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PARTICIPANTS

THEODORE BRAMELD is Professor of Educational Philosophy, New York University, and member of the staff of the Center for Human Relations Studies. He is author of "Minority Problems in the Public Schools, Patterns of Educational Philosophy," and other books. He is now engaged in writing an interpretation of the significance of culture theory for educational policy and practice, with the assistance of a grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research.

ROBERT N. BUSH is Associate Professor of Education, Stanford University, and Editor, California Journal of Secondary Education. His principal area is secondary education, and his research interests have centered around the problems of school staff personnel. He has been responsible for the development of the Stanford Consultation Service, the work of which features an interdisciplinary team approach (anthropology and sociology, psychology, psychiatry, and education) to the problems of teaching and administration in public and private schools, and is author of "The Teacher-Pupil Relationship," a volume which draws upon and describes some of this work.

ARTHUR P. COLADARCII is Associate Professor of Education and Psychology, Stanford University. He is author of "The Relative Validity of Topical Areas in Educational Psychology" (Teacher Ed. QLty.), "Are Educational Researchers Prepared to Do Meaningful Research?" (Calif. J. of Ed. Res.), "Research Priorities in Educational Administration" (J. of Ed. Res.), and other articles in educational and psychology journals.

WILLIAM H. COWLEY is David Jacks Professor of Higher Education at Stanford. After taking his Ph.D. in psychology at the University of Chicago in 1930, he gave most of his attention during nine years at Ohio State University to administration and from 1938 to 1944 served as President of Hamilton College. Since then he has been at Stanford giving all his time to seeking what he calls "a synoptic, integrated overview of American higher education."

CORA DuBOIS is Zemurray Professor at Harvard and Radcliffe, and formerly Director of Research, Institute of International Education. She is a member of the Social Science Research Council Committee on Cross-Cultural Education. She is author of "The Problems of Aor, Social Forces in Southeast Asia," and monographs on California Indians and has done field work among American Indians in California, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington, and among the Alorese in the Netherlands Indies.

LAWRENCE K. FRANK was formerly Director, Caroline Zachry Institute of Human Development, New York. He is author of "Society as the Patient, How to Help Your Child in School" (with Mary H. Frank), "Nature and Human Nature: Man's New Image of Himself, Understanding Children's Play" (with Ruth Hartley and Robert Goldenson), "Feelings..."
and Emotions, Individual Development, several other books, and numerous papers in professional and lay journals.

JOHN GILLIN is Research Professor of Anthropology at the University of North Carolina. He is the author of The Ways of Man, The Banana River Caribs of British Guiana, Moche: A Peruvian Coastal Community, The Culture of Security in San Carlos, Cultural Sociology (with J. L. Gillion), For a Science of Social Man (with others) and a long list of other anthropological monographs and articles. He has done field work in Algeria, Europe, New Mexico, Northern Wisconsin, British Guiana, Ecuador, Upper Amazon Valley, Peru, Cuba, Colombia, and Guatemala.

PAUL ROBERT HANNA is Lee L. Jacks Professor of Child Education, School of Education, Stanford University, and former Director of the Educational Division, U.S. Mutual Security Agency, Philippine Islands. He is author or editor of many social studies textbooks, spelling textbooks, professional educational books, and official publications of educational organizations.

CHARLES W. M. HART is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin. He is author of articles on Australian ethnology and social organization, and on industrial communities in Canada. He has done field work in northern Australia, northern Ontario, and Windsor, Canada.

JULES HENRY is Associate Professor of Anthropology, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, Visiting Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of Chicago, and Research Associate, The Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School, University of Chicago. He is author of Jungle People, Doll Play of Pilagá Indian Children, "Speech Disturbances in Pilagá Indian Children" (Amer. J. of Orthopsychiatry), "Child Rearing, Culture, and the Natural World" (Psychiatry). He has done field work among the Apache, the Nampimet in Mexico, and the Riksha women in Shanghai.

FELIX M. KEESING is Professor of Anthropology and executive head of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Stanford University. He has carried on extensive research since 1925 in the Pacific area (Samoan, Philippine, etc.) and among the Menomini Indians of Wisconsin. His main field of research interest, culture change, has included study of educational systems, old and new, among such peoples. He has published a number of books, monographs, and papers, including the report of a seminar on anthropology and education held at the University of Hawaii in 1936 (Education in Pacific Countries).

SOLO T. KIMBALL is Professor of Education, Department of Social and Philosophical Foundations at Teachers' College, Columbia University, and former Chairman of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Alabama. His publications include Family and Community in Ireland (with C. M. Arensberg) and The Talladega Story: A Study in Community Process (with Marion Pearse). He has done community research in Newburyport, Massachusetts; County Clare, Ireland; rural Michigan; Talladega, Alabama; and among the Navaho Indians.

ALFRED L. KROEBER is Emeritus Professor of Anthropology, and formerly Chairman, Department of Anthropology, University of California. He is editor of Anthropology Today and author of Anthropology (a general text), Configurations of Cultural Growth, The Concept of Culture (with Clyde Kluckhohn), Cultural and Natural Areas of Native North America, The Nature of Culture, and a long and illustrous list of monographs and articles. He has done field work among many American Indian tribes west of the Mississippi and is a pioneer worker in the ethnology of the California Indians.

DOROTHY LEE is Consultant in Teaching at the Merrill-Palmer School, Detroit, Michigan, formerly Professor of Anthropology, Vassar College. She is author of articles in professional journals on the conceptual and value aspects of culture, and other publications in ethnology. She has done field work in Melanesia, among the Wintu Indians of California, and in public schools in the United States.

WILLIAM E. MARTIN is Associate Professor of Child Development, College of Education, University of Illinois. He is author of Child Development: The Process of Growing Up in Society (with Celia B. Stendler), Readings in Child Development (with Celia B. Stendler), Interracial Education in the Kindergarten and Primary Grades (with Celia B. Stendler), "Growing Up in an Anxious Age" (A.S.C.D. Yearbook, 1952), "The Child in a World of Numbers" (Childh. Educ., "The Development of Values in Children" (J. Genet. Psychol.), and a long list of research papers in various psychological journals. He was given the 1953 Award for Outstanding Research by the American Personnel and Guidance Association.

MARGARET MEAD is Associate Curator of Ethnology, American Museum of Natural History, and Adjunct Professor of Anthropology, Columbia University. She has made comparative studies of education in eight different cultures during the last twenty-nine years, and has been continuously interested in the contribution of archaeological findings to education. From among the long list of books, monographs, and articles that she has authored, some of those particularly relevant for the purposes of this volume include Coming of Age in Samoa, Growing Up in New Guinea, and The School in American Culture (Inglis Lecture).

I. JAMES QUILEN is Professor of Education and Dean of the School of Education at Stanford University. He was Co-director of the Stanford Social Education Investigation (1936-40), Co-chairman of the Committee on the Function of the Social Studies in General Education (1937-40), President of the National Council for the Social Studies (1944), and an official of the UNESCO Secretariat in Paris, France (1944-45). His professional publications include The Social Studies in General Education (with others), Textbook Improvement and International Understanding, and Education for Social Competence (with Lavone Hanna).
AN INTRODUCTION TO ANTHROPOLOGY
AND EDUCATION

I. JAMES QUILLEN
Stanford University

Professional educators today face many problems. These problems are produced by such factors as the complexity and heterogeneity of American culture, the rapidity and inco-ordination of cultural change, the effort to provide equality of educational opportunity for all children and youth, the increase in the birth rate, the competition for the tax dollar, current ideological conflict, and conflicting theories of education. Educational problems center in such areas as the cultural role and objectives of education, the organization and administration of the school, the content of education, methods of teaching and learning, the evaluation and guidance of the student, and public relations and the provision of adequate financial support.

In the solution of school problems, professional educators have for some time utilized knowledge from such disciplines as biology, psychology, history, philosophy, and sociology. More recently increasing attention has been directed toward anthropology as a resource for conceptual knowledge and research methods which can contribute directly to the improvement of education. Anthropologists and educators have recognized areas of common interest and concern and have begun to work together on common problems. These co-operative efforts have been limited thus far, but this symposium is an indication both of the significant progress that has been made and of future possibilities. This introductory paper attempts to define some of the problem areas in education where anthropology can make a contribution. The overview by George Spindler, following, maps out some areas in anthropology that are relevant to these problems and surveys the articulation and historical contacts of the two fields.

Education is the instrument through which cultures perpetuate themselves. It is the process through which the members of a society assure themselves that the behavior necessary to continue their culture is learned. Since education is a cultural process, it is important for educators to have a clear conception of the meaning of culture. Confusion over this meaning is an important factor in confusion and conflict concerning the proper role of the school. Here is a basic area where anthropologists can make a significant contribution.