

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR. UNITED
STATES GEOLOGICAL AND
GEOGRAPHICAL SURVEY.
MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS. - NO.
7. ETHNOGRAPHY AND PHILOLOGY OF
THE HIDATSA INDIANS**

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WASHINGTON MATTHEWS

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F. V. HAYDEN, U. S. GEOLOGIST-IN-CHARGE.

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ETHNOGRAPHY AND PHILOLOGY

OF THE

HIDATSA INDIANS.

BY

WASHINGTON MATTHEWS,
ASSISTANT SURGEON UNITED STATES ARMY.



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1877.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL AND
GEOGRAPHICAL SURVEY OF THE TERRITORIES,
Washington, D. C., June 10, 1877.

During the year 1854, while engaged in exploring the then almost unknown country along the Upper Missouri and its tributaries, the writer of this note commenced the work of collecting vocabularies of the languages and other ethnological data respecting the Indians of the Northwest. He continued this work at intervals during a period of about six years, and the materials thus accumulated were finally published in 1862 in the "Transactions" of the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, under the title of "Contributions to the Ethnography and Philology of the Indian Tribes of the Missouri Valley". A brief sketch of the Hidatsa Indians, and an incomplete vocabulary of their language, was included in that work.

The author of the present volume, Dr. Washington Matthews, assistant surgeon United States Army, spent some years among these Indians while stationed at a military post in performance of his official duties as a medical officer of the Army. During this period he paid great attention to the same subject, observing the manners, customs, and other characteristics of these Indians, and making a close and careful study of their language. In this way were secured the materials upon which, elaborated with the utmost care and with conspicuous ability, the present important memoir is based.

Dr. Matthews's earlier studies of the subject resulted in a Hidatsa-English and English-Hidatsa vocabulary, prefaced by an essay on the grammatical structure of the language. A small edition (100 copies) was printed by Mr. J. G. Shea as one of his series of American Linguistics. At the request of the writer,—who earnestly desired to push to completion the work he had long since undertaken, but was compelled by pressure of other engagements to suspend,—Dr. Matthews spent much time in entirely remodeling and greatly enlarging the scope of his paper, to include the ethnography as well as the philology of the tribe. His final result is herewith presented.

Besides revising and adding much new matter to the vocabularies, Dr. Matthews has here made those other important additions, without which the article could hardly have been considered monographic. The whole of the "ethnography" and "philology" are new. The manner in which the work has been accomplished reflects great credit upon the author and upon the Medical corps of the Army, whose capacity for scientific work Dr. Matthews honorably illustrates in his own person. Of the value of the work as a contribution to American Ethnology, little need

be said; I regard it as the most important memoir on our aboriginal Indian languages which has appeared since the Dakota grammar and dictionary, by Rev. S. R. Riggs, was published by the Smithsonian Institution.

It was originally intended to publish this treatise as a portion of a general work on Indian ethnography now in course of preparation by the undersigned. The delay in its appearance which such course would entail, and the great merit of the work here accomplished, render it desirable, in justice both to the author and to the subject, that it should appear as a separate publication.

As circumstances rendered it impossible for the author to attend personally to the work during its passage through the press, the duty of superintending its publication devolved upon Dr. Elliott Coues, U. S. A., to whom the thanks of the Survey are due for the careful manner in which he has accomplished the task.

F. V. HAYDEN,
United States Geologist.

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ETHNOGRAPHY.
