

**ANTHROPOLOGY AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION:**  
**FREDERICK STARR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, 1892-1923**

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Within the history of social science, it is well known that the first department of sociology in the United States was formed with the opening of the University of Chicago in 1892. It is perhaps less well known that this department was, in fact, the Department of Social Science and Anthropology—changed a year later to the Department of Sociology and Anthropology—making it also one of the earliest departments of anthropology.<sup>1</sup>

For William Rainey Harper, first president of the University of Chicago, recruiting faculty for the new university proved to be exceedingly difficult (Ryan 1939). Before anyone had been appointed in sociology, Frederick Starr, head of ethnology at the American Museum of Natural History and a past associate of President Harper, decided to accept Harper's proposition and agreed "to do my best to build a strong department of anthropology" (WRH: Starr to Harper, 17 February 1891). Not quite a year later, Harper finally recruited Albion W. Small for sociology. In the same letter confirming Small as "head professor" of "social science," Harper wrote: "I have wondered whether it would not be well to put anthropology in your department and make it Sociology and Anthropology. We have appointed a man who wants to develop the line of anthropology" (UPP: Harper to Small, 8 February 1892). Apparently Harper was not inclined to form two separate departments and therefore hoped to persuade Starr to practice his research and teaching within the administrative bounds of sociology, and Small to accept an appointment without prior consultation.

Though we do not have Harper's correspondence with either Starr or Small, we do know he was successful. Starr responded that he

would be glad to arrange the work in Anthroplogy in such a way as to have it co-operate with . . . the work in Sociology, but of course it is understood that the work [in anthropology] is a separate work and capable of broadening into a full department or school. It is also understood that Prof[essor] Small is not my superior in Anthroplogy and that this subject [anthropology] is [in] no sense a subordinate one [WRH: Starr to Harper, 21 March 1892].

For his part, Small immediately responded to Harper that he, Small, "must vigorously protest,

on general principles, against the appointment of instructors otherwise than by nomination, or previous consultation of the heads of departments" (UPP: Small to Harper, 26 February 1892). Shortly thereafter, Small overcame his objections and wrote to Harper that

Dr. Starr is quite right—that the work in anthropology is capable of broadening into a full department or school. I wish to be a learner from Dr. Starr in his field, and in no case . . . should I desire to limit his work by any attempt to direct matters which he is an authority and I am not [WRH: Small to Harper, 26 March 1892].

Small then insisted that a place for Starr's program be found within the threefold division Small had planned—"historical sociology," "contemporary sociology," and "constructive sociology": ". . . the first division, viz. historical sociology, with such alternative title as Dr. Starr might choose—for example, anthropology and ethnology—should be under Dr. Starr's direction, and the courses should be enlarged or modified according to his judgment" [WRH: Small to Harper, 26 March 1892, quoted in Diner 1975: 519].

Finally, Small stated:

I simply wish to have it appear in our programme that we recognize . . . the logical relations between anthropology and constructive social science . . . and . . . the necessity of laying the foundations of social philosophy—partly in the investigations which Dr. Starr's department must pursue [WRH: Small to Harper, 26 March 1892].

Small's wish was confirmed a year later in the second *Annual Register* by way of the introductory remarks preceding the course announcements for the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. Certainly this confirmation must have pleased Starr also. These remarks read in part:

The organization of Sociology and Anthropology in a single department is provisional. The differentiation of an independent Department of Anthropology and Ethnology is anticipated. Meanwhile the present alliance and cooperation is fortunate, as it recognizes the dependence of social philosophy and social art upon anthropological science [University of Chicago 1893-94:58].

And so a wedding was consummated between sociology and anthropology at Chicago that was to last for the next 37 years, even though each *Annual*

*Register* carried the above statements or a minor variation thereof.

Edward Shils (1970:770) has written that

from the very start, there was a propitious atmosphere for research at Chicago, created, in part, by its youth, the first president's determination to make it into a research university . . . , and the large number of vigorous young professors who shared the ideal embodied in the research-centered seminars of the German university.

Chicago sociology, under the guidance of Small, W. I. Thomas, and, a little later, Robert Park and Ernest W. Burgess, soon achieved a position of hegemony within that discipline. Though Starr (1897:791-792) claimed "that at no other American institution is instructive work in anthropology so definite and at the same time so comprehensive, some eleven different courses in somatology, ethnology, and archeology being offered," Chicago anthropology languished for decades. It is reasonable, I believe, to question why, on the one hand, Chicago anthropology did not also attain a position of national importance early on, and, on the other hand, why—in spite of the statements to the contrary in each *Annual Register*—it took 37 years to separate anthropology from sociology into a department in its own right?

The answers to both questions center on the process of institutionalization, defined by Professor Shils (1970:763) as "the relative dense interaction of persons who perform that activity. The high degree of institutionalization of an intellectual activity entails its teaching and investigation within a regulated, scheduled, and systematically administered organization." Chicago sociology achieved its position of hegemony because it became more thoroughly institutionalized sooner than other departments. This pattern of institutionalization

centered on a standard textbook which promulgated the main principles of analysis, postgraduate courses, lectures, seminars, examinations, individual supervision of small pieces of field research to be submitted as course and seminar papers, and dissertations done under close supervision. . . . It was sustained by the publication of the main dissertations in the Chicago Sociological Series and the transformation of the *American Journal of Sociology* into an organ of University of Chicago research. It was reinforced by public authorities and civic groups which offered sponsorship and cooperation for research, and by financial support from the university and private philanthropists [Shils 1970:772-773].

Though the environment at the turn of the century, both within the new university and the wider anthropological community, was also ripe for the institutionalization of anthropology at Chicago, no significant progress was made in that direction during the tenureship of Frederick Starr. The above two questions can be answered with confi-

dence, then, through an examination of the life and work of Starr, as well as the relationships existent between Starr's program, the offices of the University President and Dean of Social Science, and American anthropology in general. These subjects will be taken up in order.

## LIFE AND WORK

Frederick Starr was a complex, sometimes peculiar, individual, a product of his religious upbringing and scientific training. His father, a Presbyterian minister, determined as a young man to bring the social gospel to Weston, Missouri. There, in 1854, Reverend Starr was tried by a "lynch" court as an abolitionist and threatened with a hundred lashes. According to the *Record of the Class of 1848 in Yale College* (Yale College 1871: 73), he "was permitted to address the court and so bold and eloquent was his defense that he was acquitted by an unanimous and rising vote." Weston was situated directly across the Missouri River from Kansas, and shortly after his trial, pro-slavery and anti-slavery forces began the battle over the fate of Kansas. When the pro-slavery forces started to gain the upper hand in 1855, Reverend Starr, on the advice of friends, made haste to remove his family and anti-slavery views from Missouri. His public speeches shortly thereafter—four delivered in New York City for the Republican National Central Committee—were the first on Kansas and attracted much attention. Earlier, in 1853, his nine "Letters to the People," published in a New York City newspaper and "containing a most remarkable discussion of slavery in Missouri, involving its relation to those laws of population, and those social, commercial and political forces which seemed to the writer destined to effect its gradual but sure extinction" (Yale College 1871: 75), brought national recognition.

Frederick Starr was born on September 2, 1858, in Auburn, New York, after Reverend Starr had fled Missouri. He spent his boyhood in the East and in 1882 graduated from Lafayette College, Easton, Pennsylvania, where in 1885 he received his Ph.D. in geology. In 1883 he became a professor of sciences at the State Normal School in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania. He was a professor of biology at Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, from 1884 to 1887. In the summer of 1885, he became an instructor of geography at Chautauqua University, Chautauqua, New York, and continued to teach there through correspondence courses until 1892. At this institution he also served as registrar from 1888 to 1889, and it was probably in this capacity that he became acquainted with William Rainey Harper, who also held a high administrative position (Diner 1975). From 1889 to 1891 he was

engaged in arranging, labeling, and classifying the collections in the Department of Ethnology at the American Museum of Natural History. In 1891 he became a professor of geology and anthropology, and dean of the science department, at Pomona College, Claremont, California. As already indicated, during the latter part of his tenure at the American Museum, as well as his year at Pomona College, he was in correspondence with President Harper. Starr joined the faculty at the University of Chicago as an assistant professor and became an associate professor in 1895. He remained in this position, simultaneously holding the position of curator of the anthropology section of the Walker Museum at the university, until his retirement in 1923.

Starr inherited his father's speaking ability. Throughout his career, he was an immensely popular lecturer among both his students and the general public. He also inherited his father's outspoken moral convictions. As shall be more fully discussed below, he supported many unpopular causes; he continually spoke *for* the underdog and *against* what he saw as United States imperialism. The two qualities, oratorical skill and forthright convictions, combined to bring him a goodly amount of notoriety. Indeed, Starr's ability to gain attention was almost uncanny. To illustrate, in 1899 his private remarks condemning the American intervention in Cuba and the Philippines, delivered at a small Illinois college during a reception following one of his lectures, were reported in the *New York Times* (May 2, 1889) and caused quite a scandal. A few years later, in 1902, he again garnered "headlines for his statement . . . that *Pithecanthropus erectus* had used baby talk" (Darnell 1969:157). In 1916 Starr wrote an article discussing the Japanese's expansionist tendencies which covered the entire front page of the *San Francisco Examiner* (April 3, 1916). And finally, "in 1920 [he] publicly debated the merits of civilization with Clarence Darrow, defending the negative with reasonable success" (Darnell 1969:158). Starr thoroughly enjoyed his notoriety, writing his mother weekly of his exploits and "keeping scrapbooks which ran into volumes of newspaper commentaries" (Darnell 1969:158).

Of his stay at the University of Chicago, Faye-Cooper Cole, who replaced Starr in 1924, has written:

During his thirty-one years [at Chicago] he was probably the most popular instructor in the University. Though his classes were crowded and he was the only instructor in the subject, he refused to add others, remaining, as he said, "the Lone Star." He had numerous personal idiosyncrasies. He refused to wear an overcoat, never used a telephone, and usually walked about the campus with an open book in his hands, while his apartment was a labyrinth of books

stacked on the floors in various rooms. His frankness and fearlessness in the expression of opinion often made him enemies; on the other hand, his informality and camaraderie in the classroom created a loyalty seldom met between students and professor. When he retired from the University in 1923 his former students presented him with a large purse, which enabled him to purchase a house in Seattle, a location convenient for his frequent trips to Japan [1935:532].

Starr was a man of boundless energy; he traveled widely and constantly, especially in Mexico, West Africa, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines, for the sake of anthropological investigations, and published and lectured fairly extensively on these investigations. Today many—if not most—of his works lie outside the realm of either immediate or anthropological interest: his interests, for example, ranged from cross-cultural studies to the study of deformates and albinos, as well as to the collecting of bookplates, origami, Filipino riddles, and Korean coin-charms and amulets. Moreover, insofar as anthropological theory and practice are concerned, he left little of insight or originality.

Starr's training in the natural sciences placed him squarely within the tradition of the 19th-century evolutionists and he remained within this tradition all his academic life. At about the same time that Franz Boas was beginning his systematic critique of "this more or less integrated body of assumption [which] attempted to explain in scientific terms the presumed superiority of white-skinned civilized men to dark-skinned savages by placing them both on a single developmental ladder extending upward from the apes" (Stocking 1976:3), Starr (1895: 297-298) was acknowledging his intellectual debt to such evolutionary theorists as Edward B. Tylor, Sir John Lubbock, and Herbert Spencer and writing:

In the march from savagery to civilization all peoples have not travelled at the same speed; some have hardly travelled at all. Belated tribes exist, who represent almost every stage of culture. When we have secured our full series of specimens from every tribe, we may trace a thousand lines of invention or art by comparison of specimens [1895:291].

Starr (FSP: lecture notes, no date) stressed the differences—"physically, mentally, and in life-customs"—between peoples; he underlined "Anglo-Saxon superiority"—"ours is the finest ever, all others fall short." When discussing the differences between Black Americans—"Liberians"—returned to Liberia and the native population of that country, he asked:

Is it desirable that Liberians and the natives intermarry? It is certain that the native endures the climate better than the newcomers; it is true that he has for more energy, vigor, enterprise—in case his interest is once aroused. There can be no question that close breeding among the little handful of Liberians is fraught with danger; mixture with the native stock

would give, in many cases, good results. There is always, of course, the danger in such mixed marriages of relapse to barbarism. This is a real one and needs to be avoided [1913:247].

Even as late as 1922, when Boas and his "American historical school" pretty well controlled the discipline, Starr wrote to a colleague, "In my teaching *evolution* is fundamental. It runs through every course I offer. It is what gives life and value to the work" (FMNH-DA: Starr to Logan, 7 August 1922; emphasis in original).

Starr (FSP: lecture notes, no date; see also 1895:283-293) defined the scope of anthropology to be the "'Science of Man' in the widest sense"; its content, the "origin, position, structure, reaction, appearance, movement, varieties, achievement, and progress" of mankind. Following Daniel Brinton (1892) with but few changes, he divided anthropology into "four great subdivisions": (1) somatology or physical anthropology, which attempts to determine man's position within the animal kingdom as well as the amount and kind of physical variation within mankind; (2) ethnology, which "investigates the origin of races and assails the problem of the unity of man" (1895:289); (3) ethnography, which "aims at the description of the life, customs, languages, arts, religious beliefs, etc., of peoples" (1895:289); and finally (4) culture history, which includes archaeology and traces the growth of civilization.

In light of Starr's evolutionary orientation, it is not surprising that his attitude toward field work was that of a 19th-century museum curator: rather than intensive "detailed study and meticulous description of local cultures" (Goldenweiser 1940: 462) in the Boasian tradition, Starr made extensive regional surveys for the sake of collecting, in as systematic a manner as possible, "full series of specimens"—physical measurements, artifacts, myths, etc. In Mexico, one of his main objectives was

to ascertain and define the physical types of the different tribes. To accomplish this three kinds of work were done: (1) measurements were taken upon one hundred men and twenty-five women in each tribe, and a description written of each subject; (b) photographs were made of selected subjects . . . ; (c) plaster busts were made of selected subjects who seemed to be typical, five subjects generally being selected from each tribe. While doing this work in physical anthropology many photographs and data of ethnographic interest were secured [Starr 1900-02:2-3].

For the sake of the above collections, he visited, between 1898 and 1901, at least 24 tribes in southern Mexico. In his 1905-06 trip to the Congo Free State, Starr (FSP: Field Notebook #3, December 1905) wrote the following:

Results hoped for from trip: 100 stereoscopic pictures and [a] book: series [of] life-size tattooings, hair-dressings, etc.; autograph-portrait collection;

series of tooth impressions . . . ; 50 good phonographic records; book—*The People of the Congo*; book—narrative [sic]; paper—original results: ethnographic collections; series of moving pictures; 120 lantern slides of high grade; African basketry—collection [and] book.

Many of his collections eventually ended up in the Field Columbian Museum (later the Field Museum of Natural History) and the American Museum of Natural History.

The results of these expeditions were generally published in the form of (1) "travel narratives" (1907, 1908a, 1924); (2) "ethnographic albums," which presented numerous photographs and some descriptive materials (1899, 1912); and (3) "ethnographic notes," which provided brief descriptions of the tribes surveyed (1900-02, 1909b). Although at one time or another Starr touched on every possible subject—social organization, language, religion, mythology—these descriptions concentrated mostly on the material aspects of housing, clothing, and other native industries. Starr also published numerous articles on specific subjects.<sup>2</sup>

Curiously, while many of Starr's writings and lectures were unabashedly racialist in tone because of his evolutionary orientation, his religious background steadfastly prevented him from subscribing to the doctrine that all differences between cultures were fixed or that it was the white man's responsibility to elevate the so-called backward peoples. In different lectures he (FSP: lecture notes, no date) emphasized that "there are *no* strange peoples" (emphasis in original). Other peoples' "ideals are as sacred as ours [and] . . . may be as legitimate." Two important lessons to be learned from anthropological research are the "recognition of similarity" and the "respect of difference."

Starr (see especially 1919) vigorously condemned the European colonization of Asia and Africa—"it is mutual jealousy, not great success, which holds the European powers in Africa" (1913:v-vi), as well as American colonization of or interference in Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.

Personally I dislike the effort to elevate, civilize, remake a people. It is my belief that every people is happier and better with self-government, no matter how unlike our own form that government may be. I feel that no nation is good enough, wise enough, or sufficiently advanced to undertake the elevation and civilization of a "lower" people. Still less do I approve the exploitation of a native population by outsiders for their own benefit [Starr 1907:4].

Regarding Africa, Starr (1913:v) claimed straightforwardly that ". . . the black man is capable of conducting an independent government." Starr felt that any efforts directed towards elevation—if

necessary—should be carried on by native elites, not colonial elites. Moreover, he felt that such efforts should concentrate on, first, “practical instruction in agricultural lines that will enable” the native peoples “to get a better return for their labor and live in a greater degree of comfort,” and second, on raising the natives’ “consciousness and appreciation of the fact that they are part of the nation” (FSP: Starr to de Alva, 7 February 1922).

Not surprisingly, he characterized the League of Nations as “a gathering which represents nothing but a selfish, narrow, bigoted, hostile little cluster of white peoples” (1919:27). Starr did not only lash out at foreign domination, however. He upbraided the United States for perpetuating racial inequality at home and ignoring the fate of Liberia, “an American enterprise, pure and simple” (1907: 121-129).

Starr received much public recognition—both good and bad—for his work. On the positive side, he was awarded a grand prize for his efforts at organizing a group of Ainu natives for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, held in St. Louis in 1904, and over the years was decorated by Holland, Belgium, France, Italy, Japan, Cuba, and Liberia. On the negative side, for example, Gilbert H. Grosvenor of the National Geographic Society cancelled his society’s offer of a lecture because of Starr’s frank and bitter criticism of the United States’ role in the Philippines (FSP: Grosvenor to Starr, 17 December, 21 December 1908). At the University of Chicago, however, Starr was virtually ignored, remaining, as already indicated, an associate professor from 1895 until his retirement. In a letter to his mother written while packing for a trip to the Pacific Northwest and the West Coast, Starr complained:

No, I have received no “walking papers.” Why should I? My services may not be appreciated and promises made may not have been kept, but I see no reason in either of those things for my being dismissed. If I had an assured income of \$2000 a year I would never return. I am tired . . . and want to leave. I want to get . . . away from everything . . . associated with my suffering here. I hope within three years not to have to go back to teaching. If I should continue to teach it would be somewhere else where I might have a living salary and some appreciation [FSP: Starr to “My Dear Mother,” 18 August 1914; emphasis in original].

Why did Starr receive little or no recognition from his Chicago colleagues?

Starr languished as an associate professor because Chicago anthropology languished. Between 1892 and 1923, the Department of Sociology and Anthropology awarded 55 Ph.D. and 104 master’s degrees (Faris 1967). Of these, only three doctoral and four master’s dissertations can be said to be strictly anthropological—Starr is acknowledged as an advisor in only one of these dissertations. An-

thropology languished, in great part, because of Starr’s numerous and extended absences. Rather than gathering a core of graduate students around him who could be dispatched to the field to research various problems, Starr conducted all field research by himself. Hardly a year passed without at least one trip. Lacking resident leadership, anthropology was unable to separate itself administratively from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. More importantly, such absences prevented the essential efforts necessary for the expansion of Chicago anthropology: Starr was unable to actively recruit qualified graduate students or supervise their advanced work.

Anthropology languished also, in part, because Starr’s evolutionary perspectives and museum-oriented field trips increasingly existed outside the realm of what came to be mainstream, Boasian-historical anthropology. Boas argued,

that the strong tendency to accumulate specimens has often been a disadvantage to the development of anthropology, because there are many aspects of this science in which the material objects are insignificant as compared with the actual scientific questions involved. [A]nthropology requires a broader point of view for its fieldwork than that offered by the strict requirements of the acquisitions of museum specimens [1907:931].

Many of Starr’s publications, moreover, were either popularizations or polemics not directed toward the growing audience of professional anthropologists. Potential graduate students, consequently, may have been unaware of Starr’s work. Others, aware of the shortcomings of Starr’s anthropology, would have looked elsewhere for advanced training. George Amos Dorsey, Chief Curator of Anthropology at the Field Museum, sent some of his assistants—Faye-Cooper Cole, for one—to the University of Chicago for initial graduate instruction, but to Boas at Columbia for specialized or advanced studies. Without a core of graduate students, there was no reason to expand Starr’s department of anthropology by increasing the size of the faculty. Clearly, without students or teachers, there was little chance for the process of institutionalization to begin.

## RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY

While Frederica de Laguna (1960:91) has characterized “the first anthropologists” as “serious-minded amateurs or professionals in other disciplines who delighted in communication across the boundaries of the several natural sciences and humanities,” anthropology, by the turn of the century, was nevertheless a well-institutionalized intellectual discipline,<sup>3</sup> flourishing in such centers as the Smithsonian Institution, the United States National Museum, and the Bureau of American

Ethnology in Washington, D.C.; the American Museum of Natural History in New York City; the Peabody Museum in Cambridge, and the Field Columbian Museum in Chicago (Starr 1892b, Anonymous 1906, Mitra 1933, Hallowell 1960, Mead and Bunzel 1960, Stocking 1976). Anthropologists regularly met under the auspices of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (Section H) (MacCurdy 1902), American Ethnological Society, Anthropological Society of Washington, and, after 1902, the American Anthropological Association; and communicated through the journals, annals, and publications of these societies and the above-mentioned institutions.

Anthropology, however, was still in the pre-academic era (Collier and Tschopik 1954; Lowie 1956; de Laguna 1960; Freeman 1965; Darnell 1969, 1970; Stocking 1976). "Museums, not universities, were the centers of anthropological activities, sponsoring field work, research, and publication, and making the major contributions to the education of professional anthropologists . . ." (de Laguna 1960: 101). Between 1890 and 1920, early academic departments—usually headed by museum men or former museum men—had to closely cooperate with the longer-established museums in order to survive (Collier and Tschopik 1954, Darnell 1969, Stocking 1976). This cooperation was largely a matter of financial assistance. "Aside from the money appropriated for government anthropology, research was supported largely by individual philanthropy, channeled through museums; universities provided little if any money for anthropological research" (Stocking 1976:9). Over the long haul, the dense, cooperative exchange of personnel, programs, and other resources contributed to the institutionalization of academic anthropology.

Starr's new enterprise at the University of Chicago was no different than other fledgling academic departments. Support, especially in terms of money for teaching equipment, fellowships, and additional faculty positions, was always lukewarm and, hence, slow in coming. Even before the university opened its doors, Starr wrote to President Harper and stated his need for an assistant in American archaeology and complained about the lack of funds for his program.

I am glad to have your assurance that you are going to do the best possible for me and my department. I have felt blue over it. I have gone into it believing and expecting backing and have thereby lost two positions which would pay more than Chicago. I have gone in believing that I can . . . build a department which will not only be a good and recognized part of the University, but a unique thing in America. But I have felt as if the [opportunity was] slipping [away]—and I have given up too much to be able to feel that with equanimity [WRH: Starr to Harper, 11 June 1892].

Though Starr shortly received the funds for his museum specimens and laboratory equipment (WRH: Starr to Harper, 29 June 1892), his chosen assistant, archaeologist William Moorehead, was not hired "because of Harper's lack of interest in fieldwork" (Darnell 1969:162).

Within three years Starr was again arguing for more support. Because he approached anthropology from the natural sciences, this time support also included the reclassification of anthropology from a social science to a natural science.

Has the matter of status of the work in Anthropology been acted upon? Is Anthropology, as counted in this University, a *science* or is it not? [T]his is very important to the success of my work. The students in Anthropology are naturally students who are after sciences and also are likely to be those who have a scientific training in other branches. If the work is not counted as a science the very students best prepared for it will be repelled.

There ought to be a Fellowship in Anthropology. Is there no way of securing one? I shall be glad to draw students—with no status as a science, . . . with no required courses, and with no scholarships, we shall survive and . . . continue to grow—but with some sort of encouragement we shall grow faster . . . [UPP: Starr to Harper, 23 April 1895; emphasis in original].

Even without the kind of support Starr felt he had been promised, the new department got off to a small but propitious start, especially at the undergraduate level. Instruction in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology was divided according to Albion Small's wishes into five categories (Diner 1975). One category included the work in anthropology and ethnology taught by Starr, assisted by Merton L. Miller as a graduate student in 1896 and 1897 and as a recently graduated Ph.D. from 1899 to 1902, and by George Dorsey—who continued to serve as curator of anthropology at the Field Museum—from 1905 until 1915. Another category encompassed the courses taught by W.I. Thomas, which "included work on primitive races, women, folk psychology, primitive art, primitive education, racial development, occupations, and sex" (Diner 1975:537-538). Anthropology was never officially designated a "science," but at least one fellowship was secured, probably by the fall of 1896. Head Professor Small wrote to Harper (UPP: no date):

I am greatly pleased with the fellowship appointments, particularly the recognition of Anthropology. I think I can help make that department a more important factor in the University and this encouragement will make the process easier. Starr has some great ideas in germination and Thomas will be an important element in creating a demand for the work.

By 1897 the new department had produced—according to Fred Eggan (1974)—two outstanding Ph.D.s, David P. Barrows<sup>4</sup> and the already-mentioned Merton L. Miller.

Anthropology did not expand, however, beyond its 1897 level until after Starr's retirement. Starr refused to actively cooperate with the expanding department of sociology, which perhaps could have been a source for additional funds (as well as students) because of Harper and Small's close personal relationship and Harper's commitment to the work in sociology. As presented in the Introduction, Starr insisted and Small agreed that both should head "separate" departments. Starr "understood" that he was "to receive substantial support and backing in building up the department's work" (WRH: Starr to Harper, 17 February 1891), and, for about twenty years, he dogmatically clung to the hope that the university would eventually fund him in a separate and expanded department. Starr's only connection with sociology was through the overlapping interests of W.I. Thomas, who "shared Starr's conviction of the need for studies of primitive man to complete the evolutionary history of human society" (Darnell 1969:162). Thomas even argued for the expansion of the program in anthropology (UPP: Thomas to Harper, 20 April 1904). "But Thomas was peripheral to the sociology department, and thus did little to integrate anthropology within it" (Darnell 1969:162-163).

Starr cooperated even less with George Dorsey, the only other long-term member of the anthropology department in the early years. In 1896, as a recently-graduated Ph.D. and newly-hired staff member at the Field Museum, Dorsey applied for a position within Starr's department. "Once assured that Dorsey did not want to undercut his position in the department, Starr acquiesced" (Darnell 1969:163). Starr's fears regarding Dorsey do not appear to have been unwarranted. Dorsey energetically expanded anthropology at the Field Museum (Martin 1943), and after joining the anthropology faculty in 1905, harbored ambitions of reorganizing Chicago anthropology along graduate lines and reorienting the department away from the evolutionism of Starr and toward the historicism of Boas. Boas wrote to Dorsey (FMNH-DA: 29 March 1907), "I am much interested in your endeavors to reorganize the Department of Anthropology, and hope that you may be successful."

Indeed, in an effort to expand graduate instruction, Dorsey and Thomas in 1907 joined forces in an attempt to bring Franz Boas to Chicago. While only two years earlier Small had voted extreme confidence in Starr's work (UPP: Harper to Small, 1 June 1905, Small to Harper, no date), Dorsey and Thomas were able to persuade Small—"whose goals for sociology stressed professional training" (Darnell 1969:163)—that Starr was inadequate to the task of building a graduate program. Thomas

wrote to Boas (26 March 1907, quoted in Darnell 1969:163), "you know very well that the subject is in a deplorable condition and some of us are hoping to have the department put on a really scientific basis, and to get some thoroughly trained men in the work. . . . We are in fact not so very far from the point of action." On the same day, Dorsey also wrote to Boas (FMNH-DA: 26 March 1907):

I am just back from Dean Small's office . . . where I have been talking with him on some matters of anthropology. In the course of our conversation I was telling him of the work I had been doing with you. Apropos of nothing, he asked if I thought you would accept a head professorship in anthropology at the University of Chicago, to which query, of course, I could give no answer.

Boas was unwilling to leave his position at Columbia, though he did accept an offer to lecture in Chicago's summer school in 1908. In response to Thomas' letter, Boas noted, "Since the break-down of the Museum in this city [New York], Chicago has by far the best opportunity of developing an anthropological department for the training in investigators. It has always seemed curious to me that the University has not improved that opportunity at an earlier time" (Boas to Thomas, 29 March 1907, quoted in Darnell 1969:164).

The negotiations with Boas were conducted without Starr's involvement. However, Starr may have been aware of the plot: a week after Dorsey wrote to Boas about Small's offer, Starr cancelled Dorsey's spring quarter course. Dorsey had rounded up a number of graduate students for his course but was forced to cancel it because, as he explained to Dean Small, "[Starr] preferred that I should not give it" (FMNH-DA: 10 April 1907). Perhaps to underscore his ambitions, Dorsey concluded the letter, "I am none the less ready at any and all times to do everything in my power to further the interests of the department in any way possible." Following this incident until his departure from the university in 1915, Dorsey's courses in physical anthropology continued to be listed in each *Annual Register*, though they "were rarely in fact offered: Dorsey did not enjoy teaching . . . and did not get along well with Starr" (Darnell 1969:163).

If the support for Starr within the Department of Sociology and Anthropology was weak after 1907, the support from the president's office was no stronger. A month after the Boas incident, Harper's successor, Harry Pratt Judson, wrote to Starr (UPP: 8 May 1907), "I do not see any immediate prospect of the development of the department. We are committed to so many things which must be cared for that we can hardly undertake to develop anthropology until these other matters are arranged," President Judson reiterated this same position in 1914 (UPP: Judson to Boas,

11 February 1914) and again in 1920 (FMNH-DA: Judson to Laufer, 14 April 1920). Indeed, when Dorsey left in 1915, ostensibly to join the war effort, his position was never filled, even when it became clear that he had no intentions of ever returning.

By the time Starr retired in 1923, instruction in anthropology was virtually at a standstill. According to the *Annual Register* (University of Chicago 1922-23), Ralph Linton lectured in 1923, with no other courses being offered for the remainder of the academic year. Faye-Cooper Cole joined the faculty in the fall of 1924, followed the year later by Edward Sapir, inaugurating the modern era of Chicago anthropology (Eggan 1974). But for thirty years Starr's department had languished, in some measure, because the university was committed to establishing on a firm foundation other programs before anthropology, and—perhaps as a consequence of Starr's refusal to actively cooperate with other members of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology—because Small, as head of social sciences had lost confidence in an expanded anthropology program under Starr's direction.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGY

As previously discussed, the lackluster support for Starr's program was typical of many newly-founded departments in the pre-academic era. But unlike the heads of other such impoverished departments, Starr did not seek close affiliation or cooperation with the longer-established institutions, or, perhaps more importantly, the newly-founded Field Columbian Museum, in order to bolster his resources. This course of action no doubt inhibited the growth of his program, and, as a devoted fieldworker constantly in need of travel money, perhaps his own researches as well.<sup>5</sup>

When Starr accepted Harper's offer, he was not a member of the inner circle of museum or governmental anthropologists whose "networks of personal and institutional loyalties . . . largely controlled entrance and advancement in American anthropology in the last years of the century" (Hinsley and Holm 1976:311).<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, having heard of the "movement . . . started in Chicago toward a great city museum" (WRH: Starr to Harper, 27 February 1892)—actually the World's Columbian Exposition—Starr hoped to play a central enough role in the planning so as to benefit his new department. Indeed, as the head of the only department of anthropology in the Midwest, Starr probably hoped to be named the curator of anthropology. He wrote President Harper, "Can we allow [the planning] to go along without us? Ought not I, at least, to have some connection with it in such a way as to make it helpful to us? It

is likely to be strongest in my Dep[artment]" (WRH: Starr to Harper, 27 February 1892).

Unfortunately for Starr's hopes, Frederic Ward Putnam, Professor of American Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard and the foremost museum builder in the country, had already been appointed Chief of the Department of Ethnology and Archaeology at the Exposition, with the approval of Harper. Upon learning this fact from Harper, Starr's "enthusiasm for the museum evaporated . . ." (Darnell 1969:159). Starr lamented, "I am somewhat sorry that Prof[essor] Putnam will be at the head of the City Museum. It will cripple our work in archaeology and affect us in that seriously. Utterly unacquainted with Ethnology and Physical Anthropology, he is not to be feared outside of Prehistoric Archaeology" (WRH: Starr to Harper, 21 March 1892). A few months later, again in a letter to Harper, Starr revealed rather bitterly that some ill feelings had developed between him and Putnam.

Please do not call the Harvard archaeologist an anthropologist. There is a difference. He has been growing huffy ever since I went to the [Peabody] Museum. He lately wrote me a letter which was not polite. . . . He has no good reason to speak slightlying of me for I have often spoken well of him and his work when he had no other friend to champion his cause.<sup>7</sup> Possibly he feels that there is not room for two [anthropologists] in Chicago [WRH: Starr to Harper, 29 June 1892].

Whatever the specific cause of these ill feelings, Starr played only a peripheral role in this signal event in the history of anthropology. He consulted with Boas, Putnam's assistant, regarding the university's financial contributions to the Exposition (WRH: Boas to Harper, 21 November 1892), and spent some time collecting artifacts among the Cherokee Indians of South Carolina for the exhibits (FMNH-DA: Records of Gifts and Purchases, 1892). Most surprisingly, he did not take part in the important World's Fair Congress of Anthropology, held at the Exposition in August of 1893 (Holmes 1893).

This experience set the pattern for the initial arm's distance relationship between Starr's program and the Department of Anthropology at the Field Museum, which grew out of the Exposition. This relationship probably was reinforced when George Dorsey was appointed chief curator in 1897 as Dorsey had been one of Putnam's students at Harvard, and when Dorsey sought with Thomas to bring Boas to the university. Starr sold some of his ethnographic collections to the museum in order to finance his field researches (FMNH-DA: Records of Gifts and Purchases, 1892, 1901, 1905), and apparently Merton Miller worked at the museum sometime between the years of 1896 and 1900; but such interaction appears to be the

extent of their mutual cooperation. There is no other record of any cooperation, even after Berthold Laufer replaced Dorsey as chief curator in 1915.

"Rather than seeking cooperation with the Field Columbian Museum to build up his own department, Starr encouraged the foundation of an independent museum on the University campus in which his own role would be more salient" (Darnell 1969:159-160). In a letter to Harper (WRH: 21 March 1892), Starr asked, "Do we intend to gather a Museum? If so I ought, of course, as [the one] in charge . . . of Anthropology, to be a curator of that section of the Museum. I have some ideas . . . which are new and will be of value to Education and Educators generally. . . ." Starr (1896:790) explained that the proximity of the Field Museum,

systematically developed in every line of science, . . . renders the gathering of great collections at the University unnecessary, as students have special facilities furnished them by the museum. Collections, then, at the University [only need to] be . . . formed with reference to their actual teaching value.

A museum was thus founded through the donation of George C. Walker in 1894 and Starr was appointed curator of anthropology. While the museum housed many diverse subjects, the entire third floor was given over to Starr's work, and included space for laboratories, instrumental equipment, charts, diagrams, and a considerable amount of ethnographic materials. The Walker Museum "did not, however, attract students, probably because it could not afford to sponsor research. Failure to draw on the resources of the Field Museum was thus a considerable disadvantage" (Darnell 1969:160).

Starr remained marginal to the rest of the anthropological establishment also. Evidence indicates that he increasingly charted his own independent course as the years—and the approbation of his colleagues—passed by. For example, in 1901 he took part in the discussions which eventually led to the formation of the American Anthropological Association (McGee 1903, Stocking 1960), and in 1904 traveled to Japan on behalf of the anthropological section of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition to secure a group of Ainu natives. But by 1914, while extensively lecturing in Berkeley, Oakland, and San Francisco, he appears to have consciously avoided A.L. Kroeber, only meeting him by accident at a luncheon held for the Japanese consul (FSP: Starr to "My Dear Mother," 24 November 1914), and by 1916, he was not included among the group of important anthropologists assembled to discuss "the objects and methods of anthropology teaching in colleges and universities" (Boas 1919:41).

Starr's program languished, in part, because he failed to coordinate his efforts with those of his colleagues, especially those in the well institutionalized museums and the Field Museum in particular. Given his already limited resources, such coordination probably would have strengthened his program through enlarged opportunities for field work, publication of original results, and employment of recent graduates.

## CONCLUSION

Chicago anthropology did not attain a position of national importance early on and remained a junior partner in a department dominated by men dedicated to the professionalization of sociology because Frederick Starr stood in the way of its institutionalization. The process of institutionalization centers on the teaching and investigation of the discipline's subject matter within a systematically administered organization. Unlike Chicago sociology, which from the beginning was fortunate in having teachers, research, publication outlets, and financial support centered within and organized by the department, Chicago anthropology—like other academic departments of anthropology between 1890 and 1920—only had facilities for teaching. It had only one full-time faculty member, some museum equipment, little, if any, financial support for field research, and no publication outlets. Nevertheless, Chicago anthropology possibly could have overcome its shortcomings through cooperative programs with the department of sociology and especially the Field Museum, which was well endowed by private philanthropists, conducted numerous research expeditions, and published a number of anthropological journals. This pattern of cooperation between academic departments of anthropology and museums was common during this period, and "where no close relation ever developed, academic anthropology before 1920 never got off the ground" (Stocking 1976:9).

Unfortunately, Frederick Starr did not actively seek cooperation with his colleagues. He was determined to build a strong department on his own, believed the university would eventually fulfill its promise to support his program separately, and therefore refused to subordinate any of his efforts to Albion Small or the department of sociology. An early clash of personalities between him and Putnam prevented him from cooperating with the Field Museum. Without the expanded resources such cooperation would have provided, i.e., increased funds for fellowships and research, graduate and postdoctoral employment opportunities, the department could not attract graduate students.

To compound matters, Starr's career at Chicago spanned the period when the Boasian critique of social evolutionism was gaining dominance in the

discipline. Thus, Starr's dogmatic and increasingly archaic evolutionism probably discouraged potential graduate students from attending Chicago, and, coupled with his frank, sometimes imperious opinions, no doubt inhibited the free academic exploration of anthropology. His frequent absences from the campus prevented the close supervision of graduate course work and dissertations, and contributed to a lack of leadership within the department. Without graduate students, the free exchange of ideas, or consistent leadership, the department was returned to step one: there was no reason for the university to increase its support of the department.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The department was in fact the third department of anthropology in the country (Darnell 1969).

Throughout this paper, the following abbreviations will be used in citations referring to manuscript collections: Frederick Starr Papers (FSP), William Rainey Harper Papers (WRH), and the University Presidents' Papers (UPP), (all located in the Special Collections Section, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago), and the Department of Anthropology's Archival Materials (FMNH-DA), (located in the Field Museum of Natural History).

<sup>2</sup>Limitations of time, space, and format prevented the inclusion of all of Starr's articles in the "References Cited." However, several important works not cited in the body of this paper are Starr (1892a, 1902, 1904, 1908b, 1909a, 1914, 1918).

<sup>3</sup>The discussion here follows Shils' (1970:803) differentiation:

An *intellectual discipline* exists when a number of persons believe themselves to possess an identity defined by the common subject of their intellectual concern and when many or all of the problems which they study are raised by or derived from the tradition—that is, the body of literature and oral interpretation produced by those who regard themselves as practitioners of the discipline. An *intellectual discipline* is an *academic discipline* when it is taught—that is, discussed and investigated—through academic institutions which bear the name of the discipline or something akin to it [emphasis mine].

<sup>4</sup>Barrows later became the president of the University of California, 1919-23.

<sup>5</sup>The Field Museum was fairly well endowed by private Chicago philanthropists and Starr, who often paid for his research excursions out of his own pocket, could possibly have benefited from the museum's research funds.

<sup>6</sup>Starr worked at the American Museum of Natural History before Putnam (from 1894 to 1903) reorganized the department of anthropology and the museum entered the anthropological establishment.

<sup>7</sup>While researching for his article "Anthropological Work in America" (1892b), Starr visited Putnam at the Peabody Museum. Whether Putnam ever "had no other friend to champion his cause" is questionable, but Starr was very complimentary of Putnam's work in his article.

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