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Edited by Franz Boas

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### **Handbook of American Indian Languages**

Edited by the eminent anthropologist and linguist Franz Boas (1858–1942), this work was first published in two huge volumes between 1911 and 1922. Comprising detailed studies of several Native American languages, Volume 1 has been split into two parts for this reissue. Part 1 contains chapters on the Athapascan (Hupa), Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian and Kwak'wala languages. Each chapter contains a discussion of the speakers of the language, its geographical distribution, the phonetic system, and an analysis of the grammar and vocabulary. The work built upon the foundations laid by J.W. Powell (1834–1902) in his *Introduction to the Study of Indian Languages* (1877). Boas, a pioneer in the field of cultural anthropology, used his introduction to the present work to promote his culturally relativist approach to ethnographic study. Overall, the project ranks as a landmark in entrenching scientific principles for the study of North America's indigenous peoples and languages.

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VOLUME 1

PART 1

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SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION  
BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY  
BULLETIN 40

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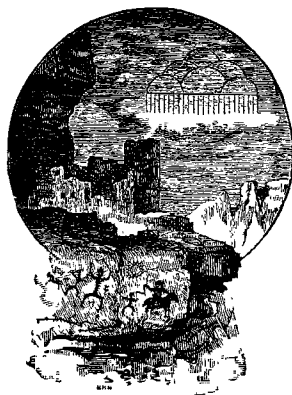
# HANDBOOK OF AMERICAN INDIAN LANGUAGES

BY  
FRANZ BOAS

PART 1

WITH ILLUSTRATIVE SKETCHES

By ROLAND B. DIXON, P. E. GODDARD, WILLIAM JONES  
AND TRUMAN MICHELSON, JOHN R. SWANTON,  
AND WILLIAM THALBITZER



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## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

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SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION,  
BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY,  
*Washington, D. C., March 11, 1908.*

SIR: I have the honor to submit herewith for publication, subject to your approval, as Bulletin 40, Part 1, of this Bureau, the manuscript of a portion of the Handbook of American Indian Languages, prepared under the editorial supervision of Dr. Franz Boas.

Yours, respectfully,

W. H. HOLMES,  
*Chief.*

Dr. CHARLES D. WALCOTT,  
*Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution,  
Washington, D. C.*

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## PREFACE

The Handbook of American Indian Languages, the first Part of which is here presented, had its inception in an attempt to prepare a revised edition of the "Introduction to the Study of Indian Languages," by Major J. W. Powell.

During the first twenty years of the existence of the Bureau of American Ethnology much linguistic material had been accumulated by filling in the schedules contained in Major Powell's Introduction, and in this manner many vocabularies had been collected, while the essential features of the morphology of American languages remained unknown.

It seemed particularly desirable to call attention, in a new edition of the Introduction, to the essential features of the morphology and phonetics of American languages, and to emphasize the necessity of an analytical study of grammar. The object next to be attained by linguistic studies of American languages is a knowledge of their phonetic processes and of the psychological foundation of their structure. The former of these objects has hardly been attempted; knowledge of the latter has been obscured by the innumerable attempts to represent the grammars of Indian languages in a form analogous to that of the European grammars.

It was originally intended to give a somewhat elaborate introduction, setting forth the essential psychological characteristics of American languages; but with the development of the plan of work it was found necessary to relegate this discussion to the end of the whole work, because without a somewhat detailed discussion of the various languages the essential points can not be substantiated by reliable evidence.

I have not attempted to give either exhaustive grammars or exhaustive discussions of phonetics, because the object of the whole work has been to describe as clearly as possible those psychological principles of each language which may be isolated by an analysis of grammatical forms. A detailed discussion of phonetics and of the probable historical development of grammatical forms belongs rather to detailed studies of linguistic stocks, which should be the next step in the progress of our knowledge of American languages.

In the collection of the material embodied in the present volume, I have been liberally assisted by investigators employed by a number

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of institutions, particularly the American Museum of Natural History and the University of California. Most of the material contained in the first Part, except that contained in the sketches of the Athapascan, by Dr. P. E. Goddard, and of the Eskimo, by Dr. William Thalbitzer, was collected in connection with extended ethnological research conducted under the joint auspices of these institutions and the Bureau of American Ethnology; and the grammatical sketches are based on the discussion of texts published by the Bureau of American Ethnology and by other institutions, and which are referred to in the various sketches.

The work of collecting and of revision has extended over the period from 1897 to 1908. Lack of funds prevented a more rapid completion of the work.

I desire to express my sincere thanks to the collaborators who have contributed to the volume, and who have willingly adopted the general plan of presentation of grammar outlined by the editor.

FRANZ BOAS.

NEW YORK, *February 26, 1910.*

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