

## *Obituaries*

### FRANZ BOAS

Franz Boas, one of the greatest of anthropologists, was born in Mindén, Germany, on July 9, 1858, a son of Meier and Sophie (Meyer) Boas. He was educated at Heidelberg, Bonn, and Kiel (where he received his Ph.D. in 1881), doing his work in the fields of physics and geography. In order to study the effect of geographical environment on human culture he went to Baffin Land, accompanied only by a servant, in 1883. He remained a year and a half among the Eskimo. This experience weaned him from physics, and upon his return to Germany he became an assistant at the Museum für Völkerkunde, and in 1886 a docent in geography at the University of Berlin. Within a few months he was drawn from this post by his desire to enjoy the democracy, political liberty, and individual freedom which he admired in the United States. In 1887 Dr. Boas married Marie A. E. Krackowizer, the daughter of an Austrian surgeon who had come to New York after the revolution of 1848, and the following year he began to teach anthropology at Clark University. Here he remained until called to become the assistant chief of the department of anthropology at the Chicago Exposition in 1892. He was in no small measure responsible for the remarkable effectiveness of this, the first general anthropological exhibition in America. At the close of the Exhibition he became Curator of the Department of Anthropology of the Field Museum in Chicago. Thence he went to Columbia University, from which center for more than forty years he sent forth the ideas and the students which revolutionized American anthropology. Perhaps more

than any other one man he was responsible for the development of anthropology as a department of university study in America. As long ago as 1906 the leading anthropologists of Europe and America united to honor him with a volume of collected studies.

When Dr. Boas began his work the science of anthropology was confined almost entirely to description. He was one of the leaders under whose direction linguistics, folklore, and all of the physical sciences were harnessed to explore and to explain man. Although the greater part of his personal research was in the field of linguistics, he was insistent that every possible tool be used. So broad was his teaching that his name is not associated with any one particular school of thought. Perhaps his most important contribution was his insistence that before physical statistics be used as a basis for the classification of human groups, a study must be made of the effect of the various environmental and hereditary conditions on the factors which are measured to obtain those statistics. He was, however, no mere theorist, willing to base his conclusions upon the work of others. To the contrary, he was a great field worker.

Even before the last war Dr. Boas had made it clear in his books that to his mind the concept of a Nordic super-race, or any similar racial snobbery, was nonsense. Although himself of Jewish stock he was a sample of the best product of the old German culture, and his pride in that civilization made him a leader in German-American circles and one of those who protested the entrance of the United States into the last war. But outside of the learned world he was little known, primarily perhaps because he would give no time for press interviews and because he had no interest in the popularization of his subject. Few men have had at once such a wide influence in the world of ideas and been known to so few of the people in the street.

This situation was in some degree changed by the rise of Hitler, for Dr. Boas' books were among the first condemned to the flames and cast into them even by the students of the University of Kiel, his alma mater. This saddened rather than angered him, but it also increased his determination to explain away the myths which had gathered about the concept of race. After his retirement from active teaching in 1939 he carried on his research faithfully in his laboratory at Columbia until his sudden death on December 24, 1942. He is survived by two daughters and by a son, Dr. Ernst Philip Boas of New York City.

The list of the honors and degrees showered upon Dr. Boas is as long as the bibliography of his works; both much too long to be included here. As a matter of course he was a member of most of the learned societies, American and foreign, in the various fields of his work. He first came to the attention of this Society when he was asked to prepare a formal description of a deformed skull from Yucatan then in its museum. His paper was read at the meeting of April, 1890, by one of the officers of the Society. He was elected to membership in April, 1908, and for our *Proceedings* of April, 1916, he edited a document from our Library containing vocabularies of four of the languages of the Northwest Coast. It is not the least of the penalties which this Society paid for its drift away from anthropology that of recent years it lost contact with Franz Boas. C. K. S.

### VALENTINE HOLLINGSWORTH

Valentine Hollingsworth was born at Rye Beach, New Hampshire, on July 11, 1883, a son of Zachary Taylor and Ida Townsend Hollingsworth. He attended St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire, and was a member of

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