

George W. Stocking, Jr., a major force in the history of anthropology, a prolific author and editor, and professor of anthropology at the University of Chicago, died on July 13th at age 84. In elegant and idiosyncratic ways, Stocking shaped the discipline of social science history through his many essays and books, as well as through the journal he founded, *The History of Anthropology*, and his extensive collegial contacts.

Stocking was born in Berlin to George Stocking, Sr., a professor of economics on research leave from the University of Texas, and Dorothea Reichhard. Stocking, his younger brother and his two sisters spent their childhood and teenage years in Austin, with frequent residence in other cities while their father was either doing research or working in governmental positions as a member of Franklin Roosevelt's "brain trust." Because of his father's travels, Stocking attended several high schools, finally graduating from the Horace Mann-Lincoln School in New York City. He matriculated at Harvard University in 1945, where he changed his major from economics to English literature and began working in socialist causes. During his senior year he became chairman of the John Reed Club and decided to become active in the Communist Party after graduation.

During the summer of 1949, Stocking married Wilhelmina Davis, who joined him in factory work. They had five children together before divorcing in 1965. After seven years of increasing disillusionment with the Party, Stocking resolved tensions with his father, who supplied money for graduate school. He entered the American Civilization program at the University of Pennsylvania in 1956. There he fell under the genial influence of Murray Murphey, a philosopher of American pragmatism, and A. Irving Hallowell, a major figure in psychological anthropology and cultural dynamics.

Stocking's dissertation in 1960, a content analysis of over 500 social scientific works on race, was begun with enthusiasm, bridged by an epistemological crisis, and finished with the resolve to abandon further efforts at positivistic history. His diligence, though, provided him an empirical resource for a different kind of history, one borrowing from anthropology: when dealing with a particular period or individual, he would select a singular event, what he sometimes called "the juicy bit," and interpret its significance along several dimensions. He would elaborate this method in seminars and in essays composed during his first academic job in the history department at Berkeley.

During his time at Berkeley, Stocking published some quite important essays, which won him tenure in 1966. Those essays became the basis for his first book, *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (1968). A National Science Foundation post-doctoral fellowship for training in anthropology in 1967-1968 brought Stocking back to the University of Pennsylvania and then to the University of Chicago, where a joint appointment was offered him in the departments of anthropology and history. The stature of Chicago's anthropology department grew considerably in the 1960s and early 1970s, with appointments of Clifford Geertz, David Schneider, Raymond Fogelson, Raymond Smith, Terry Turner, Michael Silverstein, Marshall Sahlins and others of glittering promise. Through interactions with his colleagues and distinguished visitors, Stocking became intimately acquainted with the mores of the anthropological tribe, and, in his ambivalent way, acted as a participant observer.

Chicago anthropology was undergoing a gradual shift during this period, away from strict British structural-functionalism to a re-focusing on culture and its symbolic analysis. Franz Boas, the turn-of-the-century anthropologist whose star had waned at Chicago, was re-illuminated largely through Stocking's interpretation of his work and its influence on contemporary conceptions of culture.

In fall of 1968, Stocking married Carol Bowman. During the 1970s, Stocking continued to publish important essays in the history of anthropology, but made little headway on the book he envisioned on the history of British anthropology. Lack of a book caused tensions with the history department at Chicago, from which he withdrew; but his essays, his semiannual "History of Anthropology Newsletter," and growing reputation led the anthropology department to recommend he be made full professor. During the 1980s, Stocking perfected his characteristic prose style, one borne of self-reflection and the requirements of historical sequence: long, winding sentences in which each phrase was qualified by the next, with each sentence drawing the reader into the complexities of the period.

In 1981, Stocking became director of the Fishbein Center for History of Science and Medicine at Chicago, which allowed him to organize several international meetings and work in collaboration with members of the Committee on Conceptual Foundations of Science, a Ph.D. granting unit in the history and philosophy of science. Stocking

offered regular seminars on the history of anthropology, drawing graduate students from several quarters of the university and visitors from many countries.

In the early 1980s, Stocking founded the series *History of Anthropology*, an annual that published longer articles on a given theme. He continued as editor for eight volumes, encouraging young scholars and practiced hands; and, in the tradition of strong, Nineteenth-Century editors, he worked with authors to rethink and rewrite their contributions. The twelfth volume, under different editorship, came out as his autobiography, *Glimpses into my Own Black Box: An Exercise in Self-Deconstruction* (2010).

The blockage that Stocking felt in writing the big volume crumbled when he got an early personal computer. Despite frustrations with the technology, he completed his widely praised and influential *Victorian Anthropology* in 1987 and its successor *After Tylor: British Social Anthropology, 1888-1951* in 1995. These were complemented by further collections of his essays: *The Ethnographer's Magic* (1992) and *Delimiting Anthropology* (2001). Through his many essays and books, his journal editing and organizational efforts, and the influence on his students, George Stocking helped give particular shape to contemporary history of the social sciences.