

PRIMITIVE SOCIETY

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PREFACE

ANTHROPOLOGISTS are hard put to it when asked to recommend a book that shall give the layman a brief summary of what is now known regarding their science as a whole or any one of its branches. They are usually obliged to confess that such an up-to-date synthesis as is likely to satisfy the questioner does not exist. In no department of anthropology has the want of a modern summary made itself more painfully felt than in that of social organization. Sociologists, historians, and students of comparative jurisprudence all require the data the anthropologist might supply, but for lack of a general guide they have been content to find inspiration in Morgan's *Ancient Society*, a book written when scientific ethnography was in its infancy. Since 1877 anthropologists have not merely amassed a wealth of concrete material but have developed new methods and points of view that render Morgan hopelessly antiquated. His work remains an important pioneer effort by a man of estimable intelligence and exemplary industry, but to get one's knowledge of primitive society therefrom nowadays is like getting one's biology from some pre-Darwinian naturalist. It is emphatically a book for the historian of anthropology and not for the general reader.

As I discovered during a year's lecturing at the University of California, the college student who takes anthropological courses suffers as grievously from the want of an introductory statement on primitive social organization as the interested layman or the investigator of neighboring branches of knowledge. It is the

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requirements of these three classes of readers that I have had in mind in the preparation of the present volume, which purports to present the position of modern American workers.

I am naturally under obligations to more of my colleagues than can conveniently be named here. Above all I must acknowledge my indebtedness to my preceptor, Professor Franz Boas, the champion of scientific method in all anthropological research. To Dr. Clark Wissler of the American Museum of Natural History I owe abundant and varied field experience among North American Indians and a great deal of stimulation in our common field of specialist investigation, the Plains area. To Professor A. L. Kroeber I am indebted for the opportunity to lecture at the University of California during the academic year of 1917-18, which led to a systematization of my views on primitive society and thus indirectly to the present volume. Among many of my Berkeley associates from other departments I found quite unexpectedly a most encouraging interest in anthropological theory. More particularly, I was stimulated by my friend, Professor Francis S. Philbrick, now of Northwestern University, whose broad knowledge of comparative jurisprudence helped greatly to enlarge my own vision of primitive law. Finally, I must express my obligations to my friend, Mr. Leslie Spier, of the American Museum of Natural History, for reading and acutely criticising the typescript of chapters II to VIII before setting out on a field trip; and to Miss Bella Weitzner for the competent preparation of the index.

ROBERT H. LOWIE.

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NOTE.—This Bibliography includes all the literature cited in this work. The following abbreviations are used to designate serial publications :

Amer. Anth.	American Anthropologist
Amer. Anth., Mem.	Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association
A.M.N.H.	Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History
A.M.N.H., Bull.	Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History
A.M.N.H., Hd.	Handbook Series of the American Museum of Natural History
A.M.N.H., Mem.	Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History
B.A.E.	Annual Report of the Bureau of (American) Ethnology
B.A.E., Bull.	Bulletin, Bureau of American Ethnology
Can. Geol. Sur., Mem.	Memoir, Canada Department of Mines, Geological Survey
Can. Geol. Sur., Mus.	Museum Bulletin, Canada Department of Mines, Geological Survey
Can. Sum. Rept.	Summary Report of the Geological Survey, Canada
Field Mus.	Anthropological Series, Field Museum of Natural History
J.A.F.L.	Journal of American Folk-Lore
J.A.I.	Journal of the (Royal) Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland
Reports	Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition
U Cal.	University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology
Z. vgl. R.	Zeitschrift für vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft

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