The Contested Legacy of the First Mennonite Anthropologist, H. R. Voth

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In March 2015, I had the unique experience of speaking in front of a regular meeting of the Hopi Tribal Council and Tribal Chairman—effectively the national legislature and head of government of an influential Native American nation—in the council chambers of the tribal administrative building in Kykotsmovi, Arizona. I look back on this as a high point of my career as a Mennonite archivist and historian. But what set of circumstances would bring a Mennonite archivist to this seemingly unlikely interaction of cultures? It was all because of the first Mennonite anthropologist, H. R. Voth (1855–1931).[1]

Outside of Mennonite circles, Voth is known as the most prominent early ethnographer of the Hopi people in what is today Arizona. His extensive publications in the early twentieth century gave detailed descriptions, including many photos, of several Hopi ceremonies and other aspects of their culture. Later anthropologists recognized Voth's research as meticulous and professional. Don D. Fowler states that Voth's publications, along with those of his contemporaries Jesse Walter Fewkes and Alexander Stephen, "form the basis for all subsequent studies of Hopi cosmology and ceremonialism," claiming that "no Anglo ever again had the access to ceremonies at Oraibi at the level that Voth did."[2] At the same time, Voth is seen, especially by Hopis themselves, as violating today's professional ethics. Fowler refers to "his aggressiveness."[3] Voth's writings

and photos made public ceremonial knowledge that should have been privileged and private, known only to those with cultural rights to participate in those ceremonies.

Some might dispute my labeling Voth as the "first" Mennonite anthropologist, pointing instead to Wilhelm Mannhardt (1831–1880), whose publications on Germanic folklore came about a generation before Voth's work. The Global Anabaptist and Mennonite Encyclopedia Online entry on Mannhardt even claims that Mannhardt's dissertation carried the title "Zur Anthropologie der Germanen."[4] The German Wikipedia entry, however, lists his dissertation as being on German proper names.[5] Mannhardt was really more of a literary scholar, working with folk literature of his own culture, whereas Voth operated in the classic pattern by which anthropology as a discipline originated—a person of European cultural background systematically researching and reporting on a culture or cultures that were totally "other" to their own. The justification for classifying Voth as an anthropologist comes especially from his extensive record of publications. Voth's anthropological credentials are further established by his wide network of anthropologically oriented contacts outside of Mennonite circles and his creation of significant museum collections.

Despite the fact that Voth's papers in the Mennonite Library and Archives amount to a considerable 48 cubic feet (ca. 15–17 linear metres), there are significant stretches of his life for which accessible sources are lacking. Surprisingly, Voth only irregularly preserved incoming correspondence, the exact opposite of most archival collections of personal papers, so in many cases his interactions with others are only known by his outgoing letters. Voth kept a diary for much of his adult life. Unfortunately, quite a few years of his young adult diaries are in shorthand.[6] The majority of the diaries are written in his barely decipherable handwriting and include his deep love of abbreviations. Along with a few others, I have transcribed some of Voth's diaries and correspondence, but the majority of the handwritten text remains unexplored. Voth also left behind a brief autobiographical account, written when he was seventy-four, which has been published.[7] Unfortunately, this account only goes up to about 1878, when Voth was in his early twenties and had not yet begun his first mission project. Presumably, he intended to continue the account but never did, since he died only two years later. He also left a typescript account dated 1923 titled "Historical Notes of the First Decade of the Mennonite Mission Work among the Hopi of Arizona, 1893–1902," which gives some insight into his perspective on that aspect of his work. The only critical examination of Voth's work and biography was written by anthropologist Fred Eggan (1906–

1991) as a preface to an exhibition catalogue in 1979.[8] Unfortunately, Eggan's article is without references so that many of his provocative statements about Voth are difficult to verify. For the purposes of this article, I focus particularly on Voth's location in the network of people and institutions in the emerging discipline of anthropology in the late nineteenth-century United States, and on how his work led to his becoming a despised figure among many Hopis, some Mennonites, and other critics.

Heinrich Richert Voth was born in 1855 in the village of Alexanderwohl in the Mennonite Molotschna colony in present-day Ukraine. His family seems to have been landless originally, but in 1864 was allotted a full farm in the new village of Gnadenthal. From the perspective of his later life, Voth described himself as a bookish child, actively reading whatever he could find, which included a lot of missions literature. This stimulated an early interest in becoming a missionary.[9] In 1874, the family emigrated with much of the rest of the Alexanderwohl congregation to Kansas. Voth had the foresight to study English language texts prior to the migration. He recounts that as a nineteen-year-old he was immediately pressed into service as a translator during the months between the group's arrival in the United States and their eventual settlement in Marion County, Kansas. Sometime in late fall of that first year, Voth secured a job in Newton with a general store owned by a family named Vickrey who put his two languages to use in attracting German-speaking customers.

Voth had strong encouragement from his friends and acquaintances in Newton to start his own business, but instead was asked by congregational members to teach school in the Grünfeld/Greenfield district of the Alexanderwohl settlement in Kansas. He decided to "crucify the merchant in me" and taught for a year and a half (1875–1876), which he would later "count as the most blessed period of my life."[10]

During this period, Voth's uncle Heinrich Richert was elected to the General Conference mission board, which led Voth to attend the General Conference educational institution at Wadsworth, Ohio, from 1877 to 1879, in preparation for missionary service. Unfortunately, his autobiographical account ends here. We are unable to continue to follow his late-life reflections on his early adulthood. After Wadsworth, Voth attended the Evangelical Synod seminary at Marthasville, Missouri, and also the St. Louis Medical College, from 1879 to 1882.[11]

Voth and his wife, Barbara Baer from Illinois, arrived in Darlington, Indian Territory, in July 1882. The mission field, established in 1880 as the first General Conference "foreign" mission, was only

about two hundred miles from Voth's home congregation in Kansas, and the travel time quickly diminished as rail lines were built into the region. Here is where Voth's *known* connections to the discipline of anthropology first become evident. Although the Indian Agency combined the southern Cheyenne and Arapaho, Voth was primarily in contact with the Arapaho.[12] His papers contain several notebooks with details on Arapaho language and culture.[13] He also owned a copy of John Wesley Powell's *Introduction to the Study of Indian Languages*, the second edition dated 1880.[14] It is unknown when he acquired it, but it does indicate his active interest in language learning. One of his letterpress copybooks contains the Lord's Prayer in Arapaho (or Cheyenne), among letters from mid-1886, again showing work on the local language.[15]

In these years, Voth also displayed his awareness of the political debates at the national level over Native American policy. In May of 1886, he wrote to James E. Rhoads asking for copies of the proceedings of the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian, and in October 1887, he corresponded with Charles C. Painter about the conference and the Indian Rights Association, saying he was in "full sympathy" with it.[16] These organizations, supported by well-connected Eastern philanthropists, advocated non-militaristic but assimilationist policies towards Native Americans. Despite this early expression of support, Voth's attitudes ten years later among the Hopi, where he opposed land allotment, would contradict the policies of these organizations.

Voth was an obsessive collector of both Native American and Mennonite materials and this prominent characteristic would loom large in his conflicted legacy. These practices appear to have begun soon after his arrival in Darlington. In September 1885, Voth was selling photos of the mission (taken by someone other than himself) to raise money for its operation.[17] By February of 1886, he was offering for sale craft items such as moccasins, "Indian pictures" (probably what is now known as ledger art), and knife pouches. He described these activities in a letter to a member of a prominent General Conference family, from which we can infer this was likely also fundraising for the mission.[18] The earliest letter I have found in which Voth is focused primarily on collecting Native American artifacts is from August 1887 to an H. H. Tammen in Denver.[19] There were numerous such letters for years after this, to a wide variety of different collectors and traders. In most of these letters, Voth emphasized his interest lay in his own growing "scientific" personal collection and not in operating a business. Yet he often had long lists of items he offered to others. In April 1888, he reported that he had recently bought a "war bonnet" for $27.50 (about $775 today).[20]

Voth's salary was $225 (about $6,300), so he had spent more than 10 percent of his annual earnings on this single item for his collection.[21] Presumably Voth was attempting to cover these substantial expenses with the sale of other items he had obtained. Voth's collection was not limited to local Cheyenne and Arapaho artifacts. In September 1887 he had written to an Oscar D. Hodgkiss in Fort Bennett, South Dakota, wanting to buy Sioux items, particularly "porcupine work."[22] His collecting interests even went beyond Native American artifacts; he was also apparently collecting postage stamps.[23] He even wrote to the Smithsonian Institution in March 1888, offering to sell "war bonnets, shields, tomahawks etc." or to exchange for other artifacts. He also offered them a sixteenth-century Hebrew grammar bound together with other sixteenth-century printed texts.[24] This exchange might have been his first point of contact with any kind of institutional anthropological organization.

H. R. Voth's first personal interaction with a prominent figure in anthropology (or someone who is now seen as a prominent figure) came in connection with the Ghost Dance and the followers of the prophet Wovoka in the late nineteenth century. This new revitalization movement had spread rapidly among several Native American groups in the western states. The southern Arapaho, among whom Voth was working, were one of the major centres for this Ghost Dance and he seems to have viewed it in moderately favourable terms. His published reports in late 1890 and early 1891 are hostile towards the Arapaho Sun Dance, an older tradition, but he gives a fairly lengthy description of conversations with the Arapaho leaders Sitting Bull[25] and Left Hand. In these reports, Voth makes no mention of the Ghost Dance–linked Wounded Knee massacre of Lakota by the US Army, in what is today South Dakota, which had just taken place. Instead, Voth highlights the non-violent themes of education and economic development in the Ghost Dance movement, while still viewing it as falling short of the Christianity he was there to preach.[26]

At this time, James Mooney from John Wesley Powell's Bureau of Ethnology visited the reservation specifically for the purpose of researching the Ghost Dance. The government Indian agent at Darlington sent Mooney to H. R. Voth as his primary contact into the Arapaho Ghost Dance network.[27] "The principal study was made among the Arapaho, who were the most active propagators of the 'Messiah' doctrine among the southern tribes," Mooney would report. In his "Authorities Cited" section, Mooney continues,

> Mr. Voth, now stationed among the Hopi, at Oraibi, Arizona, was formerly superintendent of the Mennonite Arapaho Mission, at Darlington,

> Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). Being interested in the ethnology and language of the Arapaho, he gave close attention to the Ghost dance during the excitement, and has furnished much valuable information, orally and by letter, in regard to the songs and ritual of the dance.[28]

Mooney and Voth continued to exchange letters for several years after this.[29]

The Ghost Dance movement and this interaction with Mooney came near the end of Voth's presence in Oklahoma. His first wife Barbara Baer had died on January 19, 1889, along with an infant daughter.[30] In 1891 Voth took a leave, essentially a sabbatical, from his mission work. During this time, he travelled with his father back to Russia and also to the Middle East.[31] After returning to the United States in 1892, he married a second time, to Martha Moser from Ohio.

In the meantime, Voth's anthropological networking had continued to grow. In January 1893, he sold a collection of several hundred Arapaho and Cheyenne artifacts to the United States National Museum (Smithsonian Institution), apparently through the mediation of James Mooney, for $750.[32] Some of these artifacts may have been included in the Smithsonian's exhibits at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition later in 1893.

During this same sabbatical period, in July of 1893, Voth's first anthropological article, "Funeral Customs among the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians," appeared in *The Folk-lorist*, published by the short-lived Chicago Folk-Lore Society.[33] Forecasting Voth's future interactions, that same issue included an article "Description of a Hopi Ti-Hü" (with a colour plate of a tihu or kachina figure) by Alexander M. Stephen, whom Voth would soon meet.[34] In the previous issue, Voth is listed as a "nonresident member" of the Society.[35] Voth's article has gone completely unnoticed. There is no copy of it in Voth's papers, no mention of it in his correspondence, and no mention of it in previous writing about Voth.[36] We have no information about how this article came to be published. None of his known network of collectors and institutional anthropologists seems to have had a definite connection to the Chicago society. So some of Voth's network remains so far unknown.

Voth's decision to work among the Hopi emerged during his sabbatical in the early 1890s. Despite budget shortfalls, the General Conference mission board had been actively searching for a new mission location. In late 1892, Voth and mission board chairman Christian Krehbiel travelled to Arizona Territory and visited all three mesas in the Hopi Reservation. The mission board decided to move ahead with the new project even though they were unable to

fully finance it.[37] In July 1893, the Voths left Kansas for their new assignment. Their new location was next to the village of Kykotsmovi (the present-day Hopi administrative centre), lying at the foot of Third Mesa and dominated at that time by the ancient village of Oraibi above.[38] Voth was in a radically different environment than in Darlington, in several respects. In contrast to many other Native American groups, the Hopis had not been displaced. They continued to live in villages they had built over approximately a millennium and practiced their traditional agricultural economy. Unlike the Arapahos, the Hopis had not had an ongoing confrontation with the US military (their primary antagonists were the Navajos). Unlike Darlington, the location was far from Voth's Mennonite community in Kansas, making communication and obtaining supplies much more time-consuming. While in Oklahoma, the Voths worked alongside a large Mennonite mission staff; on the Hopi reservation, they were the *only* Mennonite missionaries present, and often the only missionaries of any kind in the area. At Oraibi, the Mennonites were also not operating a school, a central element of Mennonite mission work in Oklahoma. Here Voth's focus was primarily on seeking converts (along with providing some medical and other practical aid in the immediate area). These years at Oraibi, about a decade in total, are at the centre of Voth's problematic legacy. It is unknown if Voth re-thought his approach to missions while on his sabbatical or whether working independent of supervision allowed him to act on pre-existing tendencies. In either case, he immediately intensified his linguistic work and ceremonial studies when he arrived at the Hopi Reservation far beyond his limited efforts in Oklahoma. It seems that he reached basic proficiency in the language within a few months of arriving.

Voth actively continued his collecting activities with an entirely new set of opportunities. In correspondence, he continued to emphasize that he did not want to be seen as an active trader. In a letter to George E. Starr, on December 11, 1893, he told his fellow collector, "I am not as you know in the *trinket business*. I am collecting a *private* collection for *scientific purposes* and it is only where I have duplicates that I would dispose of anything. I would prefer to *exchange* articles if I could get something to increase my collection."[39]

Voth's prolific artifact collecting was partially behind continuing accusations that he was operating as an unlicensed trader. Trade with Native Americans was federally regulated and required a license; missionaries in those communities were not granted such licenses. In a letter of September 24, 1894, to Thomas V. Keam, the most prominent licensed trader in the Hopi area, a day's journey or so to the east of Third Mesa, Voth gave his side of the story:

> I understand that you seem to begin to think I am doing business with the Indians, have a store, etc. I am deeply pained that reports which are based on some misunderstandings should have caused you to either think [*sic*] such an idea. . . . As you are aware we have not been able to raise anything in the way of food or feed this year and hence we are compelled and glad to get occasionally such things from the Indians as a few eggs, peaches, etc. for ourselves and a little corn and corn fodder for our teams and these things besides a few trinkets and relics now and then for my private collection. . . . At no time have I traded with them for gain or profit. . . . These people are poor especially this year have not much to sell and so they often bring us 3, 5, 8, 10, 12 cents worth of eggs, vegetables, corn, fodder, etc. They beg us to give them a little sugar, flour, baking powder, calico, and such for little articles as they want for immediate use, for these and we give it to them, not as a matter of choice but of necessity.[40]

Keam was the dominant white presence in the Hopi region both in terms of trade and in terms of contacts with researchers and museums. Although Voth seems to have bought many of his supplies from Keam, Voth's presence was a disruption to Keam's sphere of influence, especially in terms of a growing anthropological network.[41]

Despite its isolation, the Hopi region was attracting an increasing number of outside visitors and Voth, as a long-term white resident who could communicate in Hopi, automatically became a hub of contact among many parties and factions, between and within the white, Hopi, and Navajo communities. Among other things, this allowed Voth to further extend his network in the emerging anthropological world. One major early contact in the Hopi context was Jesse Walter Fewkes (1850–1930), a zoologist turned anthropologist who had already published on the Hopis and other Puebloan groups and soon joined the Bureau of American Ethnology.[42] Voth and Fewkes probably first met in mid-August 1893 when, along with Alexander M. Stephen, they observed ceremonies at First Mesa.[43] Voth and Fewkes maintained an active correspondence starting in late 1893 about observations of Hopi culture and the possibilities of publishing Voth's research.[44] Fewkes was the object of several accusations of appropriating the research material of others as his own, and some tension of this nature developed between Fewkes and Voth. Voth had the advantage of permanent residence at Oraibi while Fewkes had to make only occasional visits, and Voth refused to simply serve as Fewkes's anonymous research assistant. Voth was also in communication with the Southwestern writer G. Wharton James beginning in January 1896.[45] That same month he became a subscriber to *American Anthropologist*.[46]

An innovative technique that Voth adopted came to prominence in his work about this time and became perhaps his most well-known

and controversial legacy: photography. On August 2, 1893, Voth ordered a Premier Camera from Montgomery Ward.[47] There are some hints in his correspondence that he had a glass plate camera earlier, and it is not clear if he used this Premier Camera with plates or roll film. In his December 11, 1893, letter to George E. Starr he expresses unhappiness with the results of his plate camera and talks about getting a Kodak from Starr.[48] Few of his earlier plate negatives seem to have survived. His collection of approximately 2,200 numbered negatives includes only two plate negatives. This set of photos began in November 1894, when a group of Hopi men were arrested and sent to Alcatraz.[49] Starting with this incident, Voth began photographing many aspects of daily life at Oraibi, while eventually also documenting ceremonial activities. The quality of his photos and the fact that he was using roll film indicate that most of these were field shots—informal, spur-of-the-moment occasions rather than carefully posed scenes. The vast majority were not what one would think of as publication-quality images, although a good number of his ceremonial photos were eventually published.

A decisive contact for Voth began in August 1897, amid a flood of white visitors to the Hopi ceremonies. George A. Dorsey, recipient of the first Harvard PhD in anthropology (the first anthropology PhD awarded in the United States) and the curator of the new Field Columbian Museum in Chicago, arrived along with a party of assistants. Completely without supplies, the group simply took up residence with the Voth family for the several days of their visit to Oraibi. They apparently were interested in doing some excavation, but Voth discouraged them and, in one of the rare times he mentioned archeological work, noted, "That is out of my line."[50]

It is unclear how Dorsey became aware of Voth but their networks of acquaintances overlapped including Fewkes, Keam, and Mooney. Dorsey was greatly interested in Voth's artifact collection and immediately proposed purchasing it for the museum. He also wanted to recruit Voth to work for the museum.[51] This invitation coincided with a point where Voth was growing discouraged with his mission work.[52] He seems to have felt that he had not made progress at Oraibi. A broad reading of the contemporary mission board correspondence indicates that the board and its constituency operated under an illusion that a missionary, without any preparation in language or culture, could simply enter a region, start preaching, and produce converts. Obviously that did not happen here or in Oklahoma. Voth was not under that illusion but apparently the combination of his discouragement and the recruiting from Dorsey moved him towards taking another leave from mission work.

It is not entirely clear what formal arrangements Voth requested from the mission board for this leave, but he departed the Hopi Reservation in September 1898.[53] He worked for the Field Museum for the next year and a half, building the museum's well-known Hopi exhibit, extensively using his own artifact collection and building ceremonial altar replicas. Voth originally loaned his collection to the museum, as he was reluctant to permanently part with it.[54] However, it was eventually purchased and this led to a major clash with the mission board. It began when the trader Thomas Keam, who was hostile to Mennonite mission activities, wrote to the president of the mission board, Christian Schowalter in Donnellson, Iowa. Keam complained that Voth had shipped numerous crates of artifacts from Keam's Canyon to the Field Museum. Ironically, Keam had also sold a Hopi collection to the Field Museum in 1895 and probably saw a way to undermine a competitor.[55] Schowalter also read a report in his regional newspaper, the *Ft. Madison Democrat*, that Voth had sold his collection to the museum for $5,000.[56] It is unclear whether the Keam letter or the newspaper report came first. Though these incidents occurred while Voth was on leave, not officially employed at the moment by the mission board, they led to a major controversy. Many mission board members felt missionaries should live in poverty without independent sources of income and were unaware of how the mission's frequent salary reductions and generally dire budgetary situation might have been perceived in the daily life of mission workers in the field. In a vehement letter of defense, Voth claimed that the board member's expressions of shock about his collecting activities were somewhat disingenuous.[57] He had been collecting, buying, and selling artifacts for his entire mission career, and the board was well aware of this; he seems to have been eager to have visiting board members view his collection. The sale to the Field Museum apparently was not yet completely finalized at the time the clash with the mission board broke out, although a telegram from Dorsey to Voth dated January 14, 1899, says, "Collection purchased at your terms. Come at once."[58] The total dollar amount is unknown, but Voth claimed he would be getting less than $4,000. It may be that the reported $5,000 figure included both the collection and his year and a half of museum employment.

Some mission board members (and, by implication, much of the constituency) actively opposed Voth's linguistic and ethnographic work. Gustav Harder from Kansas wrote on November 22, 1901:

> The purpose of a missionary is not to be instructed by the heathens about their customs and religion but to bring them the true religion. What is the point of eight years of concerning himself with and messing around

> with a false religion? And now to write a letter and then sell it to a museum? . . . What use is it for the Kingdom of God?[59]

Harder even suggested that Voth should now work for the mission board for free. Harder implied that when Voth (and other mission workers) did not succeed in immediately attracting large numbers of converts, the problem lay with their personal failings rather than the uninformed expectations of the mission board and its supporters. The clash between Voth and the board also revealed divisions among various Mennonite sub-groups; Voth had more support from his own 1870s Russian immigrant community and opposition from members of other General Conference sub-groups.[60] Voth's wide-scale social network which developed simply by being present in the Native American system, including links to government officials, military officers, academics, and dilettantes, clashed with the willfully ignorant parochialism of most of the mission board. At the same time, Voth was well aware of the attitudes and divisions within the mission board; it is surprising that he seemingly did not foresee that his museum work would raise tensions.

Despite the clash, the board allowed Voth to return to mission work at Oraibi, likely to prepare for the arrival of a new mission worker which Voth had been requesting for some time. A chapel building was also under construction on the mesa, which Voth had also long been suggesting to the board. Yet the construction process led to further rumors, spread by construction workers sent out by the board to help build the chapel, that Voth was not assisting in the process. At the time, Voth was in fact engaged in physical construction work on the building, the acquisition of supplies to support the additional temporary mission workers, and work with the new missionary, J. B. Epp, on Hopi language lessons and a Hopi dictionary. The visiting volunteers seem to have had the same illusion, in their view of the language activity, that all the mission worker needed to do was preach and that language work was a waste of time and effort.[61]

On May 6, 1901, Voth's spouse Martha Moser Voth died.[62] This was the second time Voth had lost a spouse in the mission environment, and as with the death of his first wife, it led to his departure from the mission field. On March 25, 1902, he left Oraibi and returned to Newton.[63] He would return in mid-November 1902, presumably to assist in preparations for future mission workers, and stayed until early February 1903.[64] He returned at least once to do more such work and continue with his Hopi dictionary project.[65] Voth's earlier leave in 1898 to work at the Field Museum prepared the way for a wave of anthropological publications that are at the

centre of his contested legacy. That work began in this time frame at the end of his mission career. Seven years after his first little-known publication, Voth wrote an article on Oraibi marriage customs that appeared in the *American Anthropologist* in 1900. This was followed by eight additional book-length works from 1901 to 1905, a few co-authored with George A. Dorsey, all published by the Field Museum. Five were about specific Hopi ceremonies, and three about other aspects of Hopi culture. Another smaller batch of publications came seven years later in 1912: an article on Arapaho folklore reaching back to Voth's 1880s setting, and two more Hopi studies.

I have deliberately not listed the details of Voth's Hopi works here in order to emphasize the point that they are objectionable from the Hopi perspective. The publications on Hopi ceremonies were detailed descriptions accompanied by numerous photos, many of them taken by Voth although some came from other Field Museum workers. Anthropologist Peter Whiteley, writing in 1988, gave what could stand as an eight-word summary of the Voth story: "Voth is universally reviled in contemporary Hopi discourse"—reviled specifically for his publications rather than for his mission activities.[66] Whiteley elaborates:

> Voth's subjection of Hopi religion to open scrutiny ran directly counter to Hopi practice. . . . Ritual knowledge is guarded with great secrecy; it is the "currency" of power in Hopi society. Effective ritual depends on small, strictly controlled groups with privileged access to occult procedures. Voth's repeated intrusions into private rituals (from which he was forcibly ejected on occasion) and theological arguments with the priests would at the least have disturbed the mental harmony deemed essential for ritual success.[67]

At the same time, Whiteley also notes that Voth "was clearly in sympathy with some Hostile [traditionalist] views."[68] Whiteley particularly notes that Voth helped Hopis oppose land allotment,[69] and I would also add that he opposed coercion of children into school attendance, forcible haircutting, and government proposals to suppress ceremonies and traditional adornment.[70] "This aspect of his role has been generally overshadowed by negative impressions," says Whiteley.

Voth's activities after leaving active mission work are harder to track; his later diaries have not been transcribed and other papers are not well investigated. In 1902 Dorsey wrote to Voth as secretary of the newly formed American Anthropological Association, on the letterhead of the new association, inviting Voth to become a founding member. I have not been able to verify if Voth followed through

to become a founder, but I expect he would have. One major involvement was with the Fred Harvey Company, the travel services company that worked in parallel with the Santa Fe railroad. This would have been a connection made via George Dorsey, who also worked for the Harvey company at approximately the same time.[71] Voth was actively involved with the construction and furnishing of the Hopi House on the south rim of the Grand Canyon. This structure is officially attributed to the designer Mary Colter, but my hypothesis is that the persons responsible were actually the Hopi men from Third Mesa whom Voth brought in to work on the project.[72] Voth also assembled another large artifact collection, some of which was displayed for years in the Hopi House, while some, including altar reproductions, were at the Hotel Alvarado in Albuquerque.[73] Some of this work continued at least over the next ten years.

After about 1913, it seems that Voth dropped out of active work related to his Native American interests. He was involved in the founding of a Mennonite Historical Society in 1911 and was an avid collector of Mennonite artifacts and documents, some of which became part of the collection of the Mennonite Library and Archives, where I now work. At some point he moved back to Oklahoma, and one has to wonder how he felt about moving onto land confiscated from the Cheyenne and Arapaho people that he knew personally, or whether he interacted with any of them after moving into the area. Soon after Voth had left Indian Territory in 1891, much of the land reserved there for the various Native American nations was confiscated and opened for white settlement under the 1887 Dawes allotment act. While he was among the Hopi, Voth opposed this allotment process and the Hopis successfully resisted it. Back in Oklahoma he lived on land that had been allotted away from his former Cheyenne and Arapaho friends and neighbours. Voth was pastor of the Zoar Mennonite church in Goltry from 1914 to 1923 and of the Ebenezer church in Gotebo from 1923 to 1927. He also was an active itinerant minister with the Western District Conference.[74] George Dorsey, his main co-worker, also dropped out of Native American interests at this time. He seems to have taken a number of extended leaves from the Field Museum starting in 1909, and resigned completely in 1915. He moved to New York City and pursued various journalism and writing projects, becoming a fairly well-known popular writer on anthropological topics. He died there in 1931.[75]

It may be that Voth visited Oraibi occasionally after 1913, but I am not able to verify this. The only initiative that has been found after his last Field Museum publication in 1912 is a flurry of correspondence between Voth and Franz Boas in 1925–26 (also involving Elsie Clews Parsons). Boas was the leading academic anthropologist

at this time, and Parsons was one of his many famous students, who had herself done Hopi-related research. It is unclear where the initiative for this came from. Boas wrote to Voth in April 1925 and mentioned hearing of him from Dorsey (although it seems likely that Boas would have been aware of the Field Museum publications). Voth apparently did not write to Dorsey until June 1925 and Dorsey replied with only general good wishes, indicating his disconnection from museums and active anthropological work. The several letters among the various parties suggest that Boas was interested primarily in publishable linguistic and ethnographic writing while Voth was primarily interested in building museum exhibits. Nothing seems to have come of this exchange.[76] Voth was already seventy years old at this time and soon moved back to Newton where he died in 1931.

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Voth's papers, including his Hopi photos and field notes, came to the Mennonite Library and Archives in several different accessions over several decades from his children. This also included papers related to his family and other church work as well as much of his extensive Mennonite collection. A small handful of artifacts, about thirty items, went to the Kauffman Museum at Bethel College in the 1940s, about half of them Native American-related. With the gradual rise of consciousness in the museum and archival fields leading up to the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in 1990 (NAGPRA), both the archives and museum became more acutely aware of how Voth's publications and museum exhibits have been an ongoing irritant for the Hopis over the decades, as Whiteley indicates. In 1994, Leigh Kuwanwisiwma, the founding director of the then-new Hopi Cultural Preservation Office, and anthropology consultant T. J. Ferguson visited the archives and museum to review materials in our holdings in connection with any possible Hopi NAGPRA claims. I took the initiative to ask what recommendations or requirements the Preservation Office would have about the Voth materials. Leigh Kuwanwisiwma responded only in fairly general terms at that time, but after that conversation the archives defined the more restrictive policy that we have used since then—that researchers may look at culturally sensitive Voth materials in our holdings in person but any further use in research or publication requires consultation with the Preservation Office.

There has been a certain amount of misinformation circulating about the MLA relationship with the Hopi Cultural Preservation

Office. Michael F. Brown, in his 2003 book *Who Owns Native Culture?* stated that in 1994 (the same year that Hopi representatives visited the MLA) the Hopi tribal chairman had sent a letter to repositories with Hopi collections, including the MLA, requesting that Hopi collections be closed to use and asserting ownership over all such materials.[77] This is simply a false statement; Brown made no attempt to verify it with the MLA or the Hopi tribal administration. No such letter was ever sent to the MLA or to Kauffman Museum. Unfortunately, some people have continued to cite this statement, with the insinuation that the MLA has refused to cooperate with the Cultural Preservation Office.[78] In October 2014, I contacted Brown directly and he said that he had never in fact seen any such communication from any Hopi representative to any museum or archives. Brown referred to a 1996 article by Jonathan Haas in *Current Anthropology* which quotes several lines of a letter to the registrar of the Field Museum dated January 26, 1994. Haas claims that the letter went to "all those museums holding Hopi collections," but his quotation and citation refer only to the Field Museum.[79] Leigh Kuwanwisiwma made no mention of any such letter or similar requests for closure and ownership in his 1994 visit to the MLA and Kauffman Museum, even in our conversation about how to administer the Hopi materials in our holdings.

Since the visit of 1994, for the past twenty-five years, we have maintained a relationship with the Hopi Cultural Preservation Office, occasionally providing them with copies of Voth photos for various projects. As technology has progressed, we began to supply digitized materials rather than physical copies. In 2011, I made several digital copies of Voth photos for a Hopi traditional agriculture exhibit, and at that point I realized that technology had advanced to the point where it might be possible to digitize the entire set of Voth photos and turn it over to the Preservation Office for their use. It took three years to complete this project, digitizing about 2,200 images—mostly nitrate negatives—into about 100 gigabytes of data. In March 2015 I delivered the scanned photos on a thumb drive to Leigh Kuwanwisiwma at the tribal offices in Kykotsmovi. I had expected just to meet with him and other Preservation Office staff, but it turned into a much bigger occasion, with the presentation happening at a regular meeting of the tribal council and my giving an impromptu explanation of Voth's story and the significance of the photos. As I said at the beginning, I count this as a high point of my Mennonite historical and archival career.

I would like to imagine that H. R. Voth would have appreciated this outcome. As an early adopter of photography, he might have liked the technological aspect, and as a documenter of Hopi cultural

traditions he might have appreciated the ongoing work of the Hopi Cultural Preservation Office. There is a set of "Protocols for Native American Archival Materials" which was endorsed by the Society of American Archivists in August 2018, although they had been in development for more than ten years before that with major involvement from staff of the Hopi Cultural Preservation Office. I would not say that I was motivated in my work with the Voth materials specifically by the Protocols, although I was aware of them, but more by general archival principles and my knowledge of the materials' history. I wanted to make the Voth photos, given their problematic history, easily accessible to the highest-priority users of the material. When technology made that easy to do, I proceeded with the project. I wished to act with respect towards the Hopi, the primary stakeholders in these materials, and to take their interests seriously by travelling to meet them in person. Does that add some sense of reparation or a positive turn to the Voth story? That's not for me to say but for the Hopi people.

Notes

1 I want to thank Nancy Parezo, professor emerita of anthropology at the University of Arizona, for sharing some of her notes and discoveries about H. R. Voth, and encouraging my interest. I hope I haven't stolen her ideas too much.

2 Don D. Fowler, *A Laboratory for Anthropology: Science and Romanticism in the American Southwest, 1846–1930* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 169, 226.

3 Fowler, *Laboratory for Anthropology*, 226.

4 *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, s.v. "Mannhardt, Wilhelm (1831–1880)," by Mark Jantzen, https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Mannhardt,_Wilhelm_(1831-1880)&oldid=162990

5 Wikipedia, s.v. "Wilhelm Mannhardt," accessed Nov. 12, 2019, https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilhelm_Mannhardt. The dissertation itself, titled "De nominibus Germanorum propriis quae ad regnum referuntur, observationis specimen," can be found online at https://books.google.com/books?id=YjwnAQAAIAAJ.

6 He seems to have been using a shorthand system fairly close to the Stolze-Schrey system that was a common German shorthand in the late nineteenth century.

7 John F. Schmidt, "Heinrich R. Voth (1855–1931)," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 40:3 (July 1966): 217–226. An additional brief biography, based on information provided by two Voth daughters, Edna Voth and Martha Voth Dyck, is in Edmund G. Kaufman, comp., *General Conference Mennonite Pioneers* (North Newton, KS: Bethel College, 1973), 326–333.

8 Fred Eggan, "H. R. Voth, Ethnologist," in *Hopi Material Culture: Artifacts Gathered by H. R. Voth in the Fred Harvey Collection*, by Barton Wright (Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Press and the Heard Museum, 1979), 1–7.

[9] This material and the next few paragraphs, including the quotes, comes from the MQR account.

[10] The specific years come from Kaufman, *General Conference*, 329.

[11] Kaufman, *General Conference*, 329. The Evangelical Synod was in the tradition of the Prussian Lutheran-Reformed union church and went through later denominational merges to become the Evangelical and Reformed Church and now the United Church of Christ. The seminary is now Eden Theological Seminary. The medical college is now Washington University School of Medicine.

[12] The Arapaho are one of the major Plains nations, together with their traditional allies the Cheyenne, both speaking languages from the Algonquian linguistic family. Both nations are divided into southern and northern divisions. The Southern Arapaho and Southern Cheyenne share a tribal administration in Oklahoma, while the Northern Arapaho are located in Wyoming and Northern Cheyenne in Montana. For an overview of Arapaho history and culture, see Loretta Fowler, "Arapaho," in *Plains*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie, vol. 13, part 1 of *Handbook of North American Indians*, ed. William C. Sturtevant (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2001), 840–862.

[13] See several folders in box 24, H. R. Voth papers, MS.21, Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas.

[14] Folder 31, box 21, MS.21, J. W. Powell, *Introduction to the Study of Indian Languages with Words Phrases and Sentences to be Collected*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880).

[15] Copybook 2, p. 452–453, MS.21. Letterpress copybooks were a method of copying outbound correspondence by pressing a newly-written page against a tissue-paper page with a screw-driven press.

[16] Voth to J. E. Rhoads, May 17, 1886, copybook 2, p. 404; to Prof. P. Painter [*sic*], undated but the location in the copybook indicates a date of about Oct. 15, 1887, copybook 2, p. 791. Further letters to Painter, Aug. 10, 1888 (p. 975), and Aug. 13, 1888 (p. 979).

[17] Voth to C. Schowalter, Sept. 22, 1885, copybook 2, p. 290. Also several related letters pp. 291–294.

[18] Voth to Mrs. H. Van der Smissen, Feb. 26, 1886, copybook 2, p. 351.

[19] Voth to Tammen, Aug. 4, 1887, copybook 2, p. 751.

[20] Voth to James Davy, Apr 16, 1888, copybook 2, p. 912.

[21] About the salary amount, Voth to T. Connell, Aug. 30, 1886, copybook 2, p. 485. Presumably the missionaries at Darlington had their living expenses covered by the regular mission budget rather than as part of their salaries, so the salary figure may be misleadingly low.

[22] Voth to Oscar D. Hodgkiss, undated but the location in the copybook indicates a date of about Sept. 1, 1887, copybook 2, p. 768.

[23] Voth to E. B. Snell, copybook 2, p. 830. See also list on p. 828.

[24] Voth to "Supt.," Smithsonian Institution, Mar. 10, 1888, copybook 2, p. 890. See also Voth to G. B. Goode of the United States National Museum, Mar. 28, 1888 (p. 898), and May 10, 1888 (p. 926), making further offers of artifacts.

[25] This the Southern Arapaho leader Sitting Bull, not the more well-known Lakota Sitting Bull. See Loretta Fowler, *Wives and Husbands: Gender and Age in Southern Arapaho History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 158–161.

[26] "Von unserer Mission," *Christlicher Bundesbote*, Dec. 4, 1890, p. 1, Voth's report here dated Oct. 10, 1890. "Von unserer Mission," *Christlicher*

Bundesbote, May 21, 1891, undated report. An interesting recent analysis of the Ghost Dance is Louis S. Warren, *God's Red Son: The Ghost Dance Religion and the Making of Modern America* (New York: Basic Books, 2017).

27 James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and Wounded Knee* (New York: Dover Publications, 1973), 653 (reprint from Part 2 of the *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Smithsonian Institution, 1892–93*). L. G. Moses, *The Indian Man: A Biography of James Mooney* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 54.

28 Mooney, 1110.

29 See, for example, copybook 9, p. 1 (Oct. 30, 1891) and p. 322 (May 4, 1894), MS.21.

30 Genealogical Registry and Database of Mennonite Ancestry (California Mennonite Historical Society), profile #82030.

31 Kaufman, 330. Some reports of his trip were printed in the *Christlicher Bundesbote*; for example, July 21, July 28, and Aug. 4, 1892.

32 Smithsonian archives, USNM accession #26674. Apparently Voth had originally intended this collection for the newly emerging Bethel College (which began classes only in fall 1893) and had even stored it at the Mennonite teacher training school in Halstead, Kansas, for a time, but then decided it was too large to be displayed and well cared for at Bethel and sold it to the National Museum, offering to create a smaller collection for Bethel instead. There does not seem to be a record of such a smaller collection being created. See David A. Goerz papers, MS.27, Mennonite Library and Archives, H. R. Voth to David Goerz, undated (probably late 1889), folder 16, "General correspondence – undated"; David Goerz to H. R. Voth, Jan. 25, 1890, and May 7, 1890, folder 5, "General correspondence 1890"; H. R. Voth to David Goerz, Nov. 4, 1891, and Nov. 19, 1891, folder 7, "General correspondence – September-December 1891"; H. R. Voth to David Goerz, Jan. 2, 1893, folder 10, "General correspondence – January 1893."

33 H. R. Voth, "Funeral Customs among the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians," *The Folk-lorist* 1:2/3 (July 1893): 95–98. On the society see W. K. McNeil, "Bassett, Fletcher S. (1847–1893)," in *American Folklore: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Jan Harold Brunvand (New York: Garland, 1996), 148–149; and Jesse W. Harris, "Illinois Folklore, Past and Present," *Midwest Folklore* 4:3 (Autumn 1954): 134–138.

34 Alexander Stephen, "Description of a Hopi Ti-Hü," *The Folk-lorist* 1:2/3 (July 1893): 83–88.

35 *Folk-lorist* 1:1 (July 1892): 82.

36 It was brought to my attention by Nancy Parezo, and I suspect she discovered it via online searching in JSTOR.

37 *Bundesbote*, Nov. 25, 1892; Feb. 23, 1893; Mar. 2, 1893. Apparently substantial funding came from the Women's National Indian Association (see Quinton-Shelly correspondence, June 1893, I.A.1.a, General Conference Mission Board records).

38 The Hopis are one of several Puebloan nations in what is now the US Southwest, speaking a language in the Uto-Aztecan linguistic family. For an overview of Hopi history and culture see Frederick J. Dockstader, "Hopi History, 1850–1940," in *Southwest*, ed. Alfonso Ortiz, vol. 9 of *Handbook of North American Indians*, ed. William C. Sturtevant (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2001), 524–532, and several other Hopi-related articles in the same volume.

[39] Copybook 9, p. 210, emphasis in original.
[40] Copybook 9, p. 410.
[41] About Keam see Fowler, *Laboratory for Anthropology*, 135–139; and Laura Graves, *Thomas Varker Keam, Indian Trader* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998).
[42] On Fewkes see Fowler, *Laboratory for Anthropology*, 161–171. Most of Fewkes's Hopi connections were with First Mesa.
[43] Martha Voth diary, Aug. 12, 1893, MS.21. Alexander M. Stephen, *Hopi Journal of Alexander M. Stephen*, ed. Elsie Clews Parsons (Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino Fine Books, 1999), 659. Stephen was somewhat of a parallel to Voth in being a long-term white resident, at First Mesa in Stephen's case, who made extensive notes on ceremonies. Stephen never mentions Voth in his notes, but does mention Fewkes. In contrast to Voth, Stephen's notes were not published until 1936, long after Stephen's death in 1894.
[44] Voth to Fewkes, Dec. 19, 1893, copybook 9, p. 217. Here Voth states: "I am so far now that I can converse quite readily with the people."
[45] Copybook 10, p. 419, MS.21. On James see Wikipedia, s.v. "George Wharton James," accessed Nov. 19, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Wharton_James.
[46] Copybook 10, p. 400, MS.21.
[47] Copybook 9, p. 133.
[48] Copybook 9, p. 210.
[49] See John D. Thiesen, *A Guide to the H. R. Voth Photographic Collection* (North Newton, KS: Mennonite Library and Archives, 2015). The men were arrested because they were perceived to be leaders of resistance to sending Hopi children to government schools.
[50] Voth diary, Aug. 25, 1897 entry, MS.21. This sentence is in English in his diary entry, which is otherwise all in German. Biographical treatments of Dorsey seem to be scarce. The two best are: Raymond J. DeMallie and Douglas R. Parks, "George A. Dorsey and the Development of Plains Indian Anthropology," in *Anthropology, History, and American Indians: Essays in Honor of William Curtis Sturtevant*, ed. William L. Merrill and Ives Goddard (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002), 59–74; and Tristan Almazan and Sarah Coleman, "George Amos Dorsey: A Curator and His Comrades," in *Curators, Collections, and Contexts: Anthropology at the Field Museum, 1893–2002*, ed. Stephen E. Nash and Gary M. Feinman (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 2003), 87–97. See also Fowler, *Laboratory for Anthropology*, 224, 228, 240.
[51] George A. Dorsey, "The Stanley-McCormick Hopi Expeditions," *Science*, n.s., 13:319 (Feb. 8, 1901): 219–222.
[52] See diary entry for Dec. 12, 1897, for example.
[53] Diary entry Sept. 20, 1898.
[54] See inventory of 403 items dated Feb. 16, 1898 in folder 54, MS.21.
[55] George A. Dorsey, "The Department of Anthropology of the Field Columbian Museum: A Review of Six Years," in *Anthropology, History, and American Indians*, 56. There seemed to be a general sense among Keam's contemporaries in the region that Keam wanted to maintain a monopoly of trade with and influence over the Hopis and that he saw Voth and even Indian Agency employees as potential threats to his standing.
[56] A. B. Shelly to Mission Board, Apr. 13, 1899, folder 58, "Correspondence 1897–1899," I.A.1.b, General Conference Mission Board records.

57 Voth to A. B. Shelly, Apr. 3, 1899, folder 58.
58 Folder 27, MS.21.
59 Gustav Harder to Mission Board, Nov. 22, 1901, folder 3, “Correspondence Sept–Dec 1901,” I.A.1.b.
60 See, for example, Peter Balzer to Mission Board, Dec. 12, 1901, folder 3, I.A.1.b.
61 See Voth’s outraged letter to A. B. Shelly, 31 Jan 1902, folder 4, “Correspondence Jan–Feb 1902,” I.A.1.b.
62 Genealogical Registry and Database of Mennonite Ancestr, profile #82035.
63 Diary entry Mar 25, 1902.
64 See diary entries for late 1902–early 1903.
65 The actual dictionary seems to be the one which is in the Jacob B. Frey papers, MS.296, Mennonite Library and Archives. Frey was a later missionary at Third Mesa.
66 Peter Whiteley, *Deliberate Acts: Changing Hopi Culture through the Oraibi Split* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1988), 84. My own sense is that, thirty years later, this awareness of Voth has faded among younger people, except for those who are particularly active in cultural preservation issues. In my 2015 visit, it seemed that the younger members of the Hopi Tribal Council were only vaguely aware of the Voth story.
67 Whiteley, 84–85.
68 Whiteley, 85.
69 Whiteley, 81, 85.
70 On school coercion see diary entries for Apr. 18 and May 14, 1901; on haircutting see numerous diary entries in Feb. and Mar. 1902 as well as Nov. 26, Dec. 7, and Dec. 18, 1902, and Jan. 10, 1903. On haircutting and suppression of ceremonies, see J. B. Epp and H. R. Voth to Mission Board Executive Committee, Feb. 21, 1902, folder 4, I.A.1.b. In contrast to his respect for Hopi ceremonies more generally, Voth was quite unhappy with the “clown” performances that were a part of some ceremonies, especially those aspects that referred to sexual activity. He was also quite agitated about cruelty to animals by both Hopis and whites. See Voth to R. Collins (school superintendent at Keams Canyon), Apr. 12, 1897, copybook 10, p. 803.
71 Almazan and Coleman, 92.
72 Diary entries Oct. 13, 25, 1903; various entries in Oct. and Dec. 1904 when the House was under construction.
73 Wright, *Hopi Material Culture*; diary entry Feb. 4–5, 1903; “Solid Year Spent in Collecting Paraphernalia,” *Albuquerque Evening Herald*, Feb. 20, 1913, folder 115, “Clippings about or by H. R. Voth,” MS.21. Parts of this artifact collection are now at the Heard Museum in Phoenix and the American Museum of Natural History in New York.
74 Kaufman, 332–333.
75 DeMallie and Parks, 71.
76 Franz Boas papers, American Philosophical Society. Dorsey to Voth, July 2, 1925, folder 54, MS.21.
77 Michael F. Brown, *Who Owns Native Culture?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 14–15.
78 For example, Alvina Block, “Changing Attitudes: Relations of Mennonite Missionaries with Native North Americans 1880 to 2004” (PhD diss., University of Manitoba, 2006). On pages 80–81 she says, relying on Brown, “More recently, the Hopi have asked to have their ‘culturally sensitive information

repatriated.' In 1994 they requested that the Mennonite Library and Archives at Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas should 'declare a moratorium on use of materials relating to the Hopi people and their ancestors, including field notes, photographs, and drawings.'" Once again a completely false statement made without any attempt to verify it with the MLA.

[79] Jonathan Haas, "Power, Objects, and a Voice for Anthropology," *Current Anthropology* 37, supplement (February 1996): S4, S21.