

CHARLES CLARK WILLOUGHBY, 1857–1943

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CHARLES CLARK WILLOUGHBY was born at Winchendon, Mass., July 5, 1857, and died at Watertown, Mass., on April 21, 1943. He was the son of a farmer and descended from Deputy Governor Francis Willoughby (1665–70) in whom he took some interest. As a young man he went to Augusta, Maine, and clerked in a drug store. Soon he opened an art store in which original works were sold, as well as reproductions of celebrated paintings. This store was the first in its vicinity, and, under the influence of Willoughby, the young people of Augusta began to collect photographs of Madonnas and other works of art.

While in Augusta, Mr. Willoughby had two hobbies. The first of these was marquetry work. He made beautiful inlays in furniture and small picture frames, following his own designs. He also began archaeological excavations in the shell heaps of Damariscotta and elsewhere.

In 1883 he married Margaret Elizabeth Stanwood, whose father was the first city clerk of Augusta, a major in the state militia, and a leader in musical circles. Mrs. Willoughby was a cousin of the wife of James G. Blaine. Her brother was Edward Stanwood, the historian. The Willoughbys had a summer home on Squirrel Island near that of Stanwood and came into contact with Nelson Dingley, William P. Frye and other national figures.

Sometime prior to 1892 Professor Frederick Ward Putnam of the Peabody Museum of Harvard University became acquainted with Willoughby through the latter's archaeological interests. Putnam persuaded him to abandon his prosperous art business and in 1892 Mr. Willoughby became Assistant in the Department of Anthropology at the Chicago Exposition—one of Putnam's projects. At the close of the Fair, Willoughby came to the Peabody Museum of Harvard University, where he was chief assistant, 1894–99, assistant curator 1899–1913, assistant director 1913–15, director 1915–28, and director emeritus until his death. His connection with the Peabody Museum thus covered a half century.

Mr. Willoughby was passionately devoted to the institution that he served so long. His particular interest was the care and installation of specimens. He was perhaps the foremost authority in the country on the identification of ethnological objects from all parts of the world. He was a pioneer in the devising of new methods of restoring and pre-

serving specimens and indefatigable in his extermination of museum pests (insect).

With a ridiculously small budget he gradually built up the museum collections, cased the new halls in the addition that was built in 1913 to connect the old Peabody building with the University Museum, and installed exhibits himself, with the help only of Mr. S. J. Guernsey. He reorganized the storage system, established an excellent photographic collection, dug up from the files of old field notes the reports of various archaeological expeditions sent out under Putnam, edited them, and published them.

With his limited funds, he nevertheless managed to appropriate small amounts for various archaeological projects in different parts of New England.

Willoughby was an artist. He began the series of exquisite small scale ethnographical models that are one of the most useful and attractive exhibits in the Museum and were later developed and made famous by Guernsey and Pitman. He illustrated his archaeological reports with his own beautiful and meticulous drawings.

Mr. Willoughby was essentially a museum and specimen man and was not particularly interested in the teaching of anthropology, although he served as Austin teaching fellow from 1899–1901. He was most reluctant to give students manual access to his precious collections, but, when once convinced of their seriousness and competency, he was generous with his time and his knowledge in lending them assistance. He had little use for theory and for teachers who dealt with words and neglected specimens. If you got into a laboratory coat, washed, mended and catalogued specimens, and then installed them satisfactorily, you ceased to be reckoned among "the ornamental young men on the office staircase."

During my first years at the Museum (from 1913 to about 1920) I was paid a few hundred dollars annually to work upon the skeletal collections of the Museum, in order to eke out my stipend as a Harvard instructor. Thus I experienced Mr. Willoughby in his capacity as a director of curatorial work. He was severe and exacting, but generous in his appreciation of work that he judged to be well done. He could be formidable when dissatisfied. His wrath was awful.

One day I was standing on some moveable steps in the storage stacks, removing from the top of a case a wooden tray tightly packed with nested Predynastic pots. The steps tipped over and the pots and I came down. At least twenty of the former were smashed to bits. I picked myself up in one piece, but slightly battered, and in fear and trembling sought Mr. Willoughby's office. I stammered, "I have done

an awful thing; I have just fallen from the steps in the stacks and smashed a whole tray of Predynastic pots." His face softened in a kindly smile and he put his hand on my shoulder: "The only important thing is: Did you hurt yourself?"

But if you tried to get a key to a case, he was likely to be tough. It took a savage siege of months by Dixon, Tozzer, and myself to reduce Mr. Willoughby to a state of subjection in which he handed me a key to the outside door of the Museum.

Mr. Willoughby seemed austere and at times unapproachable, but he had a quiet sense of humor. His implacable moods alternated with a gentle and sympathetic treatment, if he approved of you.

He was always very deaf, but I could never sneak by his office door without being heard when he wanted me for some tiresome job. Dr. Sylvanus Morley once brought a scientific visitor into Mr. Willoughby's office. Mr. Willoughby, as usual on such occasions, got out his table audition box and hooked it up to his ears. The visitor bellowed so loud that the window-panes rattled. As he left, Mr. Willoughby turned to Morley, cocked his thumb toward the retreating guest, and yelled, "He thinks I'm deaf."

Life with Willoughby in the Peabody Museum was somewhat like "Life with Father." It was never dull. After he retired Mr. Willoughby took an office in the basement under his former director's room. Here he worked on his book about New England archaeology, made his beautiful drawings, and received visitors with invariable charm and sympathy. His irascible fits vanished with his tenure of office.

Willoughby was a fascinating and mercurial man, a thorough artist, a marvellous technologist, and an astounding erudite ethnographer. He never spared himself in devotion to his duty, which he conceived to be that of building up the collections of the Peabody into the finest, cleanest, and most orderly anthropological study collections in the country.*

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* Note. For details on Mr. Willoughby's early life, I am indebted to Mr. Charles K. Bolton, of Shirley, Mass. Miss Constance Ashenden, Assistant Librarian of the Peabody Museum, has compiled Mr. Willoughby's Bibliography.

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