



# **Margaret Mead: Coming of Age in America (Oxford Portraits in Science)**

*Joan Mark*

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The American anthropologist Margaret Mead (1901-1978) was barely 24 years old when she left New York to study the natives of Samoa, New Guinea, and other remote Pacific islands. Anthropological research to her was not a dull academic discipline but an adventure in which every little detail, from Balinese ritual dances to Polynesian tattooing, held enormous fascination. Her 1928 book--*Coming of Age in Samoa*--made her both famous and controversial. She boldly challenged the most deeply ingrained principles of the Western way of life: family structure, education, and child-rearing. When she died in 1978, a Pacific tribe she befriended held a five-day ceremony in her honor normally reserved for their greatest chiefs. Joan Mark guides us through the most exciting anthropological discoveries of the 20th century while following Margaret Mead's many triumphs around the globe in quick-paced, engrossing prose that reads like an adventure story.

*Oxford Portraits in Science* is an ongoing series of scientific biographies. Written by top scholars and writers, each biography examines the personality of its subject as well as the thought process leading to his or her discoveries. These illustrated biographies combine accessible technical information with compelling personal stories to portray the scientists whose work has shaped our understanding of the natural world.

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