Margaret Mead  
(1901–1978)  
Mead was instrumental in extending and popularizing anthropological concepts of culture. As a professor, intrepid researcher, author, speaker, and museum curator, she bridged the gap between the academy and popular culture. She first made her mark with *Coming of Age in Samoa*, published in 1928 and based on original fieldwork done for her PhD at Columbia. The book, which focused on adolescent sexuality, was an instant best seller and remains in print today; it has been read by some as a tacit critique of the suppression of teenage sexuality in the United States. Throughout her life, Mead's work focused on problems of child-rearing, personality, and culture and in the process assured the inclusion of perspectives of women and children within the scope of anthropological work. Two of her more important works were *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935) and *Male and Female: A Study of the Sexes in a Changing World* (1949).

Mead transferred to Barnard College in 1921, majored in psychology, and graduated in 1923. She remembered her two years there fondly in her memoir *Blackberry Winter*. From Barnard, Mead proceeded across Broadway to Columbia, where she pursued graduate studies in anthropology with Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict. She received her PhD in 1929. In 1934, she became a member of the curatorial staff at the American Museum of Natural History, with which she remained affiliated until her death in 1978. Mead taught off and on at Columbia well into the 1970s, but without benefit of a regular appointment. "The campus," she once wrote, "is looked upon as a sanctuary in the medieval tradition, but I don't think it should be treated any differently from the rest of the community."