason ([Mss. B M384](#),), Paul Radin ([Mss. 497.3 R114](#),), and Ashley Montagu ([Mss. Ms. Coll. 109](#)).

The APS also houses a microfilm (372.3, reel 1) of original materials in the Office of Anthropology Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., relating to Boas's trips to Baffin Island (N.W.T.) and British Columbia, during which he studied and collected cultural materials, 1885-1909.

The papers of Boas's son Ernst Boas ([Mss. Ms. Coll. 10](#)) are housed at the APS. A physician, Ernst Boas shared his father's liberal political outlook and activist social views.

Indexing Terms

Genre(s)

- Diaries.
- Notebooks

Geographic Name(s)

- Baffin Island (N.W.T.)

Personal Name(s)

- Darwin, Charles, 1809-1882

Subject(s)

- Anthropology--Research--United States
- Anthropometry -- Research.
- Indians of Mexico--Languages
- Indians of North America--Anthropometry
- Indians of North America--Northwest Territories--Languages

Bibliography

Rohner, Ronald P., ed., *The Ethnography of Franz Boas: Letters and Diaries of Franz Boas, Written on the Northwest Coast from 1886 to 1931* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1969). **Call no.:** B B61e.r

Stocking, George, ed., *The Shaping of American Anthropology, 1883-1911: A Franz Boas Reader* (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1974). **Call no.:** 572.081 B63s

Cole, Douglas, *Franz Boas: The Early Years, 1859-1906* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington, 1999).

Boas, Franz, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (N.Y.: MacMillan, 1911). **Call no.:** 572 B63m

Boas, Franz, *Ethnology of the Kwakiutl* (Washington, D.C.:Government Printing Office, 1921). **Call no.:** 572.97 B63e

Boas, Franz, *Primitive Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1927). **Call no.:** 571.7 B63p

Boas, Franz, ed., *General Anthropology* (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1938). **Call no.:** 572 B63g.r

Boas, Franz, *Race, Language and Culture* (N.Y.: MacMillan, 1940). **Call no.:** 572.081 B63r

Field notebooks and anthropometric data

Collection Inventory

Boas, Franz, 1858-1942	ca. 1883-1912	1.5 linear feet
Field notebooks and anthropometric data		
Anthropometric datasheets: Recorded at Kamloops School...	Summer 1897	Box 1
Recorded at Kamloops School and other locations, British Columbia and Washington. Data for Lilloet, Bella Bella, Salish, Thompson.		
Anthropometric datasheets: Recorded at Winnebago Reservation...	Summer 1892	Box 1
Recorded at Winnebago Reservation, Minn. Data for Winnebago.		
Anthropometric datasheets: Recorded at Tahlequah, Oklahoma, and other locations...	Summer 1892	Box 1
Recorded at Tahlequah, Oklahoma, and other locations. Data for Cherokee.		
Anthropometric datasheets: Recorded at Lincoln College, Philadelphia...	Summer 1892	Box 1
Recorded at Lincoln College, Philadelphia. Data for Oglalla, Cheyenne, Omaha, etc.		
Anthropometric datasheets: Data for Santee, Yankton, etc.	Summer 1892	Box 1
Data for Santee, Yankton, etc.		
Anthropometric datasheets: Recorded at various locations in Ontario...	Summer 1892	Box 1
Recorded at various locations in Ontario. Data for Mississagua, Chippewa, Oneida, Munsee, Ottawa, etc.		
	Summer 1892	Box 1

Field notebooks and anthropometric data

Anthropometric datasheets: Recorded at
Crow Agency, N.D....

Recorded at Crow Agency, N.D. Data for Crow.

Anthropometric datasheets: Recorded at Cheyenne River Agency, S.D....	Summer 1891	Box 2
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Recorded at Cheyenne River Agency, S.D. Data for Dakota, etc.

Anthropometric datasheets: Recorded at White Earth Agency...	Summer 1892	Box 2
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Recorded at White Earth Agency, Leech lake, and Pine Point, Minn. Data for Chippewa, etc.

Anthropometric datasheets: Recorded at Anadarko, Fort Sill, and Grantham Springs...	ca.1892	Box 2
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Recorded at Anadarko, Fort Sill, and Grantham Springs, Indian Territory (Oklahoma). Data for
Kiowa, Comanche, Apache, etc.

Anthropometric datasheets: Recorded at Omaha Government School...	ca. 1891-1892	Box 2
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Recorded at Omaha Government School, Nebraska. Data for Omaha.

Anthropometric datasheets: Recorded at Stonewall and Tishimingo...	Summer 1891	Box 2
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Recorded at Stonewall and Tishimingo, Indian Territory (Oklahoma). Data for Chickasaw.

Anthropometric datasheets: Recorded at various locations in Saskatchewan and Manitoba...	Summer 1891	Box 2
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Recorded at various locations in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Data for Ojibwa, Cree, Saulteux, etc.

Anthropometric datasheets: Recorded at Kamloops, Lytton, and other locations...	Summer 1892	Box 2
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Field notebooks and anthropometric data

Recorded at Kamloops, Lytton, and other locations in British Columbia, Spokane, Washington. Data for Thompson, etc.

Baffinland diary	1883 July 16-1884 January	Black cloth binding	Box 3
Sketches			
Baffinland notebook	1883-1884	Black cloth binding	Box 3
Sketches			
Field notes 1886 #1	1886 September 18-October 3	Brown lea.	Box 3
Includes vocabularies, texts, shorthand notes for Tsimshian, Bella Coola, Tlingit, Bella Bella Native American Images note: Sketches.			
Field notes 1886 #2	1886 November	Disbound.	Box 3
Includes vocabularies, texts, shorthand notes for Comox, Lequiltq, Sisia'atl (Sechelt).			
Field notes 1886 #3	1886 October 26-November	Disbound	Box 3
Includes vocabularies, texts, shorthand notes for Bella Coola, Tlingit, Cowichan, Nitinat, Comox, Pentlatch, Lequiltq, Sisia'atl (Sechelt). native American Images note; Sketches			
Field notes 1886 #4	1886 November-December 16	Black paper	Box 3
Includes vocabularies, texts, shorthand notes for Pentlatch, Comox, Eeqswem, Nanaimo, Squamish. Native American Images note: Sketches			
Field notes 1888 #1	1888 May 31-June	Black cloth binding	Box 3
Includes vocabularies, texts, shorthand notes for Squamish, Tsimshian, Nisgah, Haida, Coastal Salishan anthropology, Tahltan, Kwakwala, Tlingit, Heiltsuk.			

Field notebooks and anthropometric data

Native American Images note: Sketches

Field notes 1888 #2	1888 June-July 24	Black cloth binding	Box 3
Includes vocabularies, texts, shorthand notes for Heiltsuk, Tlingit, Haida, Cowichan, "Aht," Nootka, Ntlakapamuk, Kootena. Native American Images note: Sketches.			
Field notes 1889 #1	1889 July 24	Black cloth binding, 351p.	Box 3
Part of BAAS survey, including linguistic data on Songish, Alberni, Bella Coola, and Bella Bella. Native American Images note: Sketches			
Field notes 1889 #2	1889(?)	Black cloth binding, 373p.	Box 3
Part of BAAS survey, including linguistic data on Bella Coola, River Inlet, Kwakiutl, Nootka. Native American Images note: Sketches			
Field notes	1909-1912?	Red paper binding	Box 3
Linguistic data and texts for Chatino and (?) Nahuatl. Native American Images note: Sketches			
Inuit word lists and proper names	ca.1882-1883	1 folder	Box 3
TMs. The Relation of Darwin to Anthropology	n.d.	1 folder	LH-MV-E-1-1
Spanish Elements in Modern Nahuatl	ca.1882-1883	1 folder	Box 3
Folder includes disparate linguistic materials from the Northwest Coast, including for Coastal Salish (re: a religious prophet), Puyallup, Tsimshian.			
TMs, Theory of Correlations	n.d.	1 folder	Box 3
TMs. Was sind Rassen?	n.d.	6p.	Box 3

Field notebooks and anthropometric data

In German.

Miscellaneous

n.d.

1 folder

Box 3

Includes Boas Family genealogical information (1920s?), forms for anthropometric surveys, stereograph of cranium of male Aleut; two silver prints of Amazonian Indians, etc.
