
CHARLES WALTER WAGLEY



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CHARLES WAGLEY, an eminent anthropologist and Latin Americanist, and past president of the American Anthropological Association (1970–71), died in his sleep, at home in Gainesville, Florida, on 25 November 1991, at the age of seventy-eight, ending a long struggle with lung cancer and emphysema. He was graduate research professor emeritus of anthropology and Latin American studies at the University of Florida.

Born in Clarksville, Texas, Chuck Wagley transferred from the University of Oklahoma to Columbia College in 1934. A student of Ruth Benedict, Franz Boas, Ruth Bunzel, and Ralph Linton, Wagley received his B.A. (1936) and Ph.D. (1941) from Columbia. After working as an instructor at Columbia for a year (1940–41), Chuck set off for Brazil to do research and, eventually, applied anthropology (in public health and sanitation—for the Brazilian and American governments during World War II).

In 1946 he returned to Columbia, where he taught from 1946 to 1971. He was director of Columbia's Institute of Latin American Studies between 1961 and 1969 and the Franz Boas Professor of Anthropology from 1965 to 1971, when he moved to Gainesville as a graduate research professor. Chuck retired from the University of Florida in 1983.

Charles Wagley was widely respected as a field worker, scholar, teacher, writer, and humanist. "He inspired a generation of Latin American scholars at Columbia University and the University of Florida with his keen insight, his wisdom, and his great empathy for the peoples and cultures of Latin America," said University of Florida president John Lombardi, himself a former Wagley student.

Wagley's first (1937) field study, of a Mayan Indian community in Guatemala, was the basis of his doctoral dissertation, published in 1941 as *Economics of a Guatemalan Village*, a Memoir of the American Anthropological Association. For his next field work, Wagley chose Brazil; he is well known for his research at three different sites in the Amazon region. Wagley's Brazilian research began in 1939–40 among the forest-dwelling Tapirapé Indians. His 1940 article "The Effects of Depopulation upon Social Organization, as Illustrated by Tapirapé Indians" is a classic in demographic anthropology. Wagley's Tapirapé revisits culminated in his last book, *Welcome of Tears: The Tapirapé Indians of Central Brazil* (1977)—translated into Portuguese in 1988.

Wagley's research among the acculturated Tenetehara Indians in 1941–42 (with his good friend and frequent collaborator Eduardo Galvão) led to their book *The Tenetehara Indians of Brazil* (1949). Wagley's study of Itá, a community of peasant farmers and rubber tap-

pers on the banks of the Amazon, began in 1948 and produced two editions of his popular book *Amazon Town: a Study of Man in the Tropics* (1953, 1976). In 1974 Wagley edited *Man in the Amazon*. These books, along with many journal articles in English and Portuguese, established Charles Wagley's reputation as a pioneer in Amazonian studies.

Collaborating with the distinguished Bahian anthropologist Thales de Azevedo, Wagley directed the Bahia State–Columbia University Community Study Project in 1951–52. This pioneering comparative research effort culminated in Wagley's edited book *Race and Class in Rural Brazil* (1952, 1964). Wagley's longstanding interest in race, class, and ethnicity is also illustrated by *Minorities in the New World: Six Case Studies* (1958), which he wrote with Marvin Harris. *The Latin American Tradition: Essays on the Unity and Diversity of Latin American Culture* (1968) brought together several of Wagley's papers on traditional and modern Latin America, including an influential paper on the concept of social race.

Drawing on years of field work and personal knowledge of Brazilian life gained in part through his marriage to Brazilian-born Cecilia Roxo, Wagley wrote two editions of *Introduction to Brazil* (1963, 1971), which remains an essential text. Wagley's influence extended "far beyond his own field of anthropology," said Stuart B. Schwartz, director of the Center for Early Modern History at the University of Minnesota. "He trained a whole generation of specialists in Brazil, and the study of Brazil in the United States owes a tremendous debt to him."

A man of careful scholarship and keen intellect, Chuck probably took most pride in the excellence of his teaching and writing. He chaired more than fifty doctoral dissertations at Columbia and Florida, nurturing, guiding, and inspiring some of today's most prominent anthropologists—American and Brazilian. Chuck was never afraid to share his own knowledge and insights, and anthropology's value as a profession, with a larger public. The clarity and accessibility of his writing style helped him reach beyond books and academic journals to the popular press, in the United States, and especially in Brazil, where his essay "If I Were a Brazilian" (1963) attracted wide attention in a prominent newspaper. Affection, openness, honesty, respect for others, and a total lack of pretension were prominent features of Chuck's personality.

Besides the American Anthropological Association, Wagley served as president of the American Ethnological Society. He was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Center for Inter-

American Relations. He held honorary degrees from the University of Notre Dame and the University of Bahia (Brazil). His many awards include the Medal for Science in the Amazon from the National Institute for Amazon Research and the Kalman Silvert Award from the Latin American Studies Association. The Brazilian government expressed its appreciation of Wagley's work directing a major public health project during World War II by naming him to the National Order of the Southern Cross and awarding him the prestigious Medal of War.

In an otherwise happy and successful life, Chuck's greatest regret was the tragic death of his son Billy in 1960.

Chuck Wagley's wife of fifty years, Cecilia Roxo Wagley, of Gainesville, followed him in death in 1994. Charles and Cecilia Wagley are survived by their daughter Isabel (Betty) Kottak of Ann Arbor, by two grandchildren, Juliet Kottak Mavromatis, M.D., and Nicholas Kottak, and by a great grandson, Lucas Mavromatis.

Elected 1964; Committees: Lewis Award 1969-72; Research 1965-80

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