

**SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION - BUREAU
OF ETHNOLOGY: INTRODUCTION TO
THE STUDY OF INDIAN LANGUAGES:
WITH WORDS, PHRASES AND
SENTENCES TO BE COLLECTED**

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With Words, Phrases and Sentences to Be Collected by J. W. Powell

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J. W. POWELL

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SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION—BUREAU, OF ETHNOLOGY
J. W. POWELL DIRECTOR

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

STUDY OF INDIAN LANGUAGES

WITH

WORDS PHRASES AND SENTENCES TO BE COLLECTED

BY J. W. POWELL

SECOND EDITION—WITH CHARTS

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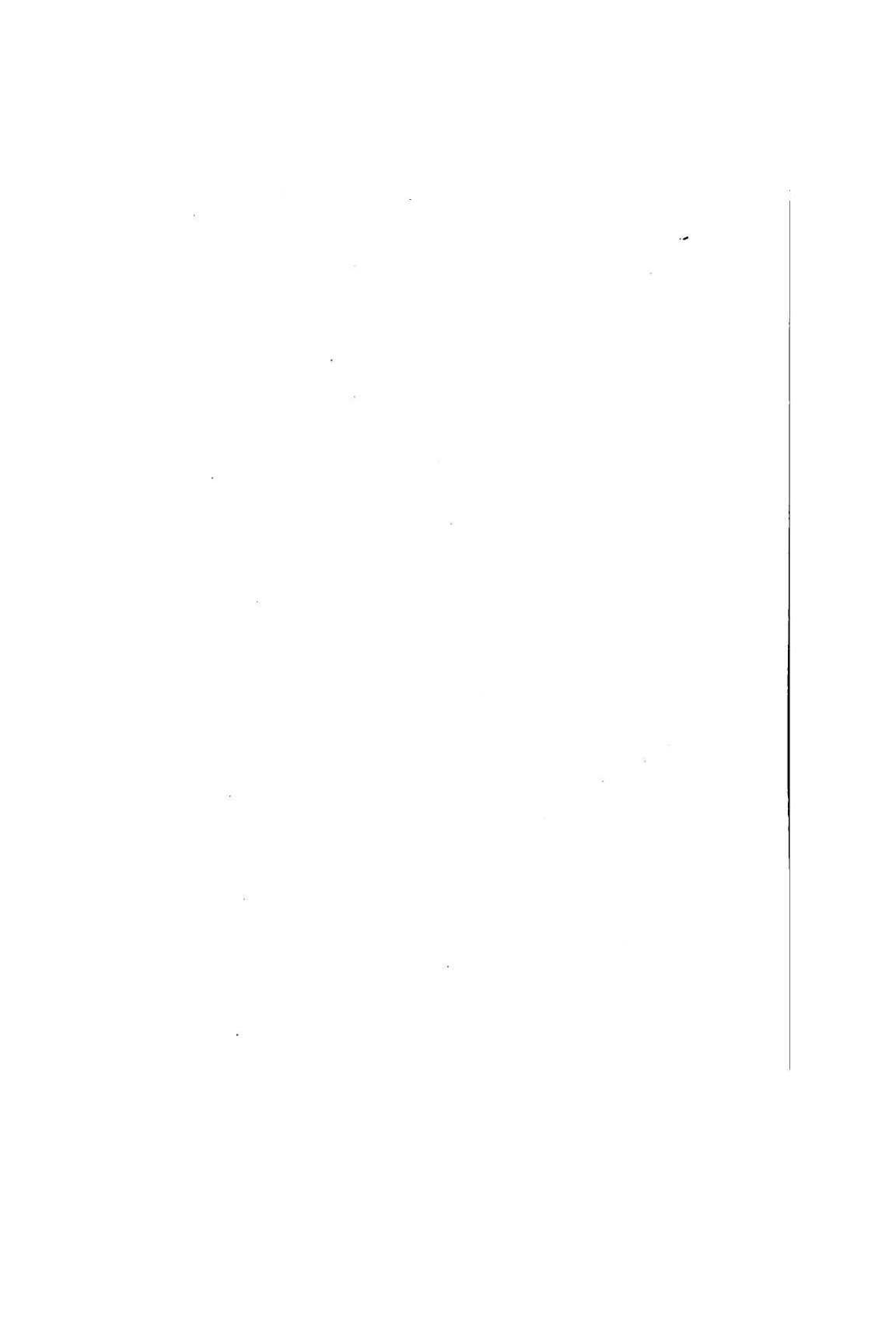
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Locality, _____

Recorded by _____

Date of Record, _____



P R E F A C E .

During the past ten years students of Indian languages have rapidly multiplied. When the author of this volume began the exploration of the Colorado River of the West under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution, Professor Henry, as its secretary, urgently recommended a study of the Indians of that country, although the work was organized primarily as a geographic and geological survey. The region was practically unknown to white men, and the Indians found therein were less modified by the influences of civilization than any others of the United States. The only inhabitants of the country being Indians, the members of the survey were thrown the more directly into contact with them, as their services were needed in finding trails, fords, passes, and watering places. Under these circumstances favorable opportunities were utilized, and from time to time since then this work has gradually expanded until a Bureau of Ethnology, under the direction of the Smithsonian Institution, has been organized by law.

In the mean time, through the efforts of this organization in its various forms many persons have been enlisted in the study of North American anthropology and the philologic branch has received special attention. To intelligently prosecute linguistic research it was found necessary to make a summary of what had previously been done in this field, and a classification of the linguistic stocks of North America was undertaken. In the progress of this work vocabularies and grammars from various sources have been studied and compared with the large amount of matter pouring in from the assistants and collaborators with the Bureau. Those engaged in the work needed constant direction and were frequently calling

for explanations. Thus there came to be an urgent demand for an "Introduction to the Study of Indian Languages." In the year 1877 the first edition was issued. The progress made by various students, and the studies made by the author, alike require that a new edition be prepared to meet the more advanced wants and to embody the results of wider studies. Under these circumstances the present edition is published. It does not purport to be a philosophic treatment of the subject of language; it is not a comparative grammar of Indian tongues; it is simply a series of explanations of certain characteristics almost universally found by students of Indian languages—the explanations being of such a character as experience has shown would best meet the wants of persons practically at work in the field on languages with which they are unfamiliar. The book is a body of directions for collectors.

It is believed that the system of schedules, followed *seriatim*, will lead the student in a proper way to the collection of linguistic materials; that the explanations given will assist him in overcoming the difficulties which he is sure to encounter; and that the materials when collected will constitute valuable contributions to philology. It has been the effort of the author to connect the study of language with the study of other branches of anthropology, for a language is best understood when the habits, customs, institutions, philosophy,—the subject-matter of thought embodied in the language are best known. The student of language should be a student of the people who speak the language; and to this end the book has been prepared, with many hints and suggestions relating to other branches of anthropology.

In preparing the first edition the author appealed to the eminent scholar, Prof. J. D. Whitney, for assistance in devising an alphabet; since then further experience has demonstrated the propriety of some changes and a considerable enlargement of the scheme. For the alphabet as it is now presented, Professor Whitney is not responsible, but the writer is greatly indebted to him for laying the foundation of the chapter as it appeared in the previous edition.

In the second chapter, entitled "Hints and Suggestions," the fourth section embodies a series of questions prepared by the Hon. Lewis H. Morgan,

and by him presented to the Archæological Institute of America, March 1880, in a "Statement concerning the Objects of an Expedition to New Mexico and Arizona, and of one subsequently to Yucatan and Central America." In many other ways the author is indebted to Mr. Morgan as the pioneer investigator into the sociology of the North American Indians. The section on Kinship especially is a summary and condensation of a portion of his great work on "Consanguinity and Affinity," published by the Smithsonian Institute; but the schedule has been considerably enlarged, and diagrams have been devised with the hope of leading to more exhaustive research and more nearly accurate records.

The writer had prepared a section on the study of materials which was thought might be useful in a more advanced stage of linguistic study than that represented in the collection of the schedules. In this he had discussed, to some extent, methods of analyzing Indian languages; but his own work had been rather that of the pioneer, and in such advanced studies he had taken but little part; and the section as written was unsatisfactory. After it had gone into the printer's hands it occurred to the writer to consult again a paper written some years ago and read by Mr. J. Hammond Trumbull before the American Philological Association.* On reading the paper again it was thought best to cut out what had been written on this subject and to insert in lieu thereof a large portion of Mr. Trumbull's paper.

The method of treatment here employed has one characteristic requiring mention. In its preparation, from time to time, illustrations from Indian languages have been more and more eliminated. To the general scholar perhaps this is a fault, but experience has fully demonstrated to the author that illustrations from unknown languages, presented to the working student in the field, serve rather to obscure than elucidate the subject in hand. Illustrations to be of value in such cases must come from materials familiar to the student. In incorporating Mr. Trumbull's paper, which was written for scholars rather than for students in the field, the writer did not consider himself authorized to modify in any manner what Mr. Trumbull had said. His matter appears, therefore, with all its wealth of example.

*On the Best Method of Studying the North American Languages. By J. Hammond Trumbull. *Trans. Am. Phil. Assn.*, 1869-70. Hartford: 1871, 8^o. pp. 65-79.