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*A statement by the Hopi Tribal Council on Hopi participation in the Quincentenary program of the 1991 Festival of American Folklife.*

*The Hopi people are a caring people. We are a patient people. We consider ourselves stewards of this great land called North America. We have welcomed people to these lands to share its resources. Through a forum of this type, we hope that others may come to understand the Hopi people. Today's lifestyle demands a respite. The Hopi can offer this pause in our hectic lives through the sharing of its cultural ways. We hope that the visitors will go away with a better perspective on life . . . that while life is a real challenge, life is also simple.  
This is the message of the Hopi.*

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# The Hopi Dictionary

## Emory Sekaquaptewa

For the first time in its history, the Hopi language is on the threshold of literacy. A Hopi dictionary is being compiled today by project teams from Northern Arizona University and the University of Arizona in collaboration with the Office of Cultural Preservation of the Hopi Nation. It is near completion.

The Hopi language has been spoken by people who have inhabited the areas of northeastern Arizona for nearly two thousand years. It continues to be the foundation of custom, usage and ceremonialism, which rely on oral tradition for their continued existence. Oral tradition incorporates ritual and ceremonial forms, spatial context, and drama to create a powerful tool that makes an indelible mark on the minds and hearts of those participating. The Hopi language, in association with rituals, customs and other forms of usage, continues to call up memories of the past that give meaning to the present and future. For this reason, the Hopi people feel confident that our language is alive today.

Why then, the need for a written form of the Hopi language? It is a proper question, whether literacy in Hopi will enhance its viability in its own cultural setting, or will detract from the power of the spoken word by undermining its use in the traditional context. It is not a technical question whether Hopi can be systematically written, for that has been practically accomplished.

But some Hopis and students of Hopi have expressed concern about the survival of the lan-

guage in modern times because of the interventions in Hopi culture by modern social and economic institutions. Under these prevailing influences there is no doubt that the Hopi language is threatened with extinction. New generations of Hopis want to be, and are becoming, more and more involved with the outside world. They seek opportunities to meet their own goals in modern society. This is the reality of today's Hopi world that justifies the writing of our language.

Those who work on and contribute to the dictionary are deeply mindful of the implications that written Hopi holds for the future. In addition to important cultural-historical perspectives on Hopi life that the dictionary can reveal, its stated goal is to preserve the language. In so doing it will be a reference tool for producing Hopi literature, and thereby assist the continued evolution of the language. In this sense, the dictionary addresses the concerns of Hopi and non-Hopi people about the survival of the Hopi language. The dictionary is not intended to replace the oral tradition practiced today by establishing a writing system. Neither is it an instrument for a revival of Hopi culture, but rather a way to new vistas for Hopi studies beyond ethnographic approaches.

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## Two Entries from the Hopi Dictionary

- 1 ENTRY.....yon|ta  
 2 ALPHABETIZER.....yonta  
 3 FORM CLASS.....vt.i.  
 4 DEFINITION.....be doing s. th. for another in order to obligate the person to reciprocate (e.g., plaque weaving, grinding corn, donating gifts to be used at wedding).  
 5 ENGLISH.....  
 6 MORPHOLOGY.....yon-ta [debtor-REP]  
 7 UNDERLYING FORM...../ yoni -tal /  
 8 INFLECTED FORMS.....~tota  
 9 COMBINING FORMS.....  
 10 PAUSAL.....  
 11 CROSS-REFERENCE.....  
 12 EXAMPLES.....  
 ÛNu' pumuy ~{ta}qe oovi pangsoq pumuy amungem put yungyaput yawma.£ By taking that plaque to them (for their use), I'm obligating them to pay me back in kind. – ÛNu' ung ~{ta}niqe oovi ungem yungyaplawni.£ I want to get you indebted to me by weaving a plaque for you. – ÛHimuwa hita, sen m'ngghintsakpi'ewakw hintsakqw, hak pangsonen pep put engem hita hintsakye', hak pan hakiy ~{ta}ngwu.£ If someone does something, for example a wedding, and one goes there to do something for that person, one is obligating that person to pay back in kind. – ÛPuma oovi pasat {naa}~{ta}ngwu.£ So then they mutually obligate one another (by weaving plaques).

- 1 ENTRY.....yotsihanin|ta  
 2 ALPHABETIZER.....yotsihaninta  
 3 FORM CLASS.....vi./vt.i.  
 4 DEFINITION.....be grinding corn inadequately due to inexperience, allowing some of the large pieces to filter down or slide between the metate and the mano.  
 5 ENGLISH.....  
 6 MORPHOLOGY.....yotsi-han-i-n-ta  
 [push:down:into-grind:corn-Ûi-£CAUS-REP]  
 7 UNDERLYING FORM...../ yohtsi haana -i -na -tal /  
 8 INFLECTED FORMS.....~tota  
 9 COMBINING FORMS.....  
 10 PAUSAL.....  
 11 CROSS-REFERENCE.....  
 12 EXAMPLES.....  
 ÛI' pas okiw naat ~{ta}.£ This poor person still allows large pieces of kernels to filter down because of her inexperience. – ÛÛm qa ~{ta}niya.£ Don't grind inadequately (by overlooking some of the larger pieces).