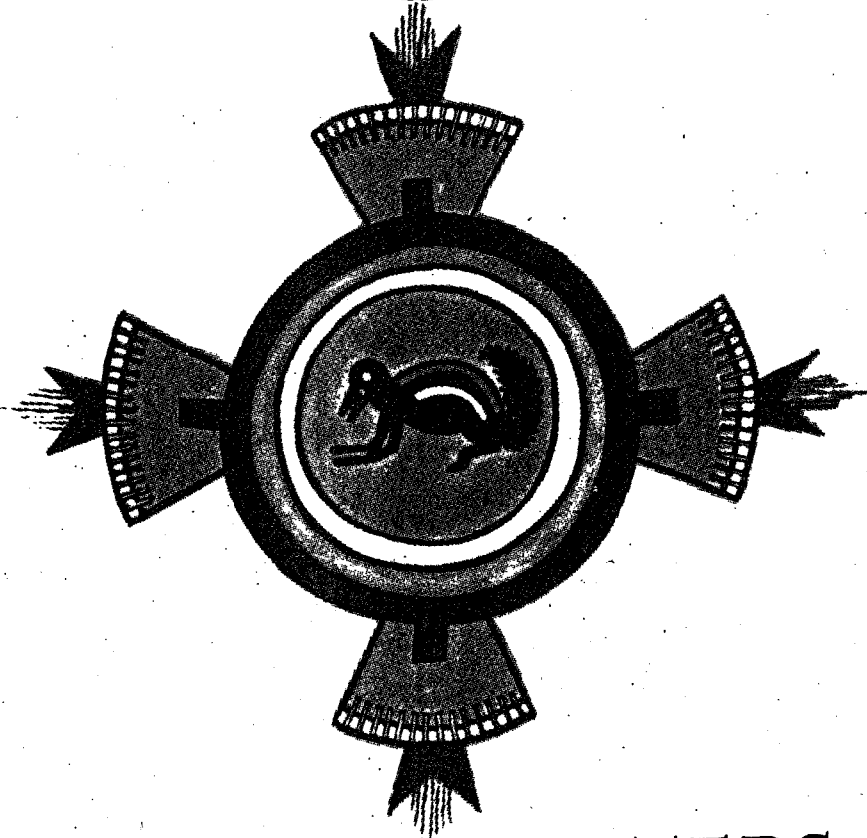


BOOK OF THE HOPI



BY FRANK WATERS

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INTRODUCTION

This is a strange and wonderful book. Its spokesmen are some thirty elders of the Hopi Indian tribe in northern Arizona.

The Hopis regard themselves as the first inhabitants of America. Their village of Oraibi is indisputably the oldest continuously occupied settlement in the United States. It and most of the other villages cling to six-hundred-foot-high escarpments of three rocky mesas rising abruptly out of the desert plain: Hano, Sichomovi, and Walpi on First Mesa; Mishongnovi, Shipaulovi, and Shongopovi on Second Mesa; Hotevilla, Bakavi, and Oraibi on Third Mesa; and Moencopi lying fifty miles to the west. No part of the vast arid plateau embracing parts of New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and Utah is more inhospitable than the Hopi Reservation of nearly four thousand square miles, itself completely surrounded by the twenty-five-thousand-square-mile wilderness of the Navajo Reservation. Men have had to walk ten miles each day to tend their little patches of squaw corn. Women have trudged interminably up the steep cliff-sides with jars of water on their heads. This is their immemorial homeland, the desert heartland of the continent.

Most of their spokesmen here are old men and women with dark wrinkled faces and gnarled hands. They speak gutturally, deep in their throats and almost without moving their lips, their voices rising out of the depths of an archaic America we have never known, out of immeasurable time, from a fathomless unconscious whose archetypes are as mysterious and incomprehensible to us as the symbols found engraven on the cliff walls of ancient ruins.

What they tell is the story of their Creation and their Emergences from previous worlds, their migrations over this continent, and the meaning of their ceremonies. It is a world-view of life, deeply religious in nature, whose esoteric meaning they have kept inviolate for generations uncounted. Their existence always has been patterned upon the universal plan of world creation and maintenance, and their progress on the evolutionary Road of Life depends upon the unbroken observance of its laws. In turn, the purpose of their religious ceremonialism is to help maintain the harmony of the universe. It is a mytho-religious system of year-long ceremonies, rituals, dances, songs, recitations, and prayers as complex, abstract, and esoteric as any in the world. It has been the despair of professional anthropologists, ethnologists, and sociologists.

The great pioneer ethnologist Alexander M. Stephen, who first recorded the details of Hopi ceremonialism in the 1890s, was led to exclaim irritably in his classic journal: "Damn these tantalizing whelps, to the devil with all of them! I have been bamboozled from pillar to post all day, have received no scrap of information!" He came to the conclusion that Hopi ceremonialism was so abstract that it would take longer than a man's lifetime to understand

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it, and that it required a sixth sense of the Hopis themselves.

J. Walter Fewkes later was equally baffled. He wrote: "There is much mysticism in the proceedings which thus far the writer fails to understand. . . . In many instances these native explanations in which much esotericism appears to enter, have not been understood. . . ."

Today, more than a half-century later, almost every Hopi ceremony has been reported with painstaking accuracy by a host of professional observers. Yet their studies are limited to minute exoteric descriptions of ritual paraphernalia and how they are used. The esoteric meanings and functions of the ceremonies themselves have remained virtually unknown. This is not wholly due to traditional Hopi secrecy. Professional scientific observers themselves have never granted validity to those aspects of Hopi ceremonialism that border the sixth-sense realm of mysticism. Indeed the rationalism of all the Western world vehemently refutes anything that smacks of the unknown or "occult." Hence Hopi belief and ceremonialism have been dismissed as the crude folklore and erotic practices of a decadent tribe of primitive Indians which have no relationship to the enlightened tenets of modern civilization.

The word "Hopi" means "peace." As a People of Peace the Hopis have tacitly ignored this outside view of themselves, suffering American domination with aloofness and secrecy, and keeping at bay the technological civilization swirling about them. But now the bow is bending. Their long-repressed resentment is breaking out against ethnologists and anthropologists who have discounted their beliefs, commercial agents who would exploit them, and the national government itself which has betrayed them. Greater tremors of unrest and resentment against the imposition of our rational materialism are shaking the Sierra Madres and the Andes. The psychic chasm separating us from all red America, black Africa, yellow Asia, and the brown Middle East grows ever wider. Who can doubt the signs that a transition to another great new age has begun?

That these Hopis have revealed their conceptual pattern of life to us now, for the first time, imparts to their gift a strangeness unique in our national experience. For they speak not as a defeated little minority in the richest and most powerful nation on earth, but with the voice of all that world commonwealth of peoples who affirm their right to grow from their own native roots. They evoke old gods shaped by instincts we have long repressed. They reassert a rhythm of life we have disastrously tried to ignore. They remind us we must attune ourselves to the need for inner change if we are to avert a cataclysmic rupture between our own minds and hearts. Now, if ever, is the time for them to talk, for us to listen.

This, then, is their book of talk. It is not a professional paper—neither a sociological or psychological study nor an anthropological report. It is the presentation of a life-pattern rooted in the soil of this continent, whose growth is shaped by the same forces that stamp their indigenous seal upon its greatest mountain and smallest insect, and whose flowering is yet to come. The Hopis

do not set themselves apart as human entities from this pattern. They are as sure of the future as they are of the past.

Beginning with their Genesis, and carrying through their Old Testament of previous worlds and their New Testament of the present to the Revelation of their esoteric ceremonialism, the tenets of this book are as sacred to the Hopis as the Judaic-Christian Bible is to other peoples. Many of these will find it impossible to concede that the Hopis, according to Hopi belief, were also a Chosen People. Nor will the Hopi view of the universe as an inseparably inter-related field or continuum be quite palatable to those who tacitly accept the role of man as a rational entity created to stand apart from nature in order to control its politically ordered cosmology with an imperialistic mechanization. They will prefer still to regard it rather as the strange and naïve myth of a still primitive tribe of Indians, facing possible extinction because of lack of adaptation. This will make its profound sense of wholeness no less wonderful to others, who see their own culture uneasily reflecting the cataclysmic split between the spiritual and the material, the conscious and unconscious. For this message of peace, this concern with helping to preserve the inherent harmony of the universal constituents of all life, reaffirms for all of us everywhere man's imperishable belief in the fullness and richness of life granted him by his creative forces, if he can but find a way of self-fulfillment.

A note about the compilation of the book:

Grateful acknowledgment is made of financial support by charitable funds, made possible by the Charles Ulrick and Josephine Bay Foundation, Inc., and my sincere thanks go to Mr. Frederick H. Howell, who conceived the project during a trip to the Hopi country several years ago. He then initiated the work and has directed it with unflagging interest and encouragement through many periods of trial.

Work on the project required nearly three years. Much of this time I lived on the Reservation in a little Hopi house below Pumpkin Seed Point, taking meals with my research co-worker, Oswald White Bear Fredericks, and his wife, Naomi, who lived a half-mile away. Our enforced intimacy under trying conditions I look back upon with warmth and gratitude.

One after another, through the months, the discourses of our Hopi spokesmen were taken down in Hopi on a tape recorder by White Bear, who later translated them into English with the aid of his wife. White Bear was especially qualified to record and translate this source material. A full-blood Hopi born in Oraibi, a member of the Coyote Clan, and a nephew of the late Wilson Tawákwaptiwa, Village Chief of Oraibi, he attended Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas, and Bacon College, Muskogee, Oklahoma.

All the Hopi spokesmen willingly and freely gave the information they were qualified to impart by reason of their clan affiliations and ceremonial duties; none of them was paid informant fees in the manner customarily followed by professional researchers gathering information for scientific studies. Each regarded the compilation of this book as a sacred task—a monumental record that would give their children and their children's children a complete history of their people and their religious belief. This great cooperative effort could not have been obtained before, nor could it be obtained now; already some of the older spokesmen have died. Their traditions come to us by the dictate of fate we call fortuitous chance, at the time when we, as they, most need them.

The spokesmen include: the late Wilson Tawákwaptiwa (Sun in the Sky), Bear Clan, Village Chief of Oraibi; Charles Fredericks, Tuwahoyiwma (Land Animals), Bear Clan, New Oraibi; Mrs. Anna Fredericks, Tuvengyamsi (Land Beautiful with Flowers), Coyote Clan, New Oraibi; Dan Qöchhongva (White Cloud above Horizon), Sun Clan, Hotevilla; Mrs. Bessie Sakmoisi (Chasing One Another on Green Field), Side Corn Clan, Bakavi; John Lansa (Lance), Badger Clan, Oraibi; De Witt Sahu (Yucca Food), Hawk Clan, Oraibi; Baldwin Polipko'ima (Male Followed by Butterfly Maiden), Badger Clan, Hotevilla; Johnson Tuwaletstiwa (Sun Standing Up), Bow Clan, New Oraibi; Bert Sakwaitiwa (Animals Run on Green Pasture), Bear Clan, Moencopi; Ralph Silena (Place in Flowers Where Pollen Rests), Sun Clan, Shongopovi; Joseph Chölö (Raindrop), Snake Clan, Oraibi; Claude Kawanyuma, Bear Clan,

Shongopovi; Earl Pela, Sun Clan, Shongopovi; Sequaptewa, Deep Well Clan, Hotevilla; Paul Siwinyawma (Corn That Has Been Rooted), Eagle Clan, Hotevilla; the late Otto Pentiwa (Painting Many Kachina Masks), Kachina Clan, New Oraibi; Sam Paweki, Rabbit Clan, Oraibi; Tom Mutchku, Water Clan, Oraibi; Stewart, Reed Clan, Walpi; Earl Mumriwa, Cloud Clan, Walpi; Sakhongva (Green Corn Standing), Hotevilla; Jack Pokunyesva (Man before Altar), Hotevilla; Ralph Tawangyaoma, Hotevilla; Elizabeth White, New Oraibi; Bob Adams, Walpi; and Robert, Badger Clan, Oraibi.

From their rough source material, so often unavoidably incomplete and contradictory, supplemented by answers to specific questions, personal observation of all ceremonies, and field trips to all sites mentioned, with additional historical research, I have written the text presented here.

Oraibi always has been regarded as the parental home of Hopi ceremonialism. Hence the interpretation of the ceremonies follows as closely as possible the traditional Oraibi pattern, noting the deviations in other villages during recent years.

For the same reason, the Oraibi dialect has been adhered to in preference to the different dialects of other villages. Although the Scriptures have been published in Hopi, Hopi is not yet a commonly written language; perhaps because of the extreme difficulty of translation, as pointed out by Benjamin Lee Whorf, who has made a profound analysis of the language. All Hopi words used here have been spelled according to a system worked out by Mr. Charles Hughes of Columbia University, to whom thanks are given for his help.

Particular thanks are due to Mrs. H. R. Voth and her daughter Mrs. P. A. Dyck for permission to reproduce photographs from the rare collection taken by the Reverend H. R. Voth during his residence at Oraibi a half-century ago. The caption material also has been supplied by Mrs. Voth.

To all the other persons, too numerous to mention, who aided us in so many ways, I can only say, "*Kwakwai! Kwakwai!*"

In arranging the material so vast in scope and detail, I have borne in mind that it virtually constitutes a Hopi Bible. Hence it is presented in chronological order, beginning with the Creation, akin to our own Genesis, and the people's successive Emergences from the three previous worlds to the present Fourth World. Part Two, which may be viewed as a Hopi Exodus, then recounts the prehistoric migrations of the clans over this continent until they arrived at their predestined homeland, whose center is present Oraibi. Here was initiated the great annual cycle of religious ceremonies still carried on as described in Part Three. Part Four then summarizes the historical period from the arrival of the first white men in 1540 to the present time.

It was wished that the book serve the practical purpose of helping to solve current Hopi problems of local self-government, factional disputes, land claims against the Navajo tribe and the national government, and other political and economic controversies. The arrangement of the text best meets this obligation by presenting these problems in Part Four, as all Hopi secular life is so based

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on the religious that these current problems cannot be properly viewed without the perspective of long tradition. Indeed, the whole history of the Hopis *vis-à-vis* the United States—as does the relationship of the Indian and the White throughout all the Americas—tragically illustrates our ignorance of and lack of interest in learning the traditional beliefs of the peoples we have dominated. It is fervently hoped that this book will be of great assistance to representatives of the Indian Bureau, National Park and Forest Service, state and court officials, and private industry in their future dealings with the Hopis.

As a final word I must reiterate that this book is an expression by Hopis of the traditional viewpoint. All the material in it, save my own obvious commentaries, was supplied by our Hopi spokesmen and approved as transcribed in manuscript form. Its aim as a free narrative was to achieve the full spirit and pattern of Hopi belief, unrestricted by detailed documentation and argumentative proof. As such it conflicts in innumerable instances with the scientific views of the Hopis held by outside academic observers. The documentary scholar may question whether an ancient primitive people could have evolved such a rich belief and preserved its full tradition for generations by word of mouth. He may assert that the interpretations of the myths, legends, and ceremonies are largely my own speculations. He will certainly deny that invisible spirits manifest themselves as described. To these doubts and denials my only answer is that the book stems from a mythic and symbolic level far below the surface of anthropological and ethnological documentation. That it may not conform to the rational conceptualization ruling our own beliefs does not detract from its own validity as a depth psychology different from our own. It stands for itself as a synthesis of intuitive, symbolic belief given utterance for the first time.

This then is the *Book of the Hopi*, as its title implies, given to us with the hope we will receive it in the same spirit of universal brotherhood that impelled its compilation.