

# Franz Boas's Legacy of "Useful Knowledge": The APS Archives and the Future of Americanist Anthropology<sup>1</sup>

REGNA DARNELL

Distinguished University Professor of Anthropology  
University of Western Ontario

It is a pleasure and privilege, though also somewhat intimidating, to address the assembled membership of the American Philosophical Society. Like the august founders under whose portraits we assemble, Members come to hear their peers share the results of their inquiries across the full range of the sciences and arenas of public affairs to which they have contributed "useful knowledge." Prior to the professionalization of science in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the boundaries between disciplines were far less significant than they are today. Those who were not experts in particular topics could rest assured that their peers were capable of assessing both the state of knowledge in each other's fields and the implications for society.

Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and George Washington were all polymaths, covering what we now separate into several kinds of science, humanities, and social science in ways that crosscut one another and illustrate the permeability of disciplinary boundaries. The study of the American Indian is a piece of that multidisciplinary heritage that constituted the APS and continues to characterize its public persona. The Founding Members of the Society all had direct and seminal experience with the Indians and with the conflict between their traditional ways of life and the infringing world of settler colonialism. On the one hand, they felt justified in exploiting Native resources, as surveyors, treaty negotiators, and land speculators. On the other hand, the Indians represented the uniqueness of the Americas, of the New World that defined itself apart from the decadence of old Europe. The gentleman scholars of the New Republic identified with the Indians but also turned to the scientific study of their languages, cultures, and histories (the latter primarily through archaeology). Although most of Jefferson's linguistic vocabularies were lost, the works of Peter Stephen Du Ponceau, John Pickering, and Albert Gallatin established the American

---

1 This essay is based on a paper read by the author at the April 2013 Meeting of the American Philosophical Society on 25 April 2013.

Indian linguistic collections that dominated the early scientific reputation of the APS. By the late 19th century, the specialist who interpreted the languages and myths of the American Indian for the membership of his day was Daniel Garrison Brinton, a Philadelphia physician who edited and published the multivolume *Library of Aboriginal American Literature*. The APS Library has continuously maintained a distinguished collection of Indian vocabularies accessible to successive generations of Member scientists who could classify the relationships of these languages and reveal the diversity of Native Americans, another instance of Franklin's vaunted "useful knowledge."

The continuity of this tradition is encapsulated today in the Boas collection that forms the core of the Library's Native American holdings. Franz Boas (1858–1942) was born and educated in Germany but is widely acknowledged as the founding figure of anthropology and linguistics in North America. Up until about 1906 when he resigned from the American Museum of Natural History to pursue a full-time academic career at Columbia University, Boas's career can be encompassed within anthropology as then understood. Originally trained in psychophysics in Germany, Boas turned to geography as the basis of his 1883–1884 year of fieldwork among the Baffinland Eskimo. This experience convinced him that environment was a limiting rather than a determining factor in cultural development, and he soon acknowledged the rich expressive culture of the Eskimo despite their extreme environment. He then reoriented his professional identity to anthropology and focused his fieldwork interests on the Northwest Coast where the intersection of multiple linguistic groups borrowing from and enriching one another facilitated the reconstruction of particular histories in the absence of written records, based on mutual borrowings and reintegration of cultural traits by each group.

The Boasian paradigm of historical particularism explicitly countered the eugenics and social evolutionary theories of so-called "primitive" culture that were pervasive at the time. Increasingly, however, Boas's scientific work expanded from anthropology into fields we now separate out as linguistics, folklore, psychology, education, and such emergent standpoint-based disciplines as Native Studies, Afro-American Studies, Jewish Studies, and Women's Studies. He took public stands on war, science, and patriotism that were unpopular in his own time, wrote to newspapers, spoke to non-academic audiences, prepared museum exhibits for public pedagogy, encouraged minority group scholars, and supported aboriginal and Afro-American communities in combating racism and marginalization.

Boas's studies of immigrant head form demonstrated the plasticity of human groups and the permeability of racial types. He was a pioneer

in breaking down American isolationism with its incumbent intolerance and misinformation about cultural, linguistic, and biological diversity, offering cultural relativism as an alternative to evolutionary racism. He argued passionately for academic and intellectual freedom and for science as a civilizational value transcending the short-term goals of nation-states. He was among the strongest supporters of European scholars displaced by Nazi politics in their efforts to resettle in America and helped to reunite families devastated by political turmoil across the Europe of two world wars. Boas models for us today the capacity of the public intellectual to call citizens to attend to social justice, environmental degradation, systemic discrimination, and other ills of contemporary society. The appearance of Boas's picture on the cover of *Time* magazine not long after his retirement from Columbia University in 1936 attests to his stature far beyond the boundaries of his nominal discipline of anthropology.

The American Philosophical Society holds Boas's personal and professional papers, as well as those of other Boas family members. The core collection consists of 59 linear feet or 46 reels of microfilm plus graphics dating from 1869 to 1940. The papers were cataloged and indexed by Carl Voegelin and Zellig Harris in the 1970s, and further finding aids have been issued in the interim. Nonetheless, omissions and misorderings in the microfilms as well as inadequacies in the finding aids themselves have impeded ongoing scholarship. The originals have been available only in the APS Library and only to scholars.

In 2008, even before he took up his official appointment as Native Studies and Western History Editor at the University of Nebraska Press, Matthew Bokovoy invited me to spearhead a project to publish the Franz Boas Papers held at the American Philosophical Society. As a Member of the Society, Chair of its Phillips Fund for Native American Research, and sometime denizen of the Archives since 1966, I concluded after some soul-searching that my work with Native North Americans, primarily Cree and Ojibwe in Canada, as well as in the history of Americanist anthropology, situated me ideally to bring the pieces together. My commitments to community collaboration in ethnographic and linguistic research carried out over substantial periods of time were well entrenched.

Nonetheless, I worried lest the project decline into the communicative morass of the legendary six blind men poking at the elusive anatomy of an elephant. My biography of Boas's most distinguished linguistic student Edward Sapir (Darnell [1990] 2010) had convinced me that no single scholar could encompass the range of Boas's interests. But I was intrigued by the possibility that a team of scholars might pool the pieces of Boas's life and work that each of them knew in detail.

The juxtaposition of partial perspectives offered the exciting potential for a fuller overall portrait. My prior historical scholarship on Boas had eschewed biography in favor of peeling the contextual onion, of unraveling his paradigm, the institutional context within which it evolved, and the social networks he initiated and sustained. A primary focus on Boas's own words as reflected in his correspondence, in contrast, would allow him to speak for himself, albeit to a future audience he did not envision.

Matt and I initiated negotiations with Martin Levitt, then-Librarian of the APS, and I invited Boas scholars who reflected the range and continuing significance of his oeuvre for anthropology, linguistics, Native Studies, and American and Canadian public life to consider the feasibility of a documentary edition. This inaugural conference assembled in London, Ontario in December 2010, amidst a blizzard that extended the stay of many contributors by several days and exceeded the budget by several thousands. The revised proceedings (Darnell, Hamilton, Hancock, and Smith 2015) serve as the framing volume for *The Franz Boas Papers: Documentary Edition (FBP)*.

With the contributors as the core of the initial Editorial Advisory Board, I assembled a Canadian-based research team designed to be attractive to the Partnership Grants program of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada. SSHRC had supported the initial conference; after a leisurely process including an extensive preliminary application, we were invited to prepare an even more extensive final application. In March 2013, SSHRC awarded *The Franz Boas Papers: Documentary Edition* at the University of Western Ontario \$2.5 million dollars (Canadian) over seven years, in partnership with the American Philosophical Society, the University of Nebraska Press, the University of Victoria, and the Musgamagw Dzawada'enuxw Tribal Council of the Kwakwaka'wakw (the people that Boas called "Kwakiutl"). I serve as Project Director and General Editor, assisted by a core research team of anthropologists, linguists, historians, and Native Americans (called "First Nations" in Canada) that includes the APS Librarian, an international Editorial Advisory Board, and an Indigenous Advisory Council. The APS has contracted with the University of Nebraska Press to produce a joint print and electronic documentary edition of 15–25 thematic volumes that will present and recontextualize the remarkable breadth of Boas's life, scholarship, and public stature.

Boas did the vast majority of his ethnographic research in Canada, on the North Pacific Coast and among the Inuit (as Eskimo call themselves in Canada), a fact that is virtually ignored by existing scholarship and in considerable need of historiographic redress. The national

contexts of Indigenous experience are distinct in the United States and Canada. Our research team includes a number of Indigenous scholars who aspire to interpret documents collected by Boas and his students because they form part of their own history and can be juxtaposed with knowledge held in contemporary oral tradition to revitalize languages and cultures.

The project is governed by an Indigenous Advisory Council (IAC) that has evolved, under the leadership of Susan Hill (Mohawk Nation, Wolf Clan), based on a loose coalition of advisors from descendant communities to a more formal membership of community-based scholars and scholars-in-training. The members represent relational collaborative perspectives rather than individual communities and are available to advise and mediate with relevant communities. The IAC mandate is to adjudicate the protection of culturally sensitive materials, to return this intellectual property to the communities of its origin through Digital Knowledge Sharing, and to create scholarly and professional capacity within Indigenous communities.

The magnitude of available material mandated a selective edition since 25 volumes could not possibly include the full contents of the Boas Papers, more than 40,000 documents. The decision was made to organize the selective edition thematically for several reasons: 1) A chronological edition, more usual for documentary editions, would have begun with Boas's early life and the rather narrowly anthropological engagements of his early career; this period, however, has been covered extensively by anthropologists writing the history of their discipline. The late Douglas Cole's meticulous biography, posthumously published in 1999, ends in 1906. My own *And Along Came Boas: Continuity and Revolution in Americanist Anthropology* (1998) and *Invisible Genealogies: A History of Americanist Anthropology* (2001) focus on the first generation of Boas's students and the emergence of his distinctive paradigm. Herbert Lewis (2014) emphasizes Boas's theoretical position within anthropological debates, past and present. Much less research has been done on Boas's later, more interdisciplinary work, so we decided to focus our initial efforts there. 2) Moreover, much of the early correspondence is in German, and our collaborations with German colleagues were in their early stages. We hope that the edition will be able to integrate documents remaining in Germany with those already held by the APS. 3) Separating the material by themes renders the volumes more accessible to Indigenous communities because readers can focus on the volumes of local relevance. 4) Each volume aspires to present its theme in a revisionist framework. Because few contemporary scholars have returned to the originals in their citation of Boas or assessment of his lasting importance, errors and

anachronisms abound in the existing scholarship. Letters and explanatory annotations will, in some sense, speak for themselves. A non-polemical framing essay will introduce each volume and assess its historiographic import within Boas's oeuvre.

There is inevitably a fine line between what George W. Stocking Jr. long ago problematized as historicism versus presentism (Stocking 1968). Historicism attempts to portray past events as participants saw them, within their original historical context. Presentism goes beyond unmediated documents to interpretative interpolation based on contemporary standards and values. Applying this familiar conundrum to documentary editing, I rephrase the dichotomy, acknowledging that historicist verisimilitude requires seeing things in their original context and clearly separating that from what we now make out of it. Nonetheless, contemporary scholars inevitably have presentist motives for pursuing disciplinary history and selecting the topics they do. The methodological challenge is to recognize the difference and balance anachronism against changing standards, taking for granted that full objectivity is an unobtainable standard because of the inevitable position of the observer but that objectivity nonetheless remains a goal to be pursued with self-conscious reflexivity. Accordingly, following A. Irving Hallowell (1965; Darnell 1977), an APS member and one of my earliest teachers of anthropology, I define the history of the discipline to be a quintessential anthropological problem. As in ethnographic fieldwork, with its characteristic methodology of participant observation, the anthropologist like the historian moves between external analysis and contextualization. The latter incorporates the effort to capture what Boas called "the native point of view."

Ideally, each volume of the documentary edition will be revisionist in its capacity to reframe Boas's work for a 21st-century audience. For example, with my colleagues, American historian Gregory Smithers and Canadian biocultural anthropologist Alexis Dolphin, I am editing a volume tentatively titled *From Anthropometry to Plasticity* as well as an annotated edition of *The Mind of Primitive Man* (MPM) with detailed comparisons of the 1911 and 1938 editions. This was Boas's paradigm statement about the universality of human capacity, both biological and mental, underscoring the importance of considering the effects of culture, environment, and history alongside racial or biological determinants. The Centennial of *The Mind of Primitive Man* in 2011 was marked by at least three conferences, one of which was the prelude to the Boas documentary edition (Darnell, Hamilton, Hancock, and Smith 2015). Others were held at Yale University and at the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research.

Boas spent much of his early career as an anthropometrist, what we would now call a physical or biological anthropologist, measuring the skull ratios of diverse human populations as an index of their unwritten prehistory. The method presumed permanent or at least very stable racial status. Between his measurement of Kwakwaka'wakw performers at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and the publication of *MPM*, Boas turned this racist scientific reasoning on its head. His prior work measuring school children in Worcester, Massachusetts during his years at Clark University in the late 1880s and early 1900s brought an invitation to study immigrant head form for the 1910–1912 United States Census. The Dillingham Commission hoped to hear that southern European immigrants, hitherto considered a separate race, could not be assimilated into American society. Boas, however, demonstrated that "head form" based on anthropometric measurement could change in a single generation after immigration to New York City. Such "plasticity" of human type fatally undermined the concept of race as then understood and re-envisioned it rather as *racism* or socially constructed prejudice. Boas acknowledged statistical differences among human groups but deemed them amenable to change in ways that could not be constrained in an evolutionary hierarchy. His studies based on particular family lines highlighted variability within so-called racial groups as well as between them. This work is reported in *The Mind of Primitive Man*, and it remained fundamental to Boas's theoretical position throughout his career. Detailed comparison of the 1911 and 1938 editions reveals surprisingly minor differences. The primary one is that Boas switched the title of his framing essay from the topic of race in America in 1911 to a critique of race in Hitler's National Socialism in 1938. The particular exemplars in the substance of the chapter, however, remained virtually unchanged.

Rereading *MPM* today, it does not say what disciplinary history recalls it to have said. Biology and culture were not binaries requiring different methods like both biological and cultural anthropologists since Boas's day have tended to assume (Darnell 2015, 2017). Beyond his argument for plasticity of immigrant head form, Boas reasoned that the relatively rigorous methods of the biological sciences could be extended by analogy to the study of cultural phenomena. Rather than a positivist vs. mentalist dichotomy, he took for granted the scientific validity of both, as sides of the same coin. Charges of latter-day critics that he was a mentalist, and that this made him unscientific, are risible in this context. Moreover, Boas was not overly concerned with culture as such, though he has often been accused of defending a reified culture concept. Instead, drawing on his training as a geographer, he focused

on environment (or environment-and-culture, taken almost as a single term) as the binary of biology. He argued that the plastic, the situational, and the historical applied in both domains. The distinction was arbitrary in that it depended on the observer and on the problem at hand. Science was the mode of attack in both cases. Recent epigenetic studies in hormonal gene expression provide a mechanism for Boas's prescient intuition about the nature of human plasticity.

My colleague and Associate Editor Joshua Smith is editing a volume called *Sovereign Anthropologies* that examines Boas's activities as activist and mentor of Indigenous scholars and his influence on Indian law and Indian policy during the interwar years (e.g., Smith 2015). The documents are effective in countering the stereotype of Boasian salvage anthropology as oblivious to then-contemporary Indigenous lives. The "action anthropology" that arose a generation later under the leadership of second generation Boasian Sol Tax still manifests itself in emerging contemporary ethical standards for research and collaborative protocols. The Boas documentary edition builds directly on this legacy both by documenting how far back it goes in Americanist anthropology and in the capacity of the project itself.

Other volumes planned or in preparation provisionally include Boas's engagements with anthropologists and anthropologies in Mexico, Canada, and Russia; his museum ethnography and pedagogy; what he called "primitive art"; folklore and ethnomusicology; grammatical theory and historical inference; culture and personality; environmental studies on the Northwest Coast; the Northwest Coast as a culture area (and its possible ties to Asia); "organizing anthropological research in America"; Afro-American race and racism; myth and narrative; law and politics; German philosophy and American pragmatism; New York City Jewish culture; efforts on behalf of European refugees and immigrants; ongoing ties to Germany; German education and early employment; and family letters/childhood. The Indigenous Advisory Council is preparing a volume of essays on uses of the Boas Papers in contemporary Native American and First Nations communities.

In light of this evolving partnership, the American Philosophical Society attracted independent donor support to digitize the Boas Papers. Digitization began in October 2012 and was completed in November 2014. A new digital finding aid incorporates APS metadata for correspondent and date. The *FBP* project editorial team has access to these digitized materials in preparing the documentary edition. Although the APS Boas Papers remain our source text, we have located and expect to include or paraphrase Boas materials from other documentary collections in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Russia, Scotland, and Germany. Each thematic volume will include an editorial



introduction as well as annotations necessary for contemporary readers to reconstruct the context of Boas's correspondence and the significance of his personal and professional network. Community partners and the IAC called for more detailed metadata allowing them to search for place names, personal and clan names, ceremonial terms—all appearing in local variants. Project Manager M. Sam Cronk has developed an Omeka-based tagging system now available to the research team that will eventually supplement publicly available materials at the APS. The complexity of Boas emerges from the juxtaposition and balancing of these multiple perspectives.

It is time, perhaps even past time, for reassessment of Boas's six-decade-long career and its ongoing impact in the academy and in public life. Anthropological commentary on Boas is polarized between post-war positivists who decry his purported mentalism and accuse him of being atheoretical, thereby impeding development of the science of anthropology, and the Boas students and students of students who maintain his legacy monolithically against all challengers. I have referred to Boas elsewhere as "the Elephant in the Middle of Anthropology's Room." Despite the diversity of the present-day discipline, every practicing anthropologist must come to terms with legacy of the founding figure of professional anthropology in America.

Plans for the documentary edition already have stimulated other research agendas. A research team based at Humboldt University in Berlin under the direction of Michi Knecht plans to collect and digitize Boas documents located in Germany with extended commentary; we hope to include this in *The Franz Boas Papers: Documentary Edition* in fully bilingual format. Rainer Hatoum has deciphered Boas's idiosyncratic shorthand, thereby rendering intelligible his Kwakwaka'wakw field notes (Hatoum 2016). Han Vermeulen's *Before Boas: The Genesis of Ethnography and Ethnology in the German Enlightenment* (2015) provides a magisterial treatment of the European philosophical underpinnings of the anthropology that Boas imported to North America. The synergy of these projects, enhanced by overlapping research personnel, underscores the timeliness and interest of the documentary edition. Although Boas's field notes and published works are primary in documenting the Indigenous cultures he studied, his correspondence contextualizes this material so that contemporary scholars and members of descendant communities can access it effectively for contemporary purposes.

Unpublished manuscripts on American Indian languages in Boas's possession at the time of his death were added to the APS collections by way of the American Council for Learned Societies (Leeds-Hurwitz 1985). This distinguished legacy is maintained and extended in the

contemporary Society. Ancillary collections are regularly enhanced by materials donated by grantees of the APS Phillips Fund for Native American Research, which provides grants for research in Native American linguistics, ethnohistory, and the history of studies of Native Americans in the continental United States and Canada. The APS Library also holds the related papers of Frank Speck, A. Irving Hallowell, Elsie Clews Parsons, John Alden Mason, Frank Siebert, Ella Deloria, Dell Hymes, and Anthony F. C. Wallace, among many others.

Under the leadership of Martin Levitt and Timothy Powell, the APS Library obtained two large grants from the Mellon Foundation to rearticulate materials on endangered Native American languages with the communities of their origin. This initiative is setting new priorities and standards for the collaboration of scholars with the communities of their research subjects and the expertise of their traditional knowledge. Linguistic materials from four tribes (Leech Lake and White Earth Ojibwe [Anishinaabeg], Tuscarora, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and Penobscot) have been reexamined by knowledge keepers and native speakers, thereby correcting and elaborating the meaning of the collections. Long separated materials—photographs, music, field notes, correspondence, etc.—are being reunited in accordance with the protocols and needs of their originary communities rather than by arbitrary cataloging criteria. The work of Maureen Matthews with Hallowell's Ojibwe photographs is exemplary (Matthews 2016). Memoranda of Understanding have been signed with each of these groups specifying collaborative projects of utility to contemporary tribal members. More recent Mellon funding supports capacity building for Indigenous undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral researchers. A permanent program to bring Native American cultural experts to the APS as researchers and consultants on their own traditions is in nascent stages.

The Mellon project facilitated the establishment of a Native American Advisory Board to adjudicate the treatment of culturally sensitive materials in the APS collections (largely of a religious or ceremonial nature and accessible by cultural protocol only to those who have undergone appropriate apprenticeship). The majority of the members are Native Americans, but I serve on behalf of the APS. The Advisory Board has devised protocols to protect esoteric knowledge and to treat both texts and artifacts in the APS collections with appropriate respect. The APS has agreed to restrict reproduction and publication of materials according to the advice of this Advisory Board, thereby making a commitment to the producers of the ethnographic and linguistic documents and their communities that is unique in the archival world and places the American Philosophical Society at the forefront of

contemporary scholarship. The establishment of the Center for Native American and Indigenous Research (CNAIR) in 2014 continues this work. Under the aegis of Curator of Native American Materials Brian Carpenter, CNAIR is expanding the number of Indigenous communities working collaborating with the APS.

The Boas documentary edition builds directly on this initiative. Our Indigenous Advisory Council, under the co-chairship of Susan Hill (Mohawk Nation, Wolf Clan) and Robert Hancock (Metis), facilitates work with descendant communities. All members are Indigenous and all are closely tied to their home communities. The proximate mandate of the IAC is to facilitate the protection of culturally sensitive materials. The longer-term goal is return of digital materials to the communities of their origin. The location of documents in Philadelphia far from the home territory of their creators has posed a serious obstacle to the usefulness of this knowledge to its producers. Intellectual property transmitted in an oral tradition is not covered by copyright legislation. Furthermore, in many cases there is ambiguity about the propriety of transfer of ritual items or ceremonial knowledge to museums, archives, and libraries run by outsiders and not under community control. From the point of view of many communities, ownership continues to reside with the creators of these materials rather than with their contemporary archival stewards. In this view, the archives are merely stewards on behalf of the true owners. The establishment of cooperative relationships between archives, museums, and other repositories of cultural information and descendants of the makers is thus a potentially fraught matter calling for mutually respectful consensus-based protocols. Such trust is established only by working together collaboratively over time.

The *FBP* project protocols arising from the APS collaborative model are already making a difference and are ideally suited to the Boas documentary research. Our core research team includes several Indigenous scholars who are working on materials collected by Boas and his associates in their home communities: Angie Bain (Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs; Lower Nicola Indian Band), Ryan Nicolson and Deanna Nicolson (Kwakwaka'wakw), Johnny Mack (Nuu Chah Nulth), Rachel Flowers (Lwungen), and Marianne Nicolson (Kwakwaka'wakw). The communities liaison for the *FBP* project is Dawn Nicolson (Kwakwaka'wakw). The IAC meets regularly to maximize the usefulness of the emerging materials for the cultural and linguistic revitalization programs that are rampant across Indian country today. Its protocols and deliberations constitute transferable knowledge applicable to multiple communities. Operating on a consensus basis, the IAC has final authority to exclude sensitive materials from

further dissemination or publication. Omissions and their general character will be noted in the published text where appropriate.

The collaborative model fits well with widely shared Native American concepts of co-stewardship and relationality and promises a documentary product that breaks ethical as well as intellectual ground. Whether the issue is linguistic texts, grave goods including human remains, or authorship attributed to the speaker rather than to the recorder or collector, the standards have been evolving rapidly since Boas's time, building on his legacy even when his practice diverges from present best practice.

The *FBP* project has established and continues to sustain important community relationships. Six members of the *FBP* core research team were invited to visit the Kwakwaka'wakw communities of Kingcome Inlet and Alert Bay, British Columbia in the summer of 2014. *FBP* project members, as well as Tim Powell and Brian Carpenter on behalf of CNAIR, returned in March 2015 for a potlatch at Alert Bay to honor the Willie Family of Kingcome Inlet and to witness Mikael Willie taking the chiefly name of Ol' Siwidi. We returned in March 2016 for the potlatch in which namekeeper Gwi'molas (Ryan Nicolson) returned the product of his research to the assembled Kwakwaka'wakw community as part of an effort to reconstitute the traditional clan system as a mode of governance for all of the Kwakwaka'wakw communities. Boas's field notes, diaries, and correspondence supplement the knowledge of contemporary elders. At these potlatches, CNAIR has returned important unpublished materials collected by George Hunt and others in collaboration with Boas to the communities. The *FBP* project, by supporting the research of community members, is helping to create a generation of community-based scholars who move adeptly between community and academy.

In Boas's day, he most often worked with elders and ceremonialists whose children and grandchildren no longer wanted to learn what their elders knew. Many chose to speak to anthropologists and linguists, with the result that much was recorded that would otherwise have been lost. Some latter-day critics have dismissed such research as mere "salvage ethnography" based on reconstruction of memories about times already long gone at the time of recording. Despite the devastating impact of forced assimilation by government- and church-run residential schools, however, contemporary communities are drawing on these documents, many of them held at the APS, alongside the knowledge of living elders that has been preserved through oral tradition, to bring back traditional forms, especially through the language revitalization programs that are active in many communities. The

knowledge held at the APS is therefore available for contemporary use in new and still evolving ways. It is useful knowledge.

A particular kind of anthropology, a Boasian kind, arose in this context (Darnell 2001). Boas developed a mode of fieldwork that emphasized culture as a body of knowledge in people's heads rather than a thing that could be observed directly. He argued that language, thought, and reality were inseparable and that the best route into "the mind of primitive man" or "the native point of view" was through written texts based on the spoken words of native speakers in their native languages. The categories of Indo-European grammar and mainstream North American cultural assumptions could not be imposed without distortion. Collaborative research methods and recognition of the expertise of the "informants" arose naturally from these assumptions. Such fieldwork took, and still takes, a long time. Many of the texts Boas and Hunt collected were never translated. But they remain accessible to contemporary use because they were recorded. The meaning encoded in them, both form and content, is itself the primary evidence—not the analysis of the outsider anthropologist or linguist.

This Boasian documentary perspective, which I have elsewhere referred to as the Americanist tradition, is, I believe, key to the continued viability of anthropology as a discipline. It also should be a source of pride to the membership of the American Philosophical Society that its traditional commitment to the study of Native Americans is pioneering in new forms of rendering knowledge useful and extending the range of the audiences drawing upon it.

## REFERENCES

- Cole, Douglas. 1999. *Franz Boas: The Early Years, 1858–1906*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre.
- Darnell, Regna. 1977. "History of Anthropology in Historical Perspective." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 6: 399–417.
- . (1990) 2010. *Edward Sapir: Linguist, Anthropologist, Humanist*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- . 1998. *And Along Came Boas: Continuity and Revolution in Americanist Anthropology*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- . 2001. *Invisible Genealogies: A History of Americanist Anthropology*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- . 2015. "Mind, Body, and the Native Point of View: Boasian Theory at the Centennial of *The Mind of Primitive Man*." In *The Franz Boas Papers, Volume 1: Franz Boas as Public Intellectual—Theory, Ethnography, Activism*, edited by Regna Darnell, Michelle Hamilton, Robert L. A. Hancock, and Joshua Smith, 3–18. Franz Boas Papers Documentary Edition Series. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

- . 2017. “Franz Boas as Theorist: A Mentalist Paradigm for the Study of Mind, Body, Environment, and Culture.” In *Historicizing Theories, Identities, and Nations*, *Histories of Anthropology Annual*, vol. 11, edited by Regna Darnell and Frederic W. Gleach, 1–26. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Darnell, Regna, Michelle Hamilton, Robert L. A. Hancock, and Joshua Smith, eds. 2015. *The Franz Boas Papers, Volume 1: Franz Boas as Public Intellectual—Theory, Ethnography, Activism*. Franz Boas Papers Documentary Edition Series. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Hallowell, A. Irving. 1965. “The History of Anthropology as an Anthropological Problem.” *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 1: 24–38.
- Hatoum, Rainer. 2016. “‘I Wrote All My Notes in Shorthand’: A First Glance into the Treasure Chest of Franz Boas’s Shorthand Field Notes.” In *Local Knowledge, Global Stage*, *Histories of Anthropology Annual*, vol. 10, edited by Regna Darnell and Frederic W. Gleach, 221–72. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Leeds-Hurwitz, Wendy. 1985. “The Committee on Research in Native American Languages.” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 129: 129–60.
- Lewis, Herbert S. 2014. *In Defense of Anthropology: An Investigation of the Critique of Anthropology*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- Matthews, Maureen. 2016. *Naamiwan’s Drum: The Story of a Contested Repatriation of Anishinaabe Artefacts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Smith, Joshua. 2015. “Cultural Persistence in the Age of ‘Hopelessness’: Phinney, Boas, and U.S. Indian Policy.” In *The Franz Boas Papers, Volume 1: Franz Boas as Public Intellectual—Theory, Ethnography, Activism*, edited by Regna Darnell, Michelle Hamilton, Robert L. A. Hancock, and Joshua Smith, 263–76. Franz Boas Papers Documentary Edition Series. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Stocking, George W., Jr. 1968. *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology*. New York: Free Press.
- Vermeulen, Han F. 2015. *Before Boas: The Genesis of Ethnography and Ethnology in the German Enlightenment*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.