Hopi Footraces and American Marathons, 1912–1930

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On the afternoon of April 20, 1912, fifteen-thousand people lined the streets of Los Angeles to witness 151 contestants compete in the Los Angeles Times Modified Marathon. Officials of the Times hosted the marathon to secure a Western candidate for the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm, Sweden, and news of the event attracted runners from across the nation. Two Hopi runners, Guy Maktima and Philip Zeyouma, from the Hopi Reservation in northeastern Arizona, stood beside the many athletes who gathered near the start line and waited for the sound of the pistol to begin the race. The Hopis ran for the newly established cross-country team of Sherman Institute, an off-reservation Indian boarding school in Riverside, California. When the race commenced, Howard W. Angus, a reporter for the Los Angeles Times, noted that Zeyouma wore “moccasins” that Hopi women made for him on the reservation, and a shirt that depicted the legendary “winged” (flying) snake of the Hopi. At first the Hopi runners “received no attention” from the other athletes who “kept their eyes on the many famous” runners in the group. During the initial two miles of the race, the Hopis positioned themselves near the front of the pack, but refrained from making a sudden advance for the lead. At the halfway point, the Hopi runners increased their pace and shortened the gap between them and the other frontrunners. When word spread among the thousands of spectators that the “little Hopis” had broken away from the lead group, people rushed to the finish line and waited for the runners to make their final approach. One reporter recalled that “every eye was turned down the course at which the leader would first appear,” and when Zeyouma turned that final corner and headed toward the finish line, a roar of “cheers announced his coming.” As the crowd cheered, Zeyouma remained focused and ran with his head down, “oblivious” to the spectators and “heedless of their advice.” Not far behind him, a competitor from the San Francisco Olympic Club bent “every effort” to catch the Hopi runner, but Zeyouma “raised his head and sprinted the remaining two blocks to where a white tape stretched across the street to mark the finish.” Having defeated his
competition by two hundred feet, Zeyouma “acted as though he was used to winning Marathons,” and waited at the finish line with a big smile.7

Although Zeyouma gave the impression that he was “used to winning” marathons, he had never competed in one prior to the Los Angeles Times Modified Marathon in 1912. Newspaper reporters considered Zeyouma and Maktima to be the least experienced marathon runners in the race. Zeyouma had been on the school’s cross-country team for only four months. He was unknown to the long-distance running community in California, and he competed for a school that had not yet established a winning reputation for its cross-country program. However, regardless of his lack of competitive experience, Zeyouma was not an inexperienced runner. Although some of the spectators looked at Zeyouma’s victory as an anomaly, the Hopi athlete came from a people who placed running at the center of their cultural identity. In April 1912, Zeyouma’s identity as a Hopi runner challenged white American perceptions of modernity and placed him in a context that had national and international dimensions. This broad perspective linked Hopi runners to athletes from around the world and caused non-Natives to reevaluate their understandings of sports, nationhood, and the cultures of American Indian people.8 For the Hopi runners at Sherman, their accomplishments in U.S. marathons reflected the beauty and complexities of Hopi culture, and their running victories compelled the athletes to consider the forces that pressured them and other indigenous people to become modern. In this regard, sports held various layers of meaning for Native and non-Native people. As Dakota Sioux historian Philip J. Deloria once observed: “Sports served as a meeting place of transformation and persistence; for distinct, even mutually exclusive, Indian and white interpretations; and for shared understandings.”9 The following narrative is a story of transformation, cultural persistence, and the continuity of Hopi running. It is a story about a time in history when white Americans found Hopis in “unexpected places,” to borrow Deloria’s term, and when Hopis demonstrated to the world that a marathon was where they should have expected them to be all along. Furthermore, it is a story that examines Hopi agency,10 and the complex and various ways Hopi runners navigated between tribal dynamics, school loyalties, and a country that closely associated sports with U.S. nationalism. Finally, the proceeding narrative calls attention to certain cultural philosophies of running that connected Hopi runners to their village communities, and the internal and external forces that strained these ties when Hopis competed in national and international running events.
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Hopi Cultural Framework of Running

On the southernmost point of Third Mesa, near the ancient village of Orayvi on the Hopi Reservation, one can stand on the mesa edge and see for miles in all directions. To the south, the land extends beyond the Hopi mesas and the silhouette of Nuvatukiyaovi, or the San Francisco Peaks, is visible in the distance. In the valleys below, corn, melon, and bean fields stand out as green patches against a backdrop of earth and sandstone. From on top of the mesa, one can enjoy the sweet smell of burning cedar, hear and feel the wind blowing over the mesa edge, and behold a breathtaking landscape surrounded by a canopy of deep blue sky. Looking east toward the village of Shungopavi on Second Mesa, running trails stretch from Orayvi like veins that connect and bring life to each of the Hopi villages. The trails near Orayvi give testimony to the tradition of running in Hopi culture and the continuance of running among today’s Hopi people.

Since the beginning of Hopi time, as first evidenced in the Hopi clan migration stories, long-distance running has held a vital role in Hopi society. According to Hopi belief, the Hopitu-shinumu, or “all people peaceful,” emerged into this fourth world, or “fourth way of life,” from a series of three underworlds. Following a time of unhappiness and discontent in the underworld, the people emerged through an opening in their sky, arriving in present-day northern Arizona, and the men, women, and children divided themselves into clans and each traveled in one of the four cardinal directions. Hopi oral history recalls that some of the clans ventured to the Pacific Ocean and South America, while others migrated east and settled at Chaco Canyon in the San Juan Basin of New Mexico. At Chaco Canyon, Hopi clans cleared trails that extended to the ancient settlement of Mesa Verde in Colorado. Used by the Flute Clan for ceremonial purposes, the running trails at Chaco Canyon are among the earliest evidences of running in Hopi society. Hopi clan runners who competed at Chaco Canyon did so to bring rain to their family’s fields. When the Hopis returned to their original lands on and near the Hopi mesas, the Flute Clan continued its ceremonial races and established running in Hopi culture.

In addition to the existing Hopi oral history, anthropologists and ethnographers have gathered numerous accounts of running in Hopi society. In 1891, J. Walter Fewkes observed that “among the customs of the Indians of Tusayan [Hopi], there are none more suggestive from an ethnological standpoint than the games and races of these people.” In comparison to the observations made
by Fewkes, anthropologist Mischa Titiev witnessed several races at Orayvi and noted that Hopi clans ran against each other for the benefit of Hopis and non-Hopis alike. At one race, Titiev recalled that the Hopi runners ran barefoot and “plunged into cactus” and “thorny bushes without the slightest hesitation.” Hopi races required each clan to kick a small ball to the end of the course, and as they worked together, the Hopi runners demonstrated incredible skill, endurance, and an ability to keep the health of the entire Hopi community in mind. In the 1890s, Hopi elders told ethnographer Alexander M. Stevens that “long ago,” Hopi kick-ball races used to “occupy a whole day,” and that it had “always been well for the Hopi to be able to run swift and far.” In the kick-ball races, the Hopi Cloud gods rejoiced “to see the Hopi youth run,” as running allowed their prayers for rain to be heard. Similar to the kick-ball races practiced by the Pima, Zuni, Tohono O’odham, and many indigenous peoples of Mexico, the Hopi races transcended the individualistic concepts of personal gain and self-accomplishment. The winners of Hopi clan races did not receive gold medals, shiny trophy cups, or media attention. Their ultimate reward came in the form of rain, which brought life and abundance to the Hopi people.

Throughout Hopi history, the people have also included stories of footraces in their mythical accounts to show the relationship between running and the spiritual world. Hopi stories of footraces evoked pride in the runner and the village, and they placed emphasis on the well-being of the community. Furthermore, stories of Hopi long-distance races produced knowledge about the Hopi and non-Hopi world. In his account of the tales and legends of the Hopi people, Harold Courlander recorded stories about mythical races that took place between runners from once-occupied villages. One of the stories begins by recalling that long ago, in the village of Payupki on Second Mesa, a chief looked across the mesa and saw that the people from the village of Tikuvi, a neighboring village, were preparing to have a race. Wanting to gather information about the runners in the nearby village, the chief instructed his best runner to enter their race. “The people of Tikuvi are racing today,” he told the young runner, “and I would like to know how good their runners are. You are the best runner we have in Payupki. Go down and join them. Run with them. Let me know what you learn.” As he competed against the other runners, the runner from Payupki desired to win the race, but he remembered that his chief had instructed him to only gather information, so he did not compete to his full potential. Upon returning to his village, the chief told him to train for the next race against Tikuvi. Obeying his chief, the young runner “ran across the mesa, he ran on the low ground, he ran in the hills,” and with
this training his legs became stronger. One day, while the chief from Payupki was smoking tobacco in the village kiva, an underground chamber, the chief from Tikuvi entered the kiva and both men smoked together. “We are glad you have come,” said the chief from Payupki. “What is on your mind?” The chief from Tikuvi told him that in four days their village would be putting on another race, and that he had come to invite the best runners of Payupki to participate.

The chief from Payupki eagerly accepted this invitation and once again called on his best runner to represent the village. That night, the men of Tikuvi gathered in their kiva and talked about the upcoming race. Aware of the situation, Spider Grandmother, the female creator deity, came to the men and told them that she had brought special medicine to help their runners run fast. But the men refused Spider Grandmother’s help. Their runners had defeated the runner from Payupki in the past and they were confident in a second victory. Spider Grandmother then went to Payupki and spoke to the men in the kiva and offered her assistance. The men at Payupki respected Spider Grandmother, and they welcomed her into the kiva and accepted her help. She rubbed a special ointment made of water and magic powder on the runner’s legs to protect him from evil spirits. The men of Payupki considered Spider Grandmother to be a wise old woman, and so they listened to her every instruction. On the day of the event, the people from both villages placed bets of “moccasins, belts, shawls, kilts, and even bows and arrows.” Word quickly spread to the surrounding villages about the race, and Hopis from each of the three mesas came to watch the runners compete. As the people looked on with much excitement, the runners set forth on the running trails. With the help of Spider Grandmother, the runner from Payupki won the race, and he collected all that he had earned and gave much of it to the wise old woman and to his community. By accepting Spider Grandmother’s help, the Hopi runner from Payupki did not rely entirely on his physical abilities to win the race. Instead, he listened to his elder, he drew upon the strength of his culture, and he received power from the spiritual world of his people.

**American Ways of Running**

American understandings of sports differed greatly from Hopi beliefs about long-distance running. In the early 1900s, U.S. politicians, educators, philosophers, and others, believed that sports unified the nation, strengthened the ideals of citizenship, and demonstrated to foreign nations the superiority of U.S. culture and democracy. Historian Mark Dyreson noted that during
this time in history, figures such as Theodore Roosevelt, A. G. Spalding, and Price Collier were convinced that sports would “restore civic virtue,” promote an understanding of “fair play,” dictate “American economic and social relations,” and “serve as a crucial institution for creating a twentieth-century American republic.” While the ideals of nationalism greatly influenced sport competition at the turn of the century, not every athlete competed in sports to strengthen and promote the U.S. republic. Ralph C. Wilcox once remarked that some Irish immigrants competed in U.S. sports to foster pride in the “Land of Erin,” and to “ensure that their fellow countryman’s Irish roots were never forgotten.” Marathon historian Pamela Cooper noted that “immigrant groups” participated in sports as an “expression of ethnic cohesion.” Cooper observed that immigrant runners “ran as representatives” and that the “success of a single runner was all that was necessary to enhance the honor of an entire group.” While American Indians have never considered themselves to be “immigrants” in North America, Native athletes shared similar understandings of representation and community with Irish, German, and other immigrant runners.

In 1908, the first Hopi to “honor” and represent his people in the U.S. sports scene was Louis Tewanima from the village of Shungopavi. Tewanima competed in long-distance running at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania and the 1908 Olympic Games in London, and he received publicity and fame for his accomplishments. Considered to be one of the great long-distance runners in U.S. history, Tewanima led Carlisle’s cross-country team to several victories and won a silver medal at the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm, Sweden. While arguably the most famous Hopi runner, Tewanima represents a small percentage of the Hopis who ran and competed at different schools during this period. Other Hopi runners such as Guy Maktima from Hotevilla, Philip Zeyouma from Mishongnovi, and Harry Chaca from Polacca joined cross-country teams in the West and forever secured a place in Hopi and U.S. running history. At Sherman Institute, Hopi runners succeeded in running events and raced against the best athletes at the national and international levels. School officials at Sherman saw the development of sport teams as a way to bring recognition to the school and to demonstrate to the general public that Indians could compete at the level of white athletes. Historian David Wallace Adams observed that for officials such as Captain Richard Henry Pratt, founder and first
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superintendent of Carlisle, “winning football games was not an end in itself but a means to a larger objective: winning support for the idea that Indians, if given the opportunity, were capable of competing with whites not only on the football field but in society as well.”

As Hopi runners competed in U.S. marathons, they challenged so-called traditional understandings of running by fusing new styles and methods with ancient Hopi techniques. According to sports historian Gerald R. Gems, “American Indian athletes in particular lived within two worlds, bridging both cultures and adopting or adapting the dominant norms when necessary or beneficial.” But their decision to incorporate Western methods and ideals in their running, and therefore redefine their identity as Hopi runners, placed them at odds with the older Hopi runners, who had not attended government schools. While the Hopi athletes used their involvement in sports to turn the Indian school experience to their advantage, the older Hopi men in their communities did not hesitate to turn situations around on the younger runners as well. Often younger Hopis came home from Indian boarding schools with a heightened sense of accomplishment and pride. Fellow pupils treated Louis Tewanima and Philip Zeyouma with celebrity status at their schools, but when they returned to the reservation, their national and international fame failed to impress the older Hopi runners, who continued to run according to the Hopi way. Hopi runners at Sherman realized that many runners remained on the reservation with “better wind and faster legs,” and this reality created tensions with the older Hopi runners when the proud and accomplished athletes returned home.

The tensions between the older and younger runners centered on issues of identity and how Hopis understood running according to Hopi culture. At off-reservation Indian boarding schools, the cultural reason for running races at times conflicted with certain values reinforced at Sherman Institute. School officials routinely told the students that the “determination to win” was the “epitome of American sport.” People in U.S. society participated in sports to win, and not to bring wellness or health to the opposing team. Historically, Hopi clan runners ran footraces as a way to express their culture as indigenous people, to elevate their clan status, and to bring much needed rain to their dry and arid fields. Sherman officials believed that students’ athletic achievements should stem from personal loyalty to the school, and competitive successes would in turn enhance the runners’ own sense of institutional fidelity and allegiance. This understanding encouraged Hopi students to set aside their practice of running according to Hopi culture, in order that it might be replaced with values esteemed by American society. No longer
in an environment or among a people who ran according to Hopi clanship loyalties, the Hopi runners learned to compete on behalf of the school and for their peers, who cheered them to several marathon victories.

**Hopi Runners and American Marathons**

In the early 1900s, individual cross-country teams at off-reservation Indian boarding schools seldom raced against each other. Although schools such as Carlisle paid the expense for its football team to play colleges, universities, and other Indian schools, Native runners at boarding schools typically competed in city and regional marathons. The first major running event for the Sherman cross-country team was the modified marathon of twelve miles that the *Los Angeles Times* hosted in 1912. Realizing that a victory at the marathon would heighten the status of the school’s new track team, Joseph Shoulder, athletic director of Sherman Institute, informed Hopi runners Guy Maktima and Philip Zeyouma about the event and accompanied them to Los Angeles so they could register for the race. Prior to 1912, Hopi runners did not race in Southern California, and when the athletic editors for the *Times* saw the athletes, they teased the Hopis about their small stature and wondered how men who were so short could compete against the much taller runners. In true Hopi fashion, Zeyouma took the editors’ comments in “good humor” and “confined his amusement to a broad smile.” Rather than responding to the editors with words, Zeyouma wanted them to judge him on his ability to run, and not on his height.

In the early twentieth century, few white Americans in Southern California had seen a Native person compete in a sporting event. By 1912, however, Indians had developed reputations as remarkable athletes, and newspaper reporters realized that a story on the Hopi runners would capture the attention of their readers. With this in mind, Owen R. Bird, a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, followed Zeyouma on an automobile tour of the course on the day before the race. He noted that the “little Hopi Indian” had come to Los Angeles for the “first time in his life” and that he “saw his first street car and had his first automobile ride.” Bird observed that Zeyouma “did not say much,” but that he carefully noted every turn and stretch of the course. When Bird asked Zeyouma why he had taken “so much notice of the curves,” the Hopi runner replied that he “wanted to remember where to go” on the day of the race. The concrete and brick streets that formed the marathon course did not resemble the dirt and rock trails that Hopis used on the reservation. Usually no more than three feet wide, the Hopi clan trails went up and down
the mesa’s edge, and back and forth between small canyons and crevices. Similar to the way Zeyouma took “notice” of the course in Los Angeles, Hopi runners on the reservation carefully studied the trails for obstacles, as well as sudden dips and turns, and meditated on different aspects of the trail. Aware of the seriousness of each footrace, Hopi runners felt the burden of the entire community to run with “good hearts,” as running brought rain and provided life to the Hopi villages. Although Zeyouma realized that he would not be running primarily for his clan or village, he knew that a victory in the Los Angeles Times Modified Marathon would bring recognition and honor to his school community.

Shortly after Zeyouma won the Los Angeles Times Modified Marathon, school officials at Sherman honored the Hopi runner with a special ceremony in the school’s auditorium. In addition to seven hundred Indian students, reporters from Southern California attended the service. At the front of the auditorium, Zeyouma calmly sat with Superintendent Frank M. Conser and Bird. When Bird presented the trophy cup to Zeyouma, the Hopi runner told his classmates that while he was “proud of the cup,” he was “more proud” of the “honors” he won for Sherman by “winning the race.” When Zeyouma finished speaking to the audience, his classmates “let loose their school yell,” which people heard a mile and a half away. Following Zeyouma’s speech, Conser told the entire school that Zeyouma won the race “not because of a few days’ training, but because of the fact that he [had] been a runner all of his lifetime” and that Zeyouma’s people “were the greatest runners in the world.” In the Sherman Bulletin, the student-written newspaper of Sherman Institute, the pupils at the school wrote that as a result of Zeyouma’s win, “Sherman was on the lips of thousands in every part of California,” and commented that the “praise of the little Indian was sung from one end of the state to the other.” Proud of their Hopi schoolmate, the students at Sherman looked at Zeyouma as a victorious example of one of their own. Students at Sherman had sent Zeyouma to the marathon to represent the school and to demonstrate their rightful place in the running community of Southern California. Zeyouma’s peers had great confidence in his ability as a runner, and noted that with “Tewanima from Carlisle guarding the Atlantic Coast and Zeyouma from Sherman Institute guarding the Pacific, America’s laurels would be in safe hands” for the 1912 Olympic Games. The success of Native athletes in U.S. sports had a remarkable effect on their peers at Indian schools. Their victories in sporting events, particularly the contests in which Indians defeated white athletes, filled the pupils with pride and motivated them to support the school’s athletic program. In July
1913, a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times* recalled that the “victory aroused the students of the institution to such a pitch of enthusiasm that they called a mass meeting and perfected a student organization.” Known as the Sherman Institute Athletic Association, the organization consisted of nearly every pupil who could afford the fifty-cent membership fee, which the students used to send the track team to “various interscholastic meets held in Southern California.” Furthermore, Zeyouma’s sensational finish created a tremendous excitement at other off-reservation Indian boarding schools. When news of the marathon reached Moses Friedman, superintendent of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, Friedman told Conser that he would be “particularly glad to see” Zeyouma join Tewanima at the Olympics, as the United States could not be “represented by too many” of the Hopi athletes. In addition to the excitement expressed by Friedman, students at both schools eagerly anticipated the Hopi showdown, and gloried in the thought that one of their runners would win an Olympic medal. However, in spite of their enthusiasm, the students at Sherman did not send their top runner to the Olympic Games. Although the American Olympic Committee had chosen Zeyouma to be on the team, Zeyouma declined the committee’s invitation to compete, and returned home for the summer with other Hopis from his school. In August 1945, Donald H. Biery, superintendent of Sherman Institute, described in a memo that although Zeyouma had been “selected to go to the Olympic games at Stockholm,” he “did not go because of his father’s objections.”

The complex relationship between Hopi parents and their children did not simplify when Hopi pupils left their village communities for government schools. In the 1940s, Wayne Dennis, a psychologist who conducted research on Hopi children, once commented that the Hopi child on the reservation “owes obedience to his mother and father, to his mother’s brothers, and to some extent to his father’s brothers who are called ‘fathers.’” Similarly, Hopi fathers had an important influence on the lives of their children who attended Indian boarding schools. During the twentieth century, Hopi fathers encouraged their sons or daughters to remain at Sherman to receive a “good education” or instructed them to return home for different reasons. While school officials attempted to weaken the influence Hopi parents had on their children, especially with parents who criticized school policies, Hopi pupils seldom went against the counsel of their fathers. Although Zeyouma’s father’s exact objections remain unknown, his disapproval may have stemmed from a tragedy that afflicted his family two years earlier. In the summer of 1910, Zeyouma’s father had lost a son and grandchild from an influenza epidemic that swept across the Hopi Reservation. Perhaps worried about his son’s safety,
Zeyouma’s father insisted that he return home. In addition to worrying about his son’s well-being, Zeyouma’s father may not have seen the value of allowing his son to compete for a nation that had not yet granted his people full U.S. citizenship.\(^{52}\) For example, the Bill of Rights did not apply to the Hopi people until the U.S. government passed the Indian Citizenship Act in 1924, but this did not prevent the American Olympic Committee from choosing “second-class” citizens to represent the United States.\(^{53}\) However, rather than conform to the expectations of an entire nation, Zeyouma relinquished his opportunity to compete in the Olympic Games and honored his father according to the Hopi way. Consequently, his decision to remain behind directly affected his Hopi rival, Tewanima, who no longer had the challenge of racing against one of the great long-distance runners in the nation. Taking advantage of Zeyouma’s absence, Tewanima went on to represent the Hopi people, his school, and the United States in the 1912 Olympic Games in Sweden and won a silver medal in the 10,000-meter event.\(^{54}\)

The rivalry between the two Hopi runners did not cease when Tewanima migrated back to the Hopi mesas as an Olympian. In September 1912, shortly before they returned to their schools, Tewanima and Zeyouma challenged each other to a race on the Hopi Reservation.\(^{55}\) On the day of the race, Hopis from the surrounding villages gathered around the starting line and anxiously watched as the two runners made their mark for the twelve-mile course. Zeyouma proudly wore his “Sherman colors,” while Tewanima “appeared in his Carlisle track suit.”\(^{56}\) By wearing their running uniforms, the Hopi athletes saw the event as a race between the two schools and identified themselves according to their school affiliation. However, such a display of school loyalty did not go unchallenged by the other Hopi runners in the crowd. Seconds before the race began, some of the older Hopi men remarked that the “boys did not look like [Hopi] runners” at all, and teased Zeyouma and Tewanima for wearing their running outfits. A *New York Times* reporter noted that when Tewanima heard the men’s insults, Tewanima replied, “If you don’t like our looks get in, and show what you can do.”\(^{57}\) The men promptly accepted his challenge and entered the race with no shoes or track suits, and wore “merely discarded” clothes. Six miles into the race, the older men proved too much for the young runners and Zeyouma and Tewanima quit and left the “race to the barefooted runners in the lead.” Coach Shoulder recalled that the winner was about fifty years old, and he looked like he was “dying of consumption” (tuberculosis).\(^{58}\)

The outcome of the race provides a telling commentary on running in Hopi culture, as well as the relationship between older and younger runners. While
the younger runners migrated to off-reservation Indian boarding schools, the vast majority of the Hopi people, including older men who were known for the ability to run long distances, remained at home. Consequently, some of the best long-distance runners in U.S. history received little or no attention by those outside of the Hopi community. Although newspaper reporters seemed surprised that men in their fifties had the ability to defeat the younger athletes, the people knew that other Hopis could easily outrun the Hopi Olympian and the track star from Sherman Institute. Furthermore, in Hopi culture, elders and uncles taught the boys of the village to run according to Hopi traditions, which explains why the older men did not hesitate to turn the situation around on the younger runners by challenging them on the day of the race. Contesting the younger men’s decision to become modern Hopi long-distance runners, the older men reminded Zeyouma and Tewanima that Hopi running did not begin, nor was it perfected, at off-reservation Indian boarding schools, but it originated with the people.59

In September 1912, less than two months after the Hopi showdown on the reservation, Zeyouma returned to Sherman, where he rejoined the school’s track team in December of the same year. Although his victory in the Los Angeles Times Modified Marathon established a Hopi running presence at Sherman, Zeyouma did not win another marathon or a major running event. In the Los Angeles Athletic Club Marathon Road Race held in February 1913, Zeyouma placed second to Albert Ray, a Pima runner from Sherman, who also defeated Zeyouma when he attempted to defend his title at the 1913 Los Angeles Times Modified Marathon; Hopi runner Guy Maktima placed second.60 In May 1913, Maktima came in second place to Ray at the Mt. Wilson Climb in Colorado, and Hopi runner Roscoe Poleytewa placed third to Sherman runner Adolpi Tomp at the 1915 San Bernardino-to-Chemawa Park Race in Southern California. From 1913 to 1928, Hopi runners encountered intense competition form their peers at Sherman. Other athletes, such as Navajo runner Peter Begay and Ray, dominated the running events at the school and often outran their Hopi rivals. Although Hopi runner Roscoe Poleytewa won the six-mile Riverside Enterprise Thanksgiving Race in 1913, Ray won far more prestigious events, such as the Mount Wilson Climb in Colorado during the same year.

Hopi Running in the 1920s

In the 1920s, Hopi runners at Sherman Institute competed in a U.S. society with a heightened interest in and fascination with individual physical accom-
accomplishments. Geoff Williams, a freelance journalist, remarked that each “decade [had] a cultural touchstone,” and during the “Roaring Twenties, endurance competitions ruled.” At this time in American history, the number of marathons and other long-distance races that organizations hosted increased throughout the nation. In 1928, the Hopi people sent Nicholas Quamawahu to be among the 199 contestants who ran in C. C. Pyle’s Bunion Derby, a race that stretched from Los Angeles to New York City. Athletic clubs on both coasts also sent their best runners to compete in marathons such as the Auto City Marathon in Detroit and the Laurel-to-Baltimore Marathon in Maryland, and Indian runners from off-reservation boarding schools eagerly participated in the marathon frenzy.

During the late 1920s, Harry Chaca, a Hopi pupil from the village of Polacca on First Mesa, joined the cross-country team at Sherman Institute and reestablished a Hopi winning presence at the school. On June 15, 1929, the Los Angeles Times hosted the first pre-Olympic marathon, and newspaper reporters immediately focused their attention on the match between the nineteen-year-old Harry Chaca and the forty-year-old Clarence De Mar. Known as the “Melrose Marvel,” De Mar had competed as part of the 1912 and 1924 Olympic teams and had won the Boston Marathon in 1927; many reporters and columnists therefore favored him to win the event. With thousands of spectators in attendance, the marathon started at the Los Angeles City Hall, and the course stretched nearly twenty-seven miles. During the first three miles, Chaca “stayed well back behind the pack,” then “gradually moved up among the leaders.” Nine miles into the race he ran “easily in fourth place,” as Hopi runners Franklin Suhu, Howard Tsemptewa, and De Mar took the lead positions. At Pico and Robertson streets, “the eleven-mile mark,” Chaca “slipped into third place and four blocks farther on he moved right up behind De Mar.” The other Hopi runners gradually slipped back “until the race became a two-man battle between” Chaca and the “veteran of all American marathoners.” As the race intensified, De Mar “soused himself, both inside and out, with water,” while Chaca “took only one or two drinks over the entire route.” Five miles from the finish, Chaca wanted to increase his pace, but coach Bert Jamison urged him to wait just a little longer. Finally, at mile-marker twenty-five on Sunset Boulevard, Chaca “broke away from the celebrated eastern star” and “hit the finish line more than three minutes ahead” of De Mar. An observer of the event recalled that a “huge mob had gathered—a mob that surged and formed into the street” to see and congratulate Chaca as he completed the race.
By the summer of 1929, Chaca had achieved celebrity status in the athletic community, and news of his accomplishments had spread to various parts of the world. Within two weeks of Chaca’s victory in the pre-Olympic marathon, a report in the Sherman Bulletin noted that according to the Los Angeles newspapers, “a Japanese runner by the name of Yoshikiyo Sudsuki announced on November 29, that the main purpose of his trip to America was to run against Harry Chacca, famed Indian runner of Sherman Institute,” who at that time ran “under the auspices of the Los Angeles Athletic Club.” Sudsuki came to the United States from Tokyo, where he learned that Chaca was one of the “greatest long distance runners in America.” Realizing that Chaca was scheduled to run in the Pre-Olympic National Marathon in Vallejo, California, on December 22, 1929, Sudsuki joined the race with the sole purpose of defeating the Hopi runner. Students at the school wrote about the upcoming marathon in the Sherman Bulletin. With a headline that read “JAP ATHLETE TRAINING TO BEAT HARRY CHACCA,” the student newspaper reported that Chaca appeared to be the “only runner in America” who stood a “chance at beating Sudsuki.” The student’s use of the term “Jap” to describe the Japanese athlete likely stemmed

![Figure 2. The 1928 Sherman Institute cross-country team. Front row: Chauquaptewa, Nenach, Suhu, Chaca Tsempetewa, Jenkins, Holulu, and Begay. Middle row: Talas, Denver, Lewis, Long Jim, Poochoma, and Nathen. Back row: Moore and Milo. Photograph courtesy of the Sherman Indian Museum, Riverside, California.](image-url)
from the political and social relationship between Japan and the United States during this period. Gerald R. Gems observed that the “political relations with Japan and the United States deteriorated precipitously” when Congress passed the California Alien Land Law of 1913, which prohibited Asians and other immigrants from owning land.73 Furthermore, as Eiichiro Azuma has pointed out, the Gentleman’s Agreement in 1908 between President Theodore Roosevelt and Japan “put a halt to labor migration across the Pacific,” and the National Origins Act of 1924 “prohibited the entry of immigrants from Japan altogether.”74 Now possessing American citizenship, and aware of the tensions between Americans and Japanese in California, the students at Sherman rallied behind their schoolmate and understood the marathon to be a match between the two nations. In this regard, Chaca represented more than the Hopi people and his school. In this international context, the Hopi runner from Polacca became a representative of the United States, and the marathon became a contest between American nationalism and Japanese imperialism. While American Indians and Japanese immigrants encountered similar experiences during this period, as both Indians and Asians were considered a marginalized minority group in American society, and Japanese and Indian children were required to attend segregated schools,75 the students at Sherman emphasized Chaca’s status as an American runner in their hopes of defeating the runner from Japan.

The pre-Olympic marathon was not the first event in which a Hopi from an Indian school competed for the United States against a Japanese runner. In their examination of Japanese sports history, historians Allen Guttmann and Lee Thompson recall that at the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm, Louis Twewania outran Kanaguri Shizo, a Japanese runner who became unconscious at the halfway point of the marathon when he stopped for a moment to rest.76 Guttmann and Thompson point out that Japanese long-distance runners performed poorly in the Olympic Games of 1912 and in the 1920s, and they did not have a reputation of being top competitors in other running venues. At the Pre-Olympic National Marathon in December 1929, Sudsuki had an opportunity to return honor to Japan, reverse U.S. sentiments about Japanese runners, and establish a winning presence in one of America’s most revered sporting events. A Japanese win in the marathon would have also helped bolster ethnic pride to the thousands of Japanese living in southern California during this period.77 Eriko Yamamoto observes that in the “face of exclusion,” many Japanese in California “sought to frame their racial stigma in a positive light,” and the “Olympics offered the chance to redefine marginality as a cosmopolitan that could coexist with white culture and contribute to American society.”78
In the late 1920s, racial hierarchies in the United States situated American Indians on a slightly higher level than Japanese and other Asian people. White Americans considered the Japanese race to be “unassimilable and undesirable in the United States,” while many white people admired American Indian cultures and believed that Indians could be assimilated. The students at Sherman may have been cognizant of these supposed racial differences, and wanted to prove to themselves and remind the Southern California community that they were better than the Japanese. Ultimately, Chaca’s speed and endurance proved too much for the forty-nine-year-old from Tokyo. The Hopi runner ran at a “killing pace to win” the full marathon in two hours, forty-one minutes, and twenty-five seconds, a “full second better than the performance of Alpien Stenroos” in the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris. One of the fifty thousand spectators of the marathon recalled that Chaca’s “victory” was “all the more noteworthy for his sensational finish. After trailing for twenty-three miles it was at that mark that he applied a final burst of speed that sent him ahead” of Hopi runner Franklin Suhu. In addition to winning the race, Chaca set a new American marathon record, which immediately confirmed his place as the top long-distance runner in the nation.

At this time in history, the political significance of sports had increased, and Americans relished the fact that a representative from the United States had defeated a foreign runner. In his examination of sports in U.S. culture, historian Mark Dyreson noted that in the early twentieth century, “as the United States moved toward becoming a world power of the first rank, American commentators had decided that athletics was a necessary ingredient in the composition of modern states.” Strong sentiments of nationalism surrounded American sports, and white spectators enthusiastically cheered for a Native person when he competed against an athlete from other countries, particularly those nations, such as Japan, whose diplomatic relationship with the United States had worsened. When Jim Thorpe, the Sac and Fox runner from Carlisle, and Louis Tewanima competed in the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm, shouts of support resonated among people across the nation. Although many white Americans held to hierarchies of race and class, Natives who competed against white or colored athletes from different countries evoked support from racists and nonracists alike. When Native runners stepped on to the track field and took their mark at the starting line, their brown skin and “uncivilized” heritage momentarily held little significance for white spectators and those in the media. While the “sporting republic,” as Dyreson suggests, may have appeared “color blind” when Native runners raced against athletes from other nations, newspaper reporters often used
racial stereotypes in their headlines to grab the attention of their white readers. Referring to Indian runners as “Redskinned,” calling Harry Chaca the “little brown dynamo,” or telling their readers that the “Injuns” had forsaken the “Warpath for the Cinderpath,” newspaper reporters utilized unflattering imagery to position Native people in a specific racial hierarchy, and to increase sales among their white audience.84

A Legacy of Hopi Running

Although Hopi runners were fueled by their accomplishments and the attention they gained in U.S. newspapers, the fame they received at off-reservation Indian boarding schools did not last forever. After their term at the school had expired, the runners migrated back to their ancestral lands and attempted to acclimate themselves to reservation life. Harry Chaca returned to his village of Polacca and eventually became the chairman of the Hopi Tribe.85 Others, however, remained at their villages for a short time and then pursued opportunities beyond the mesas. When Guy Maktima came home to Hotevilla in 1913, he immediately volunteered in the United States Army and served the nation during World War I with the First Arizona Infantry at Fort Huachuca.86 Maktima’s grandson, Nick Brokeshoulder from Hotevilla, recalled that his grandfather was always proud of his running achievements at Sherman Institute.87 Although he did not compete in a major marathon when he returned to Hotevilla, Maktima’s legacy as a great Hopi runner continued with his family and village community. Unlike Maktima, who sought a life of adventure in the army, Philip Zeyouma married a Hopi woman after he left Sherman and moved to Bloomington, California, to work in various trade occupations.88 In 1927, Zeyouma and his family returned to Arizona and established a trading post at Elden Pueblo outside the mountain community of Flagstaff. Six years later in 1933, Zeyouma moved to the Colorado Indian Reservation near Parker, Arizona.

Zeyouma never forgot about his running accomplishments at the school. In the 1940s, Zeyouma asked Superintendent Biery if he could take “some trophy cups he [had] won” back home with him to the reservation.89 Zeyouma’s desire to obtain his trophies may appear as though he went beyond traditional understandings of running in Hopi culture and embraced the value that American society attributed to trophies and medals. However, in Hopi culture, the people have always considered awards to be an important component of Hopi running. When the Hopi runner won the mythical race between the once-occupied villages of Tikuvi and Payupki, he received belts,
Zeyouma may have wanted to keep his trophies for his family and Hopi community, but he was prevented from doing so. Before he died in 1931, Superintendent Conser promised to return the cups to Zeyouma. Instead of complying with Zeyouma’s request, Biery noted that the “trophies won by Sherman students” were “ordinarily . . . displayed at the school and [were] not given to students.” The superintendent further stated that as a result of the “many years” that had passed since Zeyouma won his trophies at Sherman, he did not wish to give Zeyouma his awards.90

For nearly a hundred years, Zeyouma’s trophies have remained at the Sherman Indian Museum in Riverside, California.91 When Native athletes at Sherman won races and other competitions, school officials immediately claimed ownership of their trophy cups and medals. Although marathon organizers often engraved the pupil’s name on the awards, school officials considered the items to be part of the school’s property. As visitors came to the school, the display of Indian trophies presented the institution in a positive light and demonstrated to the public that the students at Sherman had the capacity to compete and defeat white athletes at the national and international levels. The
polished trophies also impressed the Indian pupils at the school and encouraged them to seek excellence and to value the importance of discipline and hard work. Many Native athletes, however, disagreed with the school’s trophy retention policy. In December 1914, Zeyouma told a group of officials with the Los Angeles Athletic Club that he no longer desired to run for Sherman, but that he wanted to compete for the club. According to Howard W. Agnus, Zeyouma became “sore” at school officials when they insisted on keeping his running trophies.92 Angus reported that the “Indian school” had “kept all [of] his cups,” and that school officials had “filled a whole showcase with them.”93 Zeyouma and other Hopi runners at Sherman seldom reunited with their awards. When they returned to the reservation, the Hopi runners did not arrive with physical proof of their victories.94 Instead, they told their families about their accomplishments through stories, and relied on their Hopi peers to keep the memory of their running legacies alive.

Superintendents at other off-reservation Indian boarding schools, however, seldom kept individual school trophies from Indian athletes. Barbara Landis, public historian and biographer of the Carlisle school, once remarked that nearly all of the Carlisle trophies housed in the Cumberland County Historical Society (CCHS) collections in Pennsylvania are “team trophies.” Landis noted that “since the teams were all pan-tribal, there is not one individual or nation to whom the trophies could be repatriated.”95 The one exception in the CCHS collection is a trophy won by Louis Tewanima in 1910.96 Although museum curators at Indian schools are often hesitant to relinquish control of objects in their collections, or repatriate items to Indian communities, the individual medals and cups housed at Sherman raise the question of whether the museum should return the trophies to their original owners, especially in light of recent key legal developments. For example, in 1990 the United States Congress passed the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) to require federally funded museums and agencies to repatriate certain cultural or ceremonial objects to Native communities.97 As a federally funded school with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Sherman Institute, now called Sherman Indian High School, falls within the legal parameters of NAGPRA. However, Indian repatriation cases almost always involve human remains or ceremonial objects, and not individual trophies won by Indian pupils. While sport trophies have great meaning to Indian students and their families, sacred objects, land, and human remains have explicit cultural or ceremonial significance to indigenous people. Ultimately, the decision to repatriate nonceremonial items from the Sherman Indian Museum rests in the hands of the museum staff and other school officials. Although more than
seventy years have passed since Superintendent Biery denied Philip Zeyouma’s request for his running trophies, today’s museum curator and director, Lorene Sisquoc, makes every effort to provide the public with access to the museum’s collection, which includes more than two hundred sport medals and cups that Hopis and non-Hopi pupils have won.

When Philip Zeyouma, Guy Maktima, Harry Chaca, and other Hopis competed and won trophies in U.S. marathons, newspaper reporters, school officials, and other Indian students realized that they had come from a people of great runners. Coach Jamison understood this reality well, and when a reporter asked him about the Hopi runners in May 1930, Jamison replied: “[Franklin] Suhu, a Hopi brave, will beat any white man in the world at fifty or 100 miles . . . This boy will finish five minutes or more in front of any white man at fifty miles . . . However, let me tell you something. These fellows are nothing compared to their elders back on the reservations. Any one of their grandfathers could beat ’em without drawing a hard breath.” While school officials at Sherman taught Hopi and other Indian students how to play U.S. forms of basketball, football, and baseball, neither Joe Shoulder nor Bert Jamison needed to show the Hopis the essence of long-distance running. For the Hopi athletes at Sherman, the cinder paths of Southern California momentarily replaced the dirt trails on the reservation, and their peers became their community away from home. But they never forgot their connection to the land, and who they were as Hopitu-shinumu. Furthermore, they used their participation on the school’s cross-country team as a venue for broadening their understanding of Hopi running in the twentieth century. They learned to navigate within their tribe and school communities, and among a people who considered their success in marathons to be an important component in the formation of U.S. nationalism.

Notes
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4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Steve Gachupin, a Jemez Pueblo marathon runner from New Mexico, once stated: “I always like to run alone and think about life, and all the people at Jemez and everywhere . . . especially other people out running and I feel connected to them and that (connection) joins those other runners with me and my village.” See Brian S. Collier, “‘To Bring Honor to My Village’: Steve Gachupin and the Community Ceremony of Jemez Running in the Pike’s Peak Marathon,” Journal of the West 46 (Fall 2007): 65.
10. While agency is multifaceted and often more complicated than I have portrayed in this article, the purpose of my essay is to pinpoint important types of agency without assigning blame or attributing motives to institutions or individuals.
11. In an article in the Hopi Tutwenu, the Hopi Tribe’s official newspaper, Stewart Nicholas once observed that the running trails on the reservation are “viewed as veins of the village and by utilizing them, the villagers keep them open, which helps to keep the village alive.” See Stewart Nicholas, Hopi Tutwenu, Kykotsmovi, Arizona, August 31, 2006, 3.
12. Long-distance running is still an important part of Hopi society. In the month of August, Hopi runner Juwan Nuvayokva organizes the annual Oraivi 8K Footrace and 2-Mile Fun Run and Walk, and in September family members of Louis Teewanima host the 5K and 8K Louis Teewanima Footrace. These are only a few of the footraces that take place on the Hopi reservation each year.
13. Interview with Leigh J. Kuwanwisiwma, March 21, 2006, Bacavi, Arizona, the Hopi Reservation. In this interview, Kuwanwisiwma noted that the “fourth way of life” has often been described as the “fourth world” in popular American culture. However, the Hopi people consider this present world to be the “fourth way of life” for Hopis and for all humanity.
15. Ibid., 52.
21. For another example of how Pueblo people use running as a way to represent their village, see Collier, “To Bring Honor to My Village,” 62–71.
22. Ibid, 100.


26. In 1879, Captain Richard Henry Pratt and other U.S. government officials established the nation’s first federal off-reservation Indian boarding school, named Carlisle Indian Industrial School, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The school functioned to assimilate Indian pupils into U.S. society and to eradicate the cultures and ways of Indian people.


34. Ibid., April 24, 1912, 3.

35. Ibid.

36. Although it may have been Zeyouma’s first time to ride in an automobile, he had previously traveled to Los Angeles with Coach Shoulder and Guy Maktima to register for the marathon, and both runners certainly had past experiences with streetcars. As early as 1902, the city of Riverside operated a streetcar on Magnolia Avenue that regularly brought visitors to the front gate of Sherman Institute. The tourists, local community members, and government officials who often made visits to the school required a convenient mode of public transportation. See William Oscar Medina, “Selling Indians at Sherman Institute” (PhD diss., University of California, Riverside, 2007).


40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Robert Trennert observed that Native “athletes became campus heroes and were held up as examples” for the students to “follow.” Trennert, *The Phoenix Indian School*, 131.


46. Ibid.

47. Moses Friedman to Frank M. Conser, May 14, 1912, “Zeyouma, Philip,” Box 402, RG-75, Sherman Indian High School Student Case File (SIHSCF), NARA, Laguna Niguel, California.

48. D. H. Biery to To Whom It May Concern, August 17, 1945, “Zeyouma, Philip,” Box 402, RG-75, SIHSCF, NARA, Laguna Niguel, California.


51. Frank M. Conser to Horton H. Miller, June 11, 1909, “Masaquaptewa, Herman,” Box 232, RG-75, SIHSCF, NARA, Laguna Niguel, California.


55. *Sherman Bulletin*, October 30, 1912 (vol. 6, no. 32), 4.


58. Ibid.

59. In an interview by anthropologist Peter Nabokov, Hopi runner Bruce Talawema noted that “running was something the elders used to preach to us,” saying, “anytime you go somewhere on foot, you should try to run. It is a big part of our life. Even when you are old, as long as you can race or trot, at whatever pace, it makes you feel younger.” See Peter Nabokov, *Indian Running: Native American History and Tradition* (Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 1981), 100, 101. Nabokov's work remains the only book devoted entirely to Indian runners, and it has in many ways inspired this article on Hopis and American marathons.


64. Harry Chaca's name has three different spellings: Chaca, Chauca, and Chacca. I have chosen to use the spelling that his family uses on the Hopi Reservation.


66. Clarence De Mar was born in Melrose, Massachusetts, which explains the name "Melrose Marvel."


72. Ibid.


78. Ibid., 403.

79. Ibid., 414.


82. Dyreson, Making the American Team, 55.
83. Ibid., 158.
85. Maynard Tahbo to Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert, personal e-mail communication, October 25, 2008. Maynard Tahbo is the grandson of Harry Chaca.
87. Nick Brokeshoulder interview, Hopi Cultural Center, Second Mesa, Arizona, the Hopi Reservation, March 26, 2006.
88. Mrs. Philip Zeyouma to F. M. Conser, April 22, 1915, “Zeyoma, Philip,” Box 402, RG-75, SIHSCF, NARA, Laguna Niguel, California.
89. Perkinsman to D. H. Biery, exact date unknown, “Zeyoma, Philip,” Box 402, RG-75, SIHSCF, NARA, Laguna Niguel, California.
90. Ibid.
91. The Sherman Indian Museum was originally the superintendent’s office at Sherman Institute. For additional information, visit the Sherman Indian Museum at http://www.shermanindianmuseum.org/history3.htm (accessed September 27, 2009).
93. Ibid.
94. Although he does not focus on athletes who returned to the reservation, Michael Coleman has written a fascinating account of the complex situations that Native students encountered when they came home from off-reservation Indian boarding schools. See Michael Coleman, American Indians, the Irish, and Government Schooling (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 254–61.
95. Barbara Landis to Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert, personal e-mail communication, June 16, 2009.
96. Landis to Sakiestewa Gilbert, personal e-mail communication, July 29, 2009.
97. For additional information on NAGPRA, see National Parks Service, Department of the Interior, National NAGPRA home page at http://www.nps.gov/history/nagpra.