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Preface

My path to complete this book has taken me beyond Hopi ancestral lands to cities and towns across America. Along my route I met many individuals, shared my research with them, and learned from their experiences. On other occasions I ran alongside people, literally and figuratively, and I listened to their stories about running, a topic all cultures and societies have in common. My experiences on this journey will forever mark me as a scholar and as a member of the Hopi community. Written at a moment when interest in running in America is at an all-time high, this book will appeal to those interested in running and sport in general. But I also hope that it will prove especially meaningful to Hopi runners of the past and present, and those young harriers who now have the responsibility to continue this tradition into the future.

Over the years I had several opportunities to share my scholarship on Hopi runners with people back home. Early on, when I was still a graduate student, I published articles on Hopi runners in the Hopi Tribe's newspaper, the *Hopi Tutuveni*. I knew that while the majority of people on the reservation would not be able to access my research in scholarly journals, they could access it in the tribe's newspaper. Working closely with the Hopi Cultural Preservation Office (HCPO), I also shared my research on my blog, *Beyond the Mesas*, and used this platform to make my scholarly publications available to Hopis and the greater public.¹ More than anything else, my posts on Hopi runners received the most traffic and comments. On one occasion, after I published a post about a Hopi runner named Harry Chaca (Chauca) from the village of Polacca, Arizona, I received a comment from his granddaughter Cheryl Chaca (Appendix D). She remarked how pleased she was to learn about her grandfather's running accomplishments and wished "he could have read" the post himself. Cheryl's response reminds me of the reasons why I publish and produce scholarship. While I am expected to research as a member of the academy, I have a responsibility to make my research meaningful and

useful to my people. I want to give a voice to Hopi people and share that voice widely.

In addition to making my work available on the internet, I often shared my research back home in person. On two occasions, Sam Taylor and other members of the Louis Tewanima Foundation invited me to present on Hopi runners at the annual Louis Tewanima Memorial Footrace pre-race dinner held at the village of Songòopavi (Shungopavi), Arizona, on Second Mesa. As a professor at a large research university in the Midwest, I rarely if ever have the chance to share my scholarship with such an informed audience, most of whom knew more than me about the essence of Hopi running. It was a humbling experience, but it further grounded me as a Hopi person and in my connection and responsibility to my community. The following community-based research highlights the voices of Hopi people and places our history and culture at the focal point of the narrative. It is first and foremost a Hopi story, but a story that is closely tied to the world beyond the mesas.

In the years that followed my presentations at the Tewanima footraces, Hopi runner and organizer Wendi Lewis of We Run Strong asked me to talk on Hopi footraces and American marathons at their Native running forum at my village of Upper Munqapi (Moencopi), Arizona. Here I met Hopi runners Caroline Sekaquaptewa, her brother Wayne Sekaquaptewa, and Trent Taylor and learned from them as they shared about their experiences running in Ironman triathlons and the coveted Boston Marathon. Returning home to give back in this way will always be a highlight of my career, and my experiences at home demonstrate how the Hopi community values knowledge gained from within and beyond the Hopi mesas. Not long after this experience, my research also hit the airwaves (and internet live-stream) when Bruce Talawyma interviewed me and my father, Willard Sakiestewa Gilbert, on the Hopi radio station KUYI (88.1FM) about making our research meaningful to the community. It was a thrill to see the phone lines light up the second I started talking about Hopi runners, a small demonstration of how important this topic is to our people. My experience with radio helped prepare me a year later when Scott Harves of ESPN interviewed me for a documentary he was producing on Hopi running and the Hopi High School cross-country team. During our two-hour conversation, he asked me about Hopi culture and society, but most of his questions focused on our long history of distance running. The thirty-minute film began airing two months later on ESPN2.

While I have had the privilege of presenting my work with people back home, I also had opportunities to share my research with different Native-related organizations in the Southwest. In summer 2013, Navajo organizer and runner Dustin Quinn Martin of Wings of America asked me to present at the organization's annual Indian Running Coaches Clinic in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Founded in the late 1980s to "enhance the quality of life of American Indian youth" through running, Wings of America exists to foster the next generation of Native "leaders, thinkers, and teachers of tomorrow." On the day that I spoke, the audience was full of young Native running coaches, and some older ones, including our famous Hopi High School cross-country coach Rick Baker, whom Hopis affectionately refer to as "The Legend." Two years later, I returned to the Southwest and spoke on Hopi running as a guest at the Tohono O'odham Nation Cultural Center and Museum in Topawa, Arizona, and then at the Amerind Museum in Dragoon, Arizona, the next day. These talks, organized by Christine Szuter and Eric Kaldahl, were part of the museum's exhibit on Indigenous runners that I was fortunate to help with.

Celebrated distance runner Amby Burfoot once remarked that "running clarifies the thinking process as well as purifies the body. I think best—most broadly and most fully—when I am running."² I could not agree with him more. The following book is the result of a lot of thinking, taking place during a lot of running. Trekking my way through the streets of Champaign, Illinois, or on an indoor running track at the University of Illinois, I formulated sentences in my mind, sharpened my arguments, and contemplated my approach to telling or analyzing a particular story. And about those stories . . . there are so many of them involving the great Hopi runners of the past. Some of these accounts I have retold here, but several others have yet to be shared. Every reader should know that this is not a comprehensive book on the history of Hopi running. That history would require multiple volumes and need to rely more on Hopi religious discussions on running and oral interviews, especially from those of older and younger generations. While providing a window into Hopi running from the early 1880s to the 1930s, I did not intend to cover everything in this book. Instead, I attempted to add to the existing scholarship on Hopi long-distance running during a specific period and to provide my people with a written history from one of many Hopi perspectives.

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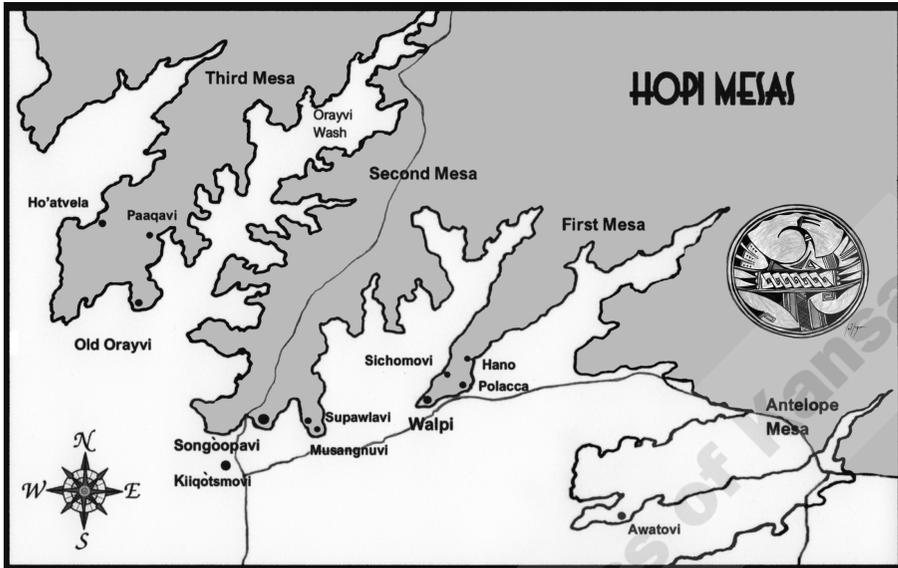
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Map of Hopi Mesas and Villages, by Neil Logan.

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Hopi Runners



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Standing on the southernmost point of Third Mesa near the village of Orayvi, looking in a southeast direction. Photograph by author.

On the southernmost point of Third Mesa, near the ancient village of Orayvi on the Hopi Reservation in northeastern Arizona, 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 Nuvatukwia'ovi, 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 Songòopavi 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.



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INTRODUCTION

To the Fence and Back

When I was writing this book I had an opportunity to run with Victor Masayesva, Jr., a well-known Hopi filmmaker and farmer from the village of Ho'atvela (Hotevilla) on the Hopi Reservation in northeastern Arizona.¹ He had come to the University of Illinois to work with me and my colleagues in American Indian Studies on a film called *Maize*, about the corn of Indigenous people.² During our short, three-mile run at the Crystal Lake Park in Urbana, we talked about our film project, and I asked him several questions about his life, but the majority of our conversation centered on the topic of running. "Has anyone ever told you about how Hopis once mimicked the movements of animals to make them better runners?" he asked me. "No," I replied, a bit embarrassed that I had no idea what he was talking about. "I'm surprised people back home haven't told you," he said to me. He then proceeded to describe the movements of deer and antelope and the lessons that Hopis, or Hopiit,³ of long ago learned from studying these magnificent runners.⁴

While we made our way around the lake I became self-conscious about my sloppy, unrefined running form. At times I struggled to maintain his pace, but like most runners I worked equally as hard not to show it. There was something about his running that both intrigued and impressed me. His stride was quick, and his shoes tapped the pavement, whereas mine pounded it. He seemed to run effortlessly, as though he was gliding along on a cushion of air, exemplifying what distance runners Danny Abshire and Brian Metzler once said: "No matter how fast you're running, your body is in harmony with the ground beneath you, moving freely and easily, springing almost effortlessly with each footstep."⁵ Then in his early sixties, Victor had fine-tuned his running stride, and he knew it. To him, I

was but a young scholar who spent his time writing about Hopi running, while he had lived his life as a runner. And it soon became apparent to me that I had much to learn from him.

My advanced degrees and faculty appointments are no substitute for the lived experiences of others. In Hopi culture, men such as Victor serve as “uncles,” teachers of younger men such as myself. We are instructed at an early age to respect and honor our elders and to listen to their advice.⁶ And we are taught to value their life experiences and to place those experiences above our own. Shortly before we approached the last quarter-mile of our run, I asked Victor one final question. “So when you run back home, how many miles do you usually cover?” I thought perhaps he would say five, eight, or even ten miles. I wanted a figure, something to gauge what we had just done to the distance he normally covers at Ho’at-vela. And I wanted to know how my running compared to Victor’s daily jaunts. But he gave me an answer that I did not expect. He smiled, chuckled a bit, and said to me, “Oh, you know, to the fence and back.”⁷

Many American runners today are obsessed with two factors in their running, distance and time. Open any issue of *Runner’s World* magazine, and you will see advertisements for products that promise to improve these two areas.⁸ Today’s runners resemble moving laboratories of gadgets and gauges. With the help of digital trackers and other audio devices, runners can escape the natural noises around them, including the sounds made when they breathe and the rhythmic pounding of their feet. Companies such as Apple and Garmin have engineered running watches with GPS and built-in heart-rate monitors. Some watches have the ability to track your position, distance, pace, and other bits of information and send the data wirelessly to your home computer or mobile device.⁹ Through social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, people can now run anywhere on the globe and remain connected to the world. But this kind of running, and the mentality behind it, was not the kind of running that Victor spoke of when he and I ran loops around Crystal Lake Park.

Victor’s brief description of running “to the fence and back” speaks to a cyclical aspect of traditional Hopi running that is often not reflected or practiced in today’s society. For Victor, and other Hopi runners of his generation, running was not always meant to be measured in miles, or timed in increments of hours, minutes, and seconds. And it did not always involve modern gadgets, shoes, sport drinks filled with electrolytes, or the latest running attire.¹⁰ Hopi messenger runners of long ago routinely ran

barefoot and navigated their high plateaus and deserts, sometimes in the darkness of night, by studying their mountains, valleys, the moon, and the stars.¹¹ They ran to nearby villages or American towns and often returned to Hopi in the same day. Their “fences,” metaphorically speaking, were the Hopi villages of Songòopavi and Walpi, or the Arizona towns of Flagstaff and Winslow, to name a few. Other times their “fences” were located far beyond Hopi ancestral lands and included the Pueblo villages of New Mexico, the Indigenous communities of central Mexico, and the coastal lands of Native California. They ran with a purpose and a destination (the fence) in mind, but they always returned to their villages (and back). They always returned home.

In his book on the lure of distance running, marathon runner Robin Harvie remarked that “getting back home lies at the heart of understanding one of the fundamental instincts of why we run.”¹² The concepts of migration, mobility, and “home” also serve as an important lens for understanding the ancient and modern world of Hopi long-distance running. Since the beginning of Hopi time, Hopis have been in a constant state of movement to and away from home. Similar to many other Native peoples, Hopis have explained these movements in very detailed origin and emergence accounts. The stories connect the people to the land and give Hopis a worldview to understand and interpret their past, present, and future. From a very early age, Hopis have been taught about the great migration stories of long ago.¹³ Well before Europeans set foot on this continent, Hopis learned that their people once divided themselves into clans and migrated in all four cardinal directions.¹⁴ According to Hopi beliefs, the clans traveled to the Pacific Ocean, Central America, and occupied lands in present-day New Mexico and Colorado.¹⁵ During these migrations, the people experienced different climates and terrains and learned to survive by hunting, gathering, and planting. But as Hopi cultural historians Stewart B. Koyiyumptewa and Leigh J. Kuwanwisiwma, and anthropologist Thomas E. Sheridan and others once noted, Hopi migration was “not a single migration but a complex series of journeys, many of which followed river valleys including the Colorado, Verde, the San Pedro, and the Membres.”¹⁶ And one of these journeys, to a place nearly two hundred miles east of their mesas, tells of a time when the people ran footraces and established running in Hopi culture.

At Chaco Canyon in the San Juan Basin of New Mexico, Hopi clans cleared trails that extended to the ancient settlement of Mesa Verde in Col-

orado. 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 they returned to their original lands in the place we now call northern Arizona, the Flute Clan continued its ceremonial races and established running in Hopi culture. Hopi runners, or warik’aya as they are referred to in Hopi, of the distant past ran as representatives of their clans and believed that their swiftness of foot would benefit their people with much-needed rain and a bountiful harvest.¹⁷ Tawangyam, or Sand Clan, runners regularly ran to shrines or other sacred sites far beyond Hopi ancestral lands to entice rain clouds to follow them back to their mesas. The ceremonial runners believed that the faster they ran on their return journey, the quicker the clouds would arrive on Hopi lands to water their fields.¹⁸

But the migrations to distant locations, and the complexities that surrounded them, did not cease when the Flute or other clans returned to their present mesas and established villages. Many years after those initial clan migrations, Hopis participated on a second wave of migration as their world intersected with the one beyond the mesas. With the establishment of the railroad, opportunities for Hopis to venture outside of their ancestral lands slowly increased. For a number of years, Hopi runners who had been hired by white individuals to deliver messages from Hopi villages to American towns such as Winslow or Holbrook often witnessed the arrival and departure of trains. The ancient running trails of their people brought them to the steel tracks of the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad. And although they had witnessed these marvels of modernity from a distance, they soon became their passengers and traveled from one end of the country to the other.

One of the first examples of this came in the early 1890s. At this time, government officials carefully planned a trip for Hopis, all of whom were runners, by train to the East Coast to show them modern civilization, the supposed superiority of American ways, and the power of the US military. During this trip, officials brought the people to American cities known for their industry, federal Indian boarding schools, and military forts. They also had them witness the “acres and acres” of corn and other agricultural fields throughout the Midwest.¹⁹ They did so to convince the people to adopt Western methods of farming back home, to stop resisting US government mandates, and to embrace Western forms of schooling for their

children. When the people returned to their villages, they argued among each other about how to respond to these outside forces of colonialism and contemplated their future in an ever-changing American society.

The accounts of Hopi leaders who traveled by train to the East and West Coasts connect to the larger story of Hopi running in important ways. Prior to the early 1890s, Hopis rarely, if ever, boarded trains to travel across the United States. Instead, trains brought visitors to the Hopi mesas, many of whom came to survey the region or to see and record Hopi religious ceremonies. These visitors returned home by rail with stories about footraces that they had observed on Hopiland and published them in American newspapers and other forms of literature. But when the Hopi delegation departed by rail for the nation's capital, or when a group of Hopi runners and prisoners left Arizona in the same fashion for Alcatraz Island in the San Francisco Bay, they foreshadowed a new era for Hopi running in American society. The delegations, whether voluntary or forced, point to a time when government officials required the people to board locomotives for places such as the "land of oranges," a term Hopis used to refer to the many orange groves surrounding Sherman Institute, an off-reservation Indian boarding school in Riverside, California.²⁰ Others boarded trains to travel far east to the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania.²¹ Although Hopi youth arrived at the schools to receive an academic and industrial education, some used the opportunity to join the school's track and cross-country teams. They signaled toward a future when school and other government officials sent Hopis by train to compete in cities across the United States, including Los Angeles, Seattle, and New York, and to when these same runners traveled by rail back to their villages as modern athletes, only to be confronted with deeply rooted cultural beliefs about running in Hopi society.

In my book I rely heavily on this concept of leaving and returning to understand and tell the story of Hopis who left their villages to compete at off-reservation Indian boarding schools. In the late 1870s, US government officials began creating these schools to help assimilate Native people into American society and to teach them trades that would be useful to tribal and nontribal communities. At the schools teachers and other officials taught the students to read and write English and instructed them in several other disciplines. In addition to teaching them subjects most commonly found in American grammar schools, school officials trained female students in domestic education and provided male students with

opportunities to learn trades including blacksmithing, plumbing, and leatherwork.²² “All the ordinary mechanical occupations likely to be useful in the future life of the pupils are taught at the Phoenix Indian School,” wrote the *Arizona Republican*. The “girls learn housekeeping, cooking, [and] sewing” while the “boys have ample chance to find their natural bent in the bakery” and in the “machine and tailor shops.”²³

Although focused on academic education and industrial training, Indian schools offered students the chance to participate in several extracurricular activities including music, drama, and sports. In his book *To Show What an Indian Can Do*, historian John Bloom keenly observed that sports at Indian boarding schools “provided a popular image of modern Native Americans that the promoters of the Indian boarding school system used to promote their cause.”²⁴ School officials encouraged athletic competitions to reinforce the values of team effort, competition, and the benefits of hard work. Students joined athletic teams as a result of their desire to compete, to improve their athletic skills, and to demonstrate to each other and white audiences that Indian athletes—if given the chance—could compete against white members of American society. Furthermore, sport teams increased the visibility of Indian schools and taught athletes the Western concepts of competition and what non-Native people deemed to be fair play.

While Hopis participated in several sports, including basketball, football, and even boxing, their greatest success came as members of track and cross-country teams. Sports at off-reservation schools provided Native athletes opportunities that did not exist for them on their reservations. When Hopis joined cross-country teams at Sherman Institute, or the Indian school at Carlisle, they experienced for the first time different regions of the country, life in modern cities, and a new way of running footraces. And Hopis used these opportunities to learn and interact with people from other parts of the United States and the world. While competing in marathons, Hopis ran with runners from Ireland, Germany, Sweden, and Japan, and although from vastly different cultures, they spoke a common—and perhaps universal—language of competitive running.²⁵

Having come from a society that valued long-distance running for ceremonial and practical purposes, Hopi youth transferred this cultural mindset with them when they entered these faraway schools. Hopi runners who competed at Indian schools had come from a tribe of racers. While none



Runners at the Oraivi Footrace, Orayvi, Arizona, 2009. Photograph by author.

of these athletes needed to be taught the essence of long-distance running, coaches nevertheless trained them in modern running techniques and rules to compete effectively in American track and cross-country events. The dirt trails on the reservation did not resemble the paved roads or clay tracks used in many American running competitions. And so in their first year on a school's cross-country team, Hopis learned about running in different locations, climates, and elevations. And they had to develop mental and physical strategies for running in cities, on mountain roads, or in front of thousands of cheering spectators in a stadium.

When Hopis ran on trails back home, they did so in a relatively quiet and peaceful environment, far from the sounds of locomotives arriving and departing towns such as Winslow. Running on or near the mesas, Hopis became attuned with their bodies and surroundings, becoming one with their environment. They listened to their own breathing, the sound of their feet tapping the trail as they danced on Mother Earth. They felt the rhythmic pounding of their heart telling them to adjust or steady their pace.²⁶ And they listened to birds singing and the sound of the wind cutting through the canyons. And often they ran alone, experiencing physi-

cal ailments that all distance runners endure. “He was alone and running on,” Kiowa poet N. Scott Momaday writes of a Jemez Pueblo runner named Abel. “All of his being was concentrated in the sheer motion of running on, and he was past caring about pain.”²⁷ In the high desert of Arizona, Hopi runners also beheld beautiful landscapes, greeted majestic sunrises and sunsets, and had unobstructed views for miles in all directions. Running with no distractions from the outside world, Hopis ran with “good hearts,” prayed silently for the well-being of their people, and sang songs to their katsina spirits to entice the rain clouds to follow them home to their villages.²⁸

However, the tranquil environment that encompassed the trails back home did not reflect the fast pace and at times chaotic life in large modern American cities. In Los Angeles, for example, Hopi runners had to learn to navigate through crowds of shouting spectators and endure the piercing sound of honking automobiles. Most of these automobiles lined the race path alongside the spectators, but others, accompanied by newspaper reporters, drove ahead of the runners and fumigated them with their exhaust. As one reporter for the Associated Press remarked, “life in the clean-up land of the Hopi reservation with their own people is far different from the gasoline laden sphere of the white man’s out of doors.”²⁹ For some Hopis and non-Indians who raced in Los Angeles and in other cities such as New York, the exhaust caused severe breathing problems that required them to quit. No longer running back home where the air was clean, the Hopi runners learned to endure the smell and ill effects of toxic automobile smoke and adjusted to this new way of running in modern American cities.

But toxic fumes from automobiles was not the only issue Hopi runners had to contend with when they ran in American races. Most competitive runners at this time wore leather-and-rubber shoes specifically designed for distance running.³⁰ However, back on the reservation, the people either ran barefoot or wore moccasins made by members of their village. To compete in American events in the early 1900s, Hopis often had to replace their traditional footwear with modern running shoes. Many Hopis found them to be cumbersome and uncomfortable, and at times attributed their less-than-stellar performances to the shoes that race officials required them to wear. While some Hopi runners competed in at least one American race wearing moccasins made from the hide of a deer,³¹ most had to adopt the American-style shoes and adjust their strides accordingly.³²

But as Hopi runners accepted, sometimes begrudgingly, Western forms of running in US races, newspapers and the sporting communities had to also rethink how they understood Hopis in this new American sport context.

When Hopi people competed and won American running events, newspaper writers seemed surprised that the “little Hopis” had the ability to defeat top runners in the nation. In their articles, authors and their illustrators focused on the Hopi runners’ short stature and quiet demeanor and wondered how the runners could perform so well in the nation’s prestigious marathons. Some writers attempted to explain their running success on Hopi religious customs, forces of colonialism, and exercise they received from trekking up and down cliffs to tend to their corn and melon fields below the mesas. With little or no familiarity with Hopi history or culture, newspaper writers informed their readers on Hopi running accomplishments, explained why Hopis did so well in cross-country events, and situated Hopis in what they perceived to be their place in American society. Often accompanied with illustrations and photographs, newspaper accounts of Hopi running victories created tremendous excitement for American sport enthusiasts, and solidified—at least for the time being—Hopi running in American sport society.

While sport enthusiasts praised Hopi runners for their victories, they also became disappointed in them when they lost races and fell short of their expectations. For years, newspaper and other writers had published glowing accounts on the running accomplishments of the Hopi people. At times describing the runners in mythic terms, newspapers built them up in the minds of their readers to succeed, and not to fail. But Hopis competed in hundreds of track and cross-country meets throughout the country, and won only a portion of them. Regardless of their Native identity or cultural upbringing, Hopi runners faced physical and mental handicaps that every runner experienced in the early twentieth century. They suffered fatigue, sprained ankles, sore knees, and blistered feet. Running long distances, whether on soft or hard surfaces, took a toll on their bodies and often shortened their careers. After trotting through the hot Mojave Desert in the late 1920s, limping his way through the mountain region of northern Arizona with sprained ankles and battered knees, one acclaimed Hopi runner not only quit the race but used the occasion to exit competitive American running entirely.³³

In addition to enduring physical handicaps, those Hopi runners that

competed at Indian schools suffered in other ways. Government officials established the schools to instruct youth in grammar, math, science, history, and various occupational trades. However, for students to properly learn these subjects, they needed to be present in the classroom. Students who ran for the school's cross-country and track teams devoted large amounts of time to practicing, conditioning their bodies to function at the highest levels. Early in the morning, while their schoolmates slept, the teams ran the city streets and paths of Riverside, Phoenix, and Carlisle, to name a few. Those who ran for Sherman Institute also trained on long stretches of dirt roads that ran parallel to the many orange groves in Southern California, stopping now and then to quench their thirst and replenish their energy with the sugary fruit. And after their training, while experiencing physical and mental fatigue, they sat in their classrooms and attempted to learn their daily lessons. Having once run freely up and down their mesas as young children, the Hopi youth, and even their running, had become "institutionalized," a term used by runner and writer James F. Fixx to describe the constraints imposed on running and movement when youth enter schools.³⁴ Then, in the late afternoon, as their peers relaxed in dorm rooms or visited with each other under the shade of a palm tree, the runners often hit the streets again, a cycle that continued for months during the school year.³⁵ And some accomplished Hopi runners participated in so many meets that they spent much of their time away from school, and their education and grades suffered as a result of it.³⁶ But fatigue and subpar grades at Indian schools did not compare to other, more culturally problematic, issues awaiting the runners when they returned to their village communities.

While a select few Hopis at Indian boarding schools received honors and notoriety for their feats of endurance, others back home remained unimpressed with their running accomplishments.³⁷ When Hopis returned to their villages after their boarding school days, they came home to a society with a long tradition of distance running and great runners. However, the vast majority of these runners, many of whom were much older than the student athletes, never had opportunities to compete at Indian schools, marathons, or for city athletic clubs. Since they did not attend an off-reservation school, they never demonstrated before newspaper writers their abilities in American marathons or international events. Therefore, they remained virtually unknown to those outside of the Hopi community. But people back home knew of these runners and regularly

reminded the young Hopi track stars about the long tradition of running in Hopi society and culture. They reminded them that long before Hopis won medals and trophy cups in American marathons, or had their names grace the pages of American newspapers, Hopi clan runners competed against each other on and below the mesas, and when they won footraces, they received rain.³⁸ Furthermore, younger Hopis often came home from Indian boarding schools with a heightened sense of accomplishment and pride. Fellow pupils treated certain Hopi athletes 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 Indian schools realized that many runners remained on the reservation with “better wind and faster legs,”³⁹ and this reality created tensions with the older Hopi runners when the proud and accomplished athletes returned home.

The tensions between older and younger runners often 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 Indian schools. Officials at Sherman, for example, routinely told the students that the “determination to win” was the “epitome of American sport.”⁴⁰ People in US society participated in sports to win, and not to bring wellness or health to their 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. School 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.⁴¹

American understandings of sport also differed greatly from Hopi clan beliefs about long-distance running. In the early twentieth century, politicians, educators, philosophers, and others believed that sports unified the nation, strengthened the ideals of American citizenship, and demonstrated to foreign nations the superiority of US culture and democracy.

Sport historian Mark Dyreson noted that during the early twentieth century, figures such as Theodore Roosevelt, A. G. Spalding, and Price Collier believed that sport 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.”⁴² 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 American republic. Ralph C. Wilcox once remarked that some Irish immigrants competed in US sports to foster pride in the “Land of Erin” and to “ensure that their fellow countryman’s Irish roots were never forgotten.”⁴³ 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.”⁴⁴ While Hopis and other 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.

Although individuals such as Roosevelt, Spalding, and Collier emphasized the role sport had in the furtherance of American nationalism, others focused on the power of sport to transform into better individuals.⁴⁵ At this time, many Americans still considered Hopi adults and other Indians to be dirty, lazy, and to have the mental capacity of children.⁴⁶ But in their participation in athletics, even Indians could be lifted to a higher moral and virtuous state. “Take a class of boys and give them proper instruction in cross-country running,” Coach Lewis of Sherman Institute once remarked, and it “will develop [them] into good strong youths” and “will do more for the temperance cause and to do away with cigarettes than anything else that I know of.”⁴⁷

In addition to running for sport programs at Indian schools, some Hopi runners also ran for teams under the auspices of city athletic clubs and competed alongside people from many nationalities. Prior to 1900, sport enthusiasts strategically developed athletic clubs in cities such as Los Angeles, New York, and Philadelphia.⁴⁸ Although colleges and off-reservation Indian schools created their own sport programs, athletic clubs in American cities influenced sport in US society in significant ways. “Nearly all contemporary sports evolved, or were invented, in the city,” sport historian Steven A. Riess observed, for the “city was the place where

sport became rationalized, specialized, organized, commercialized, and professionalized.”⁴⁹ City athletic clubs competed against each other and emphasized fair play and gentlemanly conduct.⁵⁰ For the Hopi runners, representing athletic clubs in large cities also gave them opportunities to race against top runners and to compete in more meets. It also provided them with financial backing needed for their race entry fees and other expenses.

While Hopis ran beyond the mesas for various reasons, school administrators, government officials, sport promoters, and a host of other individuals had their own agendas for Hopis to compete and succeed in national and international competitions. School superintendents and coaches saw the success of Hopi runners as a way to bring recognition to their schools and athletic programs. City officials saw Hopi running success as a way to promote their towns and attract business to their cities. Government bureaucrats used Hopi runners to bolster pride in America and to demonstrate to the world the superiority of American culture and society. Race promoters and other organizers viewed Hopi running success as an opportunity to earn money and to advance their personal and financial interests. And newspapers published thousands of articles on the accomplishments of Hopi and other Indian runners to increase their sales and to heighten interest in sporting news throughout America.⁵¹

This book examines Hopi runners who left their villages in the early 1900s to compete in cities across the United States. It examines the ways Hopi marathon runners navigated between tribal dynamics, school loyalties, and a country that closely associated sport with US nationalism. It calls attention to Hopi philosophies of running that connected the runners to their village communities, and to the internal and external forces that supported and strained these cultural ties when Hopis competed in US marathons. This work pushes the notion that between 1908 and 1936, the cultural identity of Hopi runners challenged white American perceptions of Natives and modernity and placed them in a context that had national and international dimensions. This broad perspective linked Hopi runners to athletes from around the world, including runners from Japan and Ireland, and caused non-Natives to reevaluate their understanding of sport, nationhood, and the cultures of Indigenous people.

Over the years, scholars and other writers have published modest amounts of material on Hopi runners. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, anthropologists such as Alexander M. Stephen and Jesse Walter

Fewkes made several trips to Hopiland to study certain aspects of Hopi life, including running. In his two-volume ethnography *Hopi Journal*, Stephen provided brief observations on the religious significance of Hopi kickball races and offered short commentary on Hopi clan runners.⁵² Around the same time, Fewkes published his essay “The Wa-Wac-Ka-Tci-Na, a Tusayan Foot Race” on competitions between Hopi clan runners and Hopi katsinas and clowns.⁵³ These and other anthropological expeditions to Hopi paved the way for other scholars and academics to conduct research on the mesas, including a Ukrainian anthropologist named Misha Titiev, who published an essay on Hopi clan runners at Orayvi.⁵⁴ “The Hopi believe,” Titiev wrote in this essay, “that the faster a man runs, the faster the clouds will come.”⁵⁵

For the next several years, written accounts of Hopi running mostly appeared in newspapers, children’s books, or in venues intended for public audiences.⁵⁶ In the early 1980s, however, Peter Nabokov, then a graduate student in anthropology, rekindled scholarly interest in Native and Hopi runners by publishing a comprehensive account of Indigenous runners entitled *Indian Running*.⁵⁷ In this study, Nabokov wrote at length about Hopi runners of the past and present. He was the first scholar to situate Hopi running within a contemporary American sport society.⁵⁸ Eight years after Nabokov released *Indian Running*, Dick and Mary Lutz published a nonscholarly but well-cited account of Tarahumara Indian people of northern Mexico and dedicated an entire chapter to their running legacy and abilities. Written for the general public, *The Running Indians* provides an intimate glimpse into the lives of the Tarahumara based on two trips the authors took to Copper Canyon in Mexico to live among the people.⁵⁹

While much of what authors wrote in the 1980s and 1990s centered on the running traditions of tribes, journalists and other writers soon began publishing biographical works on individual Native runners. In 2006, musician and amateur historian Michael Ward published a biography on Narragansett runner Ellison “Tarzan” Brown, who is perhaps best known for twice winning the Boston Marathon and for competing in the Olympic Games in Germany in 1936.⁶⁰ The following year, historian Brian S. Collier wrote a remarkable account of Steve Gachupin, a Jemez Pueblo runner who amazed America’s running community for his six consecutive victories of the Pike’s Peak Marathon in Colorado during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Basing much of his essay on oral interviews that he conducted with Gachupin, newspaper accounts, and works by Pueblo and

non-Indian scholars, Collier highlights the cultural significance of running for the Jemez runner and his village community.⁶¹ At the same time that Collier published on Gachupin, an editor for the *Colorado History Now* newsletter named Ben Fogelberg published a brief article on Hopi runner Saul Halyve of Musangnuvi (Mischongovi) and his short-lived success competing at the Teller Institute in Grand Junction, Colorado.⁶² And although not writing on a specific runner, Christopher McDougall, an avid distance runner himself, two years later published a highly popular book entitled *Born to Run* wherein he explores Tarahumara running by focusing on the people's health, cultural beliefs, and environment.⁶³

Building upon this rich body of literature, I place Hopi long-distance runners within a larger American sport context. I seek to accomplish what Dyreson did with his wonderful article "The Foot Runners Conquer Mexico and Texas." In it he situated Tarahumara runners within international dimensions, challenged notions of their Indigenous identities in the print media, and demonstrated their influence on people's understandings of Mexican nationalism.⁶⁴ While I situate Hopi running within a broad American sport context, I do not offer a comprehensive account on the topic. Instead, I provide a window for one to see a particular time in American history when Hopis competed simultaneously for their tribal communities, Indian schools, the nation, and even for themselves. Much has yet to be researched or written on Hopi runners, especially works on contemporary runners, and the many runners who are lesser known outside of the community and who have received little to no attention.⁶⁵ I am, of course, also reminded of this whenever I speak to other Hopi individuals about this topic: "Oh, have you heard of [so and so]?" they ask me; "he was a great runner."

Although it has been some time since I ran laps around Crystal Lake Park with Victor, his comment "to the fence and back" still resonates with me as a Hopi person. It helps me understand my people's history as a continuous cycle of leaving and returning, of going away and coming back. It causes me to consider the ancient ones who ran to sacred sites far beyond Hopi ancestral lands to entice the rain clouds to follow them back to their mesas.⁶⁶ And it reminds me of messenger runners who used a network of trails to deliver information to other Hopi villages and to people in far-away lands. Hopi clan and messenger runners of the past foreshadowed a new era in Hopi society when the people left their villages to visit American cities and returned to tell about what they experienced and saw on

their journeys. And it points to a time when Hopi youth and older adults continued the cycle of leaving and returning when they departed on trains for off-reservation Indian boarding schools, competed on cross-country teams, ran for race promoters or city athletic clubs, and then migrated back to their villages as modern Hopi athletes.



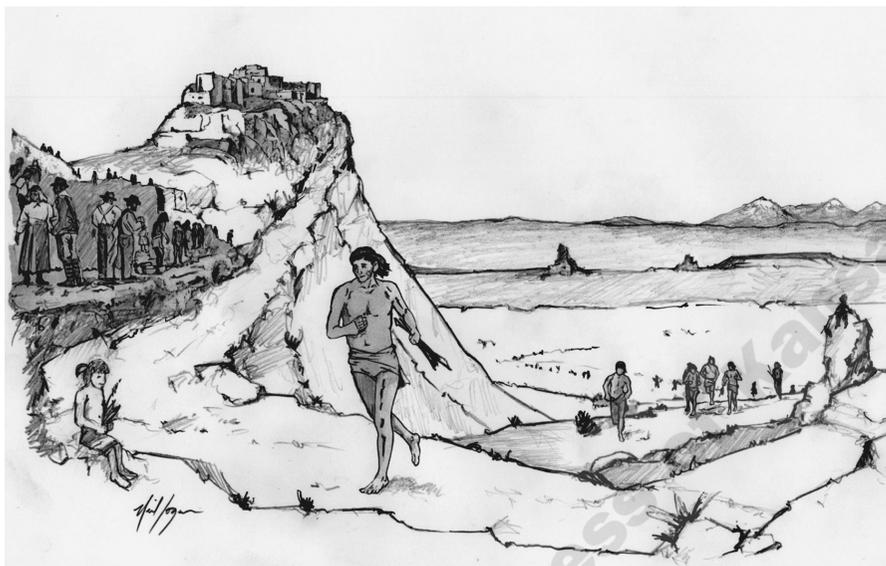
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They are for the blessings of the cloud people, for the rain, for the harvest, so we have a good life, a long life. That's what these ceremonial runners do. They bring this positiveness to the people.

—Leigh J. Kuwanwisiwma, Village of Paaqavi



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Ascending First Mesa at Walpi, by Neil Logan.

