



Figure 1. Louis Tewanima (center) running alongside Neil McCarthy (left) and Joseph Forshaw in the 1908 London Olympic Marathon, UB7515OINP. Photo © Bettman/Corbis Images.

MARATHONER LOUIS TEWANIMA AND THE CONTINUITY OF HOPI RUNNING, 1908–1912

MATTHEW SAKIESTEWA GILBERT

In January 1907, Louis Tewanima, from the Hopi Reservation in northeastern Arizona, enrolled at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania. While at Carlisle, Tewanima joined the school's cross-country team. He won numerous races and earned the opportunity to compete in the 1908 and 1912 Summer Olympic Games. Tewanima's story represents his ability to redefine Hopi running in the twentieth century and shows how he maneuvered within American and European perceptions of Natives and sports. His participation in running events recalls a time when white Americans situated indigenous people on the fringes of U.S. society but embraced them when they brought honors to the country by representing the nation in athletic competitions at home and abroad. Furthermore, Tewanima's involvement in marathons and Olympic races demonstrates the ways Americans used his success to advance the ideals of U.S. nationalism, as he simultaneously continued the long tradition of running among his people.

ON 11 JULY 1908, two days before King Edward VII officially opened the Games of the IV Olympiad in London, a crowd of people gathered to watch Hopi runner Louis Tewanima practice at the Brighton Football Club running track in East Sussex. A member of the U.S. Olympic team, Tewanima had won numerous events in North America, and his reputation as a distance runner had spread to England, where people anxiously waited to see him compete in the Olympic marathon. A reporter from *The New York Times* noted that the “long distance champion” received considerable attention from the British, who could not “understand how an apparently

MATTHEW SAKIESTEWA GILBERT (Hopi) is an assistant professor of American Indian studies and history at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He thanks Robert Warrior, Frederick E. Hoxie, LeAnne Howe, Vicente M. Diaz, Christine Taitano DeLisle, Robert Dale Parker, Jodi A. Byrd, Brenda M. Farnell, Antoinette Burton, Diane Koenker, Sheilah E. Nicholas, Benjamin H. Nuvamsa, Dustin Tahmahkera, Manu Vimalassery, Joyce Martin, Mary Frances Ronan, three anonymous reviewers, and the Hopi Cultural Preservation Office.

fragile creature” could “aspire to marathon honors.” At 5 feet 4 1/4 inches tall and 115 pounds, Tewanima’s short stature and thin physique did not match the profile of other successful runners with longer legs and torsos. News of Tewanima even attracted the attention of a British humorist who wrote that the runner had been “trained on chutney and rice.” While not based on fact, the idea became popular with the British public, who consequently gave Tewanima the nickname “Chutney Rice.”¹

On the day of the race, fifty-five runners from sixteen nations gathered near the starting line at Windsor Castle, 700 yards from the Queen Victoria statue. The marathon wound through the streets of London for 26 miles and 385 yards, ending at White City Stadium. *The Times of London* observed that the “glorious hot July afternoon, with hardly a breath of wind, [was] ideal for a bathe or a game of cricket perhaps, but terrible for a feat of endurance.”² At 2:30 in the afternoon, officials arranged the runners into “four rows,” and the Princess of Wales, Mary of Teck, began the event by signaling for a “pistol to be fired.” During the first mile, Tewanima remained with the last group of runners while William Clarke of the United Kingdom and Arthur Burn of Canada set the lead pace. At the 12-mile mark, Tewanima ran alongside Canada’s George Goulding and Gustaf Törnros of Sweden. (See Figure 1.)

Accompanied by a young American trainer named Neil McCarthy, who rode a bicycle beside him for the remainder of the race, the Hopi runner kept a steady pace while McCarthy urged him to hasten to the finish line.³ Twenty miles into the marathon, the gap between Tewanima and the front-runners had increased, although some of the athletes in the lead pack showed signs of severe fatigue.⁴ Heat exhaustion forced Tom Longboat, an Onondaga runner from the Six Nations Reserve in Canada, to quit the race as he approached mile marker 21. With Longboat out, Tewanima entered the Olympic stadium to a “roar” of “cheering” to complete the marathon in ninth place.⁵

¹ “American Athletes Sure of Success,” *New York Times*, 12 July 1908, p. S1; “Physical Record of Student,” 3 December 1908, Tewanima, Louis, file 3766, box 79, Records of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, Carlisle, PA, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1793–1989, Record Group 75, National Archives and Records Administration (Washington, DC) (hereafter Tewanima File); and “American Athletes Sure of Success.” See also “Hopi Students to Preach Culture to Sun Worshipers: From the *New York American*,” reprinted in *Red Man* 5 (February 1913): 248. *The Red Man* was Carlisle Indian Industrial School’s newsletter.

² “The Olympic Games,” (*London*) *Times*, 25 July 1908, p. 8.

³ U.S. Olympic coach Mike Murphy had originally assigned Neal McCarthy to cycle beside American runner Mike Ryan. When Ryan quit the race after the 11-mile mark, McCarthy sought out Tewanima and remained with him to the finish. “Bill Henry Says,” *Los Angeles Times*, 8 December 1935, p. 17.

⁴ According to Tewanima’s teammate Joseph Forshaw, who ran alongside Tewanima for the first 20 miles of the marathon and ended up winning a bronze medal, the Hopi runner was “suffering from bad knees” and sore feet. Forshaw also recalled that Tewanima had a difficult time understanding his pacesetter Neal McCarthy, due to his inability to comprehend much English. Christine Forshaw O’Shaughnessy, “Joseph Forshaw, Marathon Runner,” *Journal of Olympic History* 12 (May 2004): 12.

⁵ “The Olympic Games,” p. 8. See also John Bryant, *The Marathon Makers* (London, 2008),

In *Indians in Unexpected Places*, historian Philip J. Deloria argued that Native people have regularly “created new Indian worlds, fusing diverse cultures, or fitting themselves into the interstices between core Native tradition and new practices introduced from the American periphery.” Tewanima’s participation in the Olympics and other running events points to a moment in history when a select number of Hopis used running to enter national and international contexts beyond their homelands in present-day northeastern Arizona. It signals a transition in Hopi society when men navigated between the “interstices” of their religious beliefs about footraces and American ideologies of sport. Although some writers, including Norm Frauenheim, might consider this a “clash of the ancient and modern,” Tewanima’s story represents one runner’s ability to redefine Hopi running in the twentieth century and shows how he maneuvered within American and European perceptions of Natives and sports. It tells of a time when white Americans situated indigenous people on the fringes of U.S. society but embraced them when they brought honors to the country by representing the nation in athletic competitions at home and abroad. Furthermore, Tewanima’s involvement in marathons and Olympic races demonstrates the ways Americans used his success to advance the ideals of U.S. nationalism as he simultaneously continued the long tradition of running among his people. But while Tewanima created a “new Indian” world of Hopi running in the early 1900s, he “did so within the constraints of American rules, regulations, expectations, and power.”⁶

For more than thirty years, the literature on indigenous runners of the Southwest has increased, with contributions from various scholars, including anthropologist Peter Nabokov and historian Brian S. Collier. These studies complement works on the Tarahumara runners of northwestern Mexico, especially Mark Dyreson’s “The Foot Runners Conquer Mexico and Texas” and Darcy C. Plymire’s “The Legend of the Tarahumara.”⁷ Apart from Nabokov’s *Indian Running*, which includes lengthy

217. Mississauga Ojibwa runner Frederick Simpson, from Canada, also competed in the 1908 Olympic marathon. He finished in sixth place, three places ahead of Tewanima. Tewanima completed the course in 3 hours, 9 minutes, and 50.8 seconds. His U.S. teammate John Hayes won a gold medal by finishing in 2 hours, 55 minutes, and 18.4 seconds. Bill Mallon and Ian Buchanan, *The 1908 Olympic Games: Results for All Competitors In All Events, With Commentary* (Jefferson, NC, 2000), 65.

⁶ Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence, 2004), 113, 114 and Norm Frauenheim, “Lewis Tewanima: Running for a Reason: Hopi Legend’s Rain Cloud Had Silver Lining,” (*Phoenix*) *Arizona Republic*, 16 December 1999, p. C3.

⁷ Peter Nabokov, *Indian Running: Native American History and Tradition* (Santa Barbara, 1981); Brian S. Collier, “To Bring Honor to My Village: Steve Gachupin and the Community of Jemez Running and the Pike’s Peak Marathon,” *Journal of the West* 46 (Fall 2007): 62–71; Mark Dyreson, “The Foot Runners Conquer Mexico and Texas: Endurance Racing, *Indigenismo*, and Nationalism,” in *Mexican Americans and Sports: A Reader on Athletics and Barrio Life*, ed. Jorge Iber and Samuel O. Regalado (College Station, 2007), 19–49; and Darcy C. Plymire, “The Legend of the Tarahumara: Tourism, Overcivilization and the White Man’s Indian,” in *Native Americans and Sport in North America: Other People’s Games*, ed. C. Richard King (New York, 2008), 17–29. For a non-scholarly but very compelling book on Tarahumara runners, see

discussions on Tewanima and other Hopi runners, the majority of the literature on Tewanima is found in larger narratives on Natives and sports, most notably Joseph B. Oxendine's *American Indian Sports Heritage* and John Bloom's *To Show What an Indian Can Do*. Although popular audiences read Tewanima's story in newspaper articles, magazines, and books, these publications tend to focus on his participation in the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm, Sweden, and many of them perpetuate a romantic portrayal of Tewanima by retelling accounts of him running after rabbits as a young man and running to Winslow, Arizona, "just to see the trains [go by]." Contrary to one contemporary writer who noted that Tewanima was "almost totally forgotten," scholars have remained intrigued by his accomplishments, although they are often overshadowed by accounts of his Carlisle teammate, Sac and Fox athlete Jim Thorpe. While references to Tewanima grace the pages of many articles and books, further studies are needed, particularly ones that interpret his accomplishments within the contexts of Hopi and American sport culture.⁸

When Tewanima competed in the 1908 Olympics, people in American society closely associated sports with U.S. nationalism and the notion that athletic victories established the United States as an emerging world power. American reformers such as A. G. Spalding, Price Collier, and Theodore Roosevelt believed that sports fostered national unity and a "republican civilization" and demonstrated U.S. political and economic dominance over other nations. Furthermore, Mark Dyreson once observed that prior to World War I, Progressives believed that sports created "social reform," encouraged the sharing of "communal values" among Americans, and increased the "public good." Still other American thinkers argued that U.S. athletes won national and international competitions because they were American, not merely as a result of their physical abilities.⁹ While the concepts of American identity, democracy, and communal values dominated conversations about U.S. sports in the early 1900s, not every athlete who competed on the Olympic team embodied these ideals.

Less than two years before the London Games, Tewanima appeared to be an unlikely candidate to represent the country. Although Hopis had reportedly received American citizenship under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, certain rights did not apply to

Christopher McDougall, *Born to Run: A Hidden Tribe, Superathletes, and the Greatest Race the World Has Never Seen* (New York, 2009).

⁸ Joseph B. Oxendine, *American Indian Sports Heritage* (Lincoln, 1995), vii, 87, 89; John Bloom, *To Show What an Indian Can Do: Sports at Native American Boarding Schools* (Minneapolis, 2000), xvii, 24, 72, 73, 90, 151; Bill Crawford, *All American: The Rise and Fall of Jim Thorpe* (Hoboken, NJ, 2004), 72; Sally Jenkins, *The Real All Americans: The Team That Changed A Game, A People, A Nation* (New York, 2007), 270; and Jim Hinckley, *Backroads of Arizona: Your Guide to Arizona's Most Scenic Backroad Adventures* (St. Paul, 2006), 65.

⁹ S. W. Pope, *Patriotic Games: Sporting Traditions in the American Imagination, 1876–1926* (Knoxville, 2007), 49 and Mark Dyreson, *Making the American Team: Sport, Culture, and the Olympic Experience* (Urbana, 1998), 5, 199, 10.

them or other indigenous people.¹⁰ As a second-class citizen, Tewanima ran for a country that considered him and his people to be wards of the government. In the 1890s and early 1900s, government officials routinely banished problematic Hopi leaders to distant lands. In 1894 the U.S. government arrested nineteen Hopi leaders from the village of Orayvi on Third Mesa and shortly thereafter sent them to Alcatraz Island in the San Francisco Bay for refusing to send their children to government-run schools. Separated from their families and village community, the prisoners remained on the island from January to September 1895. In September 1906, the Hopi had endured an internal division at Orayvi over the encroachment of American ways on Hopi culture, the U.S. government's insistence that Hopi children attend Western schools, and disagreements surrounding the interpretation of Hopi prophecy.¹¹ Two factions emerged whom federal officials and Christian missionaries referred to as "Hostiles" and "Friendlies," based on their association with the U.S. government. To them, Tewanima and the other resisting Hopis threatened attempts to civilize and subdue Hopis on the reservation. The runner from Shungopavi had shown leadership qualities, but officials despised him and all Hopis who went against their mandates. Consequently, armed government soldiers arrested the resisters, including Tewanima, and transported the prisoners to Fort Wingate in New Mexico. Two months later, officials arrested a Hopi chief from Orayvi named Tawaquaptewa and sent him, his family, and other Hopi leaders to Sherman Institute, an off-reservation Indian boarding school in Riverside, California.¹²

In January 1907, government officials put Tewanima and the other ten Hopi prisoners—including Tawa Ventawa, Wallace Houma, Glenn Josyewa, and Washington Talayumptewa (Talayamptewa, Talyumptewa)—on a Santa Fe train bound for the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania. Under the care and watchful eye of First Lieutenant John H. Lewis, they would learn English and appreciate the supposed superiority of American ways.¹³ When Tewanima and the other Hopis first

¹⁰ There is confusion among scholars and other writers as to when Hopis became U.S. citizens. Some have argued that Hopis became citizens in 1924, with the Indian Citizenship Act, although there is evidence to suggest that it technically took place much earlier, in 1848. Thomas Donaldson, *Extra Census Bulletin: Moqui Pueblo Indians of Arizona and Pueblo Indians of New Mexico* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1893), 9; Robert P. Porter, *Report On Indians Taxed and Indians Not Taxed in the United States (Except Alaska) at the Eleventh Census, 1890* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1894), 164; and Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 2 February 1848, *Perfected Treaties, 1778–1945*, Record Group 11, General Records of the United States Government, 1778–1992, National Archives, accessed 29 November 2011, <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=old&doc=26>.

¹¹ Harry C. James, *Pages from Hopi History* (Tucson, 1974), 115–6. For a detailed analysis of the Hopi division, see Peter M. Whiteley, *Deliberate Acts: Changing Hopi Culture Through the Oraibi Split* (Tucson, 1988).

¹² "Descriptive and Historical Record of Student," 31 August 1912, p. 2, Tewanima File. See also Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert, *Education beyond the Mesas: Hopi Students at Sherman Institute, 1902–1929* (Lincoln, 2010).

¹³ "Descriptive and Historical Record," Tewanima File. See also Edmund Nequatewa, *Truth*



Figure 2A. Eleven Hopi “prisoners” as they entered Carlisle, Louis Tewanima sits in the front row, second from left, 1907, Todd Photo Archives, 12-27-01 (DR 2-45). Photo courtesy of the Cumberland County Historical Society.

arrived at the school, one newspaper writer described them as “crude specimens. Long hair hung down their backs, they were garbed in discarded khaki uniforms and blue army overcoats, and none of them could speak a word of English.”¹⁴ (See Figures 2A and 2B.)

Newspaper accounts of the men reflect the paternalistic and racist belief of the day that Native people needed a Western education to redeem them from their apparent

of a Hopi: Stories Relating to the Origin, Myths and Clan Histories of the Hopi (Flagstaff, 1994), 62–3, 113n53 and “Hopi Students,” 248. The remaining Hopi prisoners included William Navongva, Ponaqua Tewa, Andrew Hermequatewa, Edward Tewane, Joshua Hermeyesva, and Archie Quamala. Anthropologist Peter M. Whiteley suggests that Commissioner of Indian Affairs Francis E. Leupp allowed the Hopi prisoners to choose which off-reservation boarding school they would attend, and the Hopis chose Carlisle. Peter M. Whiteley, *The Orayvi Split: A Hopi Transformation; Part II: The Documentary Record* (New York, 2008), 1063. There appears to be confusion on the exact number of Hopis who enrolled at Carlisle in January 1907. For example, in a newspaper article in the *New York American*, which was republished in *The Red Man*, the author noted that at this time, twelve Hopis enrolled at Carlisle. Two of the twelve Hopis listed are “Tala Yamtewa” and “Washington Talyumtewa”; but both names refer to the same individual: Washington Talayumtewa. Furthermore, photographic and NARA archival evidence suggest that only eleven Hopis enrolled at Carlisle in January 1907. “Hopi Students,” 248 and Talayamtewa, Washington, file 3751, box 79, Records of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, Carlisle, PA, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1793–1989, Record Group 75, National Archives and Records Administration (Washington, DC) (hereafter Talayamtewa File).

¹⁴ “Hopi Students,” p. 246.

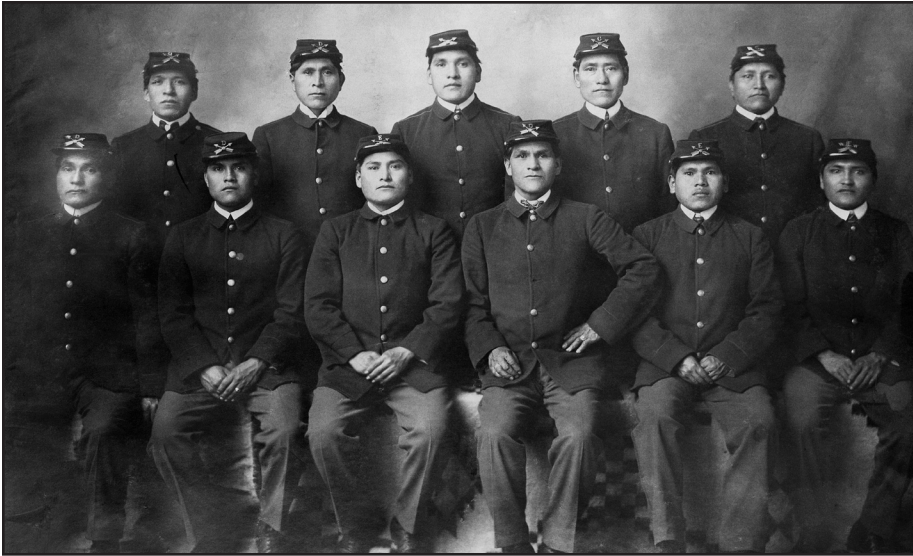


Figure 2B. Eleven Hopi students after attending Carlisle for one year, Louis Tewanima stands in the back row, far left, date unknown, Todd Photo Archives, 12-27-02 (DR 2-46). Photo courtesy of the Cumberland County Historical Society.

state of savagery. Some white Americans and so-called progressive reformers believed that this transformation best occurred at off-reservation Indian boarding schools such as Carlisle. The federal government founded the school in 1879 to weaken American Indian cultures, train students in industrial trades, and assimilate pupils into mainstream white American society. Under the direction of Jewish school superintendent Moses Friedman, who succeeded William A. Mercer in 1907, Carlisle sought to encourage Native students to look, behave, and think like white Protestant Americans, not as indigenous people.¹⁵ When Tewanima entered Carlisle, the school's established athletic program included football and track teams.¹⁶ Athletic teams increased the visibility of Indian schools and taught athletes the Western concepts of competition and fair play. Sports historian Gerald R. Gems noted that at Carlisle, "Sport instilled

¹⁵ Warren King Moorehead, *The American Indian in the United States, period 1850–1914* (Andover, MA, 1914), 201. For additional information on the founding and purpose of Carlisle, see Jacqueline Fear-Segal, *White Man's Club: Schools, Race, and the Struggle of Indian Acculturation* (Lincoln, 2007), 25–7.

¹⁶ When Tewanima was not training or competing in races, he honed his skills as a tailor, learned English, and worked in the school's Outing Program. While he had a modest academic record, he was most admired by his peers for his ability to run long distances. "Outing Record—Carlisle Industrial School," Tewanima File and "Favor Worcester to Win B.A.A. Meet," *Boston Journal*, 15 February 1909, p. 9. For an examination of Carlisle's famous football team, see David Wallace Adams, "More Than a Game: The Carlisle Indians Take to the Gridiron, 1893–1917," *Western Historical Quarterly* 32 (Spring 2001): 25–53.



Figure 3. Albert Yava recalled that Hopi farmers from Orayvi would run to fields at Moencopi (pictured), take care of their crops, and run back to Orayvi in the same day (a total distance of nearly 100 miles. Photo by author (2009).

discipline” utilizing “teamwork, a strong work ethic, and perhaps most importantly, deference to authority in the form of a coach or game official that might ready one for a compliant workforce.”¹⁷

One of the most significant authority figures Tewanima encountered at Carlisle was athletic director Glenn “Pop” Warner. Previously, Warner successfully coached football and track at various colleges, including the University of Georgia and Cornell. Tewanima told Warner that he could run well, and he even demonstrated his talent to the coach.¹⁸ It did not take long for Tewanima to attract the attention of his peers on the cross-country team with his ability to run long distances. In *The Indian Helper*, the school’s official newspaper, a reporter noted that Tewanima had never run in a marathon or trained in distance running before he entered Carlisle.¹⁹ Yet he origi-

¹⁷ Gerald R. Gems, *The Athletic Crusade: Sport and American Cultural Imperialism* (Lincoln, 2006), 9.

¹⁸ Peyton Reavis, “Great Little Hopi: Lewis Tewanima” (unpublished manuscript, 1990) and “Lewis Tewanima,” LAB BIO-229, Labriola Indian Data Center, Department of Archives and Special Collections, Arizona State University.

¹⁹ The official newspaper at Carlisle went by a number of names, including *Eadle Keatah Toh*, *School News*, *The Morning Star*, *The Red Man*, *The Carlisle Indian Boys’ and Girls’ Friend*, *The Indian Helper*, *The Arrow*, *The Carlisle Arrow*, and *The Indian Craftsman*. “Newspapers and Periodicals,” Carlisle Indian Industrial School, accessed 8 December 2011, <http://www.historicalsociety2.com/>

nated from a people who understood running as an integral part of their social and religious culture.

According to Hopi belief, men ran footraces to unify the villages, gain information from other clans, and prepare them for life's challenges. Up until the early 1900s, government officials, Christian missionaries, and ethnographers hired Hopi runners to carry messages to various parts of present-day northern Arizona. The Hopi considered running a trustworthy method of transportation, and the people ran as an expression of their identity. Ethnologist Walter Hough once remarked that during the sixteenth century, Spanish conquistadors were "struck with the ability of the Hopi runners" and recorded that the "Indians could easily run in one day across the desert to the Grand Canyon, a distance which the Spaniards required three days' march to accomplish."²⁰ At the village of Orayvi, Albert Yava recalled that young men often ran to their fields fifty miles away at Moencopi, then ran back to the village later that same day.²¹ (See Figure 3.) Covering distances that exceeded American marathons, these Hopi farmers depended on their ability to run to care for their agriculture. Most importantly, they ran to bring rain and moisture to their dry and arid fields.

In Hopi culture, fields belong to one of several matrilineal-based clans. Hopis of the Tuwawungwa, or Sand Clan, sent runners to distant lands to entice rain clouds to follow them back to the mesas. In the late 1890s, ethnologist Alexander M. Stephen recorded that when a Sand Clan chief named Si'mo ran, he did so "swiftly, that the clouds may come swiftly, that his prayers may be quickly answered."²² Sand Clan runners had the responsibility of running far beyond Hopi ancestral lands. As a member of the Piqöswungwa (Bear Strap Clan), Tewanima learned the centrality of rain in Hopi running from older male clan members.²³ They reminded him of their responsibility to run great distances for the benefit of the clan and for all Hopi people. And similar to Jemez Pueblo runner Steve Gachupin of New Mexico, who won six consecutive Pikes Peak Marathons in Colorado during the 1960s and early 1970s, Tewanima ran to "honor" his village and continue its long tradition of distance running.²⁴

[ciisnewspapers.html](#).

²⁰ Stewart Nicholas, "Working to Keep Traditions Alive," *Hopi Tutuveni* (Kykotsmovi, AZ), 31 August 2006, p. 3; Harold Courlander, *People of the Short Blue Corn: Tales and Legends of the Hopi Indians* (New York, 1970), 96–109; and Walter Hough, *The Hopi Indians* (Cedar Rapids, IA, 1915), 110.

²¹ Albert Yava, *Big Falling Snow: A Tewa-Hopi Indian's Life and Times and the History and Traditions of His People*, ed. Harold Courlander (Albuquerque, 1992), 13. Orayvi (also spelled Oraibi, Oraibe, Oraivi), located on the southernmost point of Third Mesa on the Hopi Reservation in northeastern Arizona, is one of the oldest inhabited villages in North America.

²² Alexander M. Stephen, *Hopi Journal of Alexander M. Stephen*, ed. Elsie Clews Parsons, part 2 (Mansfield, CT, 2005), 780. See also Nabokov, *Indian Running*, 27–8.

²³ From at least the early 1980s, writers have claimed that Tewanima was Tuwawungwa (Sand Clan). I thank his family members Sheilah E. Nicholas and Benjamin H. Nuvamsa, both from Shungopavi, for providing me with his correct clan—Piqöswungwa (Bear Strap Clan).

²⁴ Collier, "To Bring Honor," 62–71. One newspaper writer affirmed Tewanima's running past

While Tewanima used running to bring honor to his people, government officials believed that his participation in the Olympics also brought honors to the nation. Shortly after the Olympic team, including Tuscarora athlete Frank Mount Pleasant, returned to the United States from London, President Theodore Roosevelt hosted a special reception for them at his home in Sagamore Hill, on the shore of Oyster Bay, New York.²⁵ As members of the team approached Roosevelt's residence, Olympic Committee secretary James E. Sullivan assembled the athletes into two lines and Tewanima and his teammates marched in formation while whistling the song "A Hot Time in the Old Town." When the athletes reached the front porch, Roosevelt stood by the door to congratulate each person and shake his hand. As Tewanima greeted the president, Roosevelt told him that he was extremely "glad" that a "real original American Indian competed for America and represented the country abroad."²⁶

In contrast to Tewanima's white teammates, whose families had immigrated to the United States, his people were among the first caretakers of North America. For Roosevelt, Tewanima looked like an American Indian; he still spoke fluent Hopi and had only recently been exposed to the civilizing influences of American society. Even though Tewanima did not win a medal in the marathon, his participation in the Olympics symbolically demonstrated to the nation the possibility of a new role for Native people in American society. No longer resisting the U.S. government on the reservation, Tewanima now represented the United States, and few things could have been more "American" than an "original" American who brought honors to his country.

Tewanima earned the privilege to emblemize the nation, his school, and his people by outrunning top competitors at national and international events. One such event was a 10-mile race that took place at the Pastime Athletic Club's games in New York City's Madison Square Garden in January 1909. Some of the best distance runners in the nation participated, including James J. Lee, George J. Obermeyer, and Tewanima's 1908 Olympic teammate Mike Ryan. Using a common race strategy, Tewanima held back from making any push for the lead until the 7-mile mark. Eight miles into the race, Lee tried to "get up on even terms with the flying little Indian" but was unable

by noting that he had been "taught running in the school where running is a necessity and for years he was a runner among his people, and his duty was to carry messages from post to post and from village to village." "Lewis Tewanima," *Trenton (NJ) Evening Times*, 23 February 1909, p. 15.

²⁵ After the London Olympics, Tewanima and other U.S. team members traveled to France to participate in a series of exhibition games. They returned to the United States on the American Line steamer *New York* on 15 August 1908. "More Olympic Athletes Back," *New-York Tribune*, 16 August 1908, p. 8. Frank Mount Pleasant was Tewanima's teammate at Carlisle. He competed in the 1908 Olympics and placed sixth in the broad jump and the triple jump events. Mallon and Buchanan, *1908 Olympic Games*, 83-7. The reception took place sixteen days after they returned from Europe on 31 August 1908. "President Greet's Olympic Athletes," *New York Times*, 1 September 1908, p. 5.

²⁶ "Athletes Visit Sagamore Hill," *Gazette-Telegraph* (Colorado Springs, CO), 1 September 1908, p. 1.

to stay with Tewanima for more than a “half lap.” At mile marker 9, the Hopi runner continued to hold the lead position, with Lee following shortly behind. A *New York Times* reporter noted, “When the warning at the beginning of the last half mile was given[,] Tewanima started a sprint that completely finished Lee, the Indian winning in commanding style in 54:27 4-5.”²⁷ A month later, Tewanima won the Young Men’s Gymnastic Club’s 20-mile marathon in New Orleans with a time of 2 hours, 10 minutes, 53 seconds. At the Phoenix Indian School in Arizona, school officials included the news of Tewanima’s New Orleans victory in the weekly school newspaper, *The Native American*, proudly noting that Tewanima had shown his “heels to the fastest distance runners in the country.”²⁸

Off-reservation Indian boarding schools regularly included news about the accomplishments of Native athletes in their newspapers. Superintendents wanted students to look to Tewanima and other successful Native athletes as role models. Their accomplishments in American sports demonstrated the positive outcomes that one might expect from hard work and perseverance. Shortly after the division at Orayvi in September 1906, government officials sent children from the resisting Hopi families to the Phoenix Indian School. Many of these students knew about Tewanima and kept track of his running progress in the school’s newspaper. At times, school officials at Carlisle even informed Hopi students personally about the runner’s success. For example, in September 1908, not long after Tewanima returned from the London Olympics, Friedman enthusiastically shared news of his accomplishments with other Hopis at the school. “I suppose you know,” wrote Friedman to Washington Talayumptewa, who was away from school on an outing, “that Lewis Tewani went across the Atlantic Ocean to England this summer” and “made a great name for himself as a runner and you boys have reason to be very proud of him.”²⁹

Although Talayumptewa, who also earned a reputation as an accomplished runner while at Carlisle, and the other Hopi students understood that Tewanima’s desire and ability to run stemmed from his culture, sports writers of the day provided readers with their own reasons why he won so many events. In an article titled “It’s No Wonder Tewanina Can Run,” an illustrator for *The Globe and Commercial Advertiser* depicted a Hopi man running away from a Spanish vaquero on horseback shooting bullets at him. (See Figure 4.) The caption reads, “They always had plenty of training.” A second illustration describes a more commonly held explanation. In the late nineteenth and

²⁷ “Tewanina Was Too Busy to Bother About His Prize,” *Evening World* (New York City), 26 January 1909, p. 12 and “Indian Tewanina Wins 10-Mile Race,” *New York Times*, 26 January 1909, p. 10.

²⁸ “Tewanini Wins Marathon Race,” *New York Times*, 22 February 1909, p. 2 and “From Other Schools,” *Native American* (Phoenix Indian School), 13 March 1909, p. 180. For additional information on *The Native American*, see Robert A. Trennert, *The Phoenix Indian School: Forced Assimilation in Arizona, 1891–1935* (Norman, 1988), 82.

²⁹ Whiteley, *Deliberate Acts*, 300 and Moses Friedman to Washington Talayumptewa, 25 September 1908, Talayamtewa File.

early twentieth centuries, reporters frequently wrote about how Hopis traveled up and down their mesas, oftentimes to care for their fields. In this illustration, a Hopi father stands high on a mesa edge with a tomahawk raised in the air. He yells to his son who is running down the mesa, "If you don't hurry to the store an' get that bread I'll bounce this hammer off your bean."³⁰

A third illustration connects Tewanima's success to Hopi religious culture, particularly the Hopi snake dance. At this time, the ceremonies associated with the dance fascinated newspaper reporters and many white Americans. The dance attracted tourists from across the nation, including former President Theodore Roosevelt, who traveled to the village of Walpi on First Mesa in August 1913 to witness the event.³¹ Part of the ceremony involved a messenger runner who took prayer feathers to shrines beyond the mesas. Building upon this American fascination with the Hopi ceremonies, the newspaper illustrator depicted a warrior-like runner departing a village with a snake in his hand. As the snake cries out for its mother, one of the snakes back at the village exclaims, "Save Me Child!"

The illustrations provide a telling commentary on colonial explanations for Tewanima's success. The newspaper portrayed the Hopi as a peaceful and cowardly people who never cared to fight. According to the illustrator, the Hopis preferred to run away when pursued by forces of colonialism, which provided them with practice in running and the endurance needed to win American marathons. Moreover, the bizarre depiction of Hopi religious culture, contrasted with the picture of Tewanima standing in modern running attire, speaks to the transforming powers of sport and the triumph of Western civilization over indigenous cultures. In his examination of Māori masculinity and sport, Ngāti Pūkenga scholar Brendan Hokowhitu once observed that "Māori sportsmen, in particular, were the greatest trophies of colonization because they signified assimilation and the success of British imperialism."³² Similarly, Americans considered Tewanima to be their trophy of colonization. His accomplishments in U.S. marathons reflected the presumed "success" of American democracy, which allowed him to be a civilized, and therefore colonized, member of U.S. society.

One of his most remarkable marathons took place in September 1910, when he won the "George W. Bogar seven-mile handicap Marathon" in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Defeating fifteen of the top runners in the state, Tewanima won in front of ten thousand people and completed the course in 38 minutes and 10 and 2-5 seconds. But just two months later, when he attempted to defend his "Ten-Mile Champion" title that he

³⁰ "It's No Wonder Tewanina Can Run," *Globe and Commercial Advertiser*, 13 March 1909, in Tewanima File. Newspaper reporters spelled Tewanima's last name in various ways, including Tewanina, Tewanini, and Tewauina. On his school records, officials at Carlisle recorded his name as "Lewis Tewani." "Descriptive and Historical Record," Tewanima File.

³¹ "Indian Snake Dance Draws Big Crowds," *Coconino Sun* (Flagstaff, AZ), 23 August 1912, p. 1 and Theodore Roosevelt, "The Hopi Snake Dance," *Outlook* 105 (October 1913): 364-73.

³² Brendan Hokowhitu, "Tackling Māori Masculinity: A Colonial Genealogy of Savagery and Sport," *Contemporary Pacific* 16 (Fall 2004): 270.

In the early 1910s, many white Americans considered Tewanima and other Native Americans to be part of a vanishing race who belonged to the fringes of society. At this time, Native people struggled to retain portions of their ancestral lands and confronted the imposition of U.S. government policies on their indigenous cultures. On the Hopi Reservation in Arizona, government officials separated children from their parents and village communities at Indian boarding schools such as Carlisle, Sherman, and Haskell Institute in Kansas. While the situation for indigenous people was grim, in the sporting scene, select Native runners, including Tom Longboat, Penobscot runner Andrew Sockalexis, and Tewanima, availed themselves of opportunities that did not exist in their reservation communities. Furthermore, Tewanima brought attention to the Hopi people, and he encouraged non-Hopis to understand and judge him on his ability to run, not on the racist "ideologies" emphasized in American and European newspapers.³⁴

Within a few months after the Berwick Marathon, the symbolic relationship Americans saw between sports and U.S. nationalism had increased, especially as the country's athletes prepared for the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm. Since the United States dominated several events at the 1904 and 1908 Games, Americans believed that the nation would secure additional honors in Stockholm, but not without fierce competition from athletes in England, France, Finland, and Canada. "The victories of American athletes in past Olympic games," wrote a reporter for the *Morning Oregonian*, "have been so consistent that every other competing country is making special arrangements to break the chain of triumphs." To further the country's Olympic "supremacy" and to "maintain" its high standing, the American Olympic Committee (AOC) held regional tryouts at Marshall Field in Chicago, Stanford University in California, and Harvard University in Massachusetts to select the majority of the athletes to represent and defend America's honor abroad.³⁵

Tewanima's incredible achievements in U.S. marathons made him a strong candidate to compete in the 1912 Olympics. At Carlisle, students watched with much interest as Tewanima intensified his training. In his examination of Jim Thorpe, Jack Newcombe noted that "Warner had Tewanima pounding methodically around the board track" and made him run "long stretches" on "Carlisle walks and roads." Although Talayumptewa was also training for the Olympic team as a miler, Carlisle students looked primarily to Thorpe and Tewanima with great confidence that both athletes would win medals in Stockholm. One reporter wrote, "Probably none of the Americans will go abroad more fully equipped than the little Hopi redskin." Even high-ranking members of the

1,000 Start," *San Francisco Call*, 7 May 1911, p. 46; "Tewanima Again a Winner," *Washington Post*, 3 December 1911, p. S3; "Race Too Swift for Gallagher," *Washington Post*, 29 November 1912, p. 9; and partial newspaper clipping, *Washington Star*, 6 December 1911, in Tewanima File.

³⁴ Joseph K. Dixon, *The Vanishing Race, The Last Great Indian Council*. . . (Glorieta, NM, 1973) and Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 9.

³⁵ "American Marks Best," *Morning (Portland) Oregonian*, 26 January 1912, p. 8 and Dyreson, *Making the American Team*, 156.

AOC such as James E. Sullivan, who boasted that the “great Indian” Tewanima would “win the Marathon,” held this sentiment.³⁶

Prior to the Boston Marathon in April 1912, an event that determined the final U.S. distance runners for the Olympics, newspapers published a partial list of athletes who had already qualified for the team, including Clarence DeMar, Mike Ryan, Sockalexis, and Tewanima.³⁷ On 14 June 1912, Tewanima and a group of 150 U.S. athletes set sail from New York City on the Red Star Line steamship *Finland*. Before the team’s departure, the AOC had the ship transformed into a “veritable floating gymnasium,” including a 100-yard cork track on the “upper deck” for the sprinters and distance runners, so that the athletes could train en route to Stockholm.³⁸ Although U.S. running victories qualified Tewanima to be on the team, his past accomplishments did not guarantee him an opportunity to compete for a medal. To determine the finalist for the 10,000-meter event, officials hosted three qualifying heats on the day before the race. The top five runners in each heat earned a spot in the final. In the second qualifying heat, Tewanima finished in second place behind Leonard Richardson of South Africa.³⁹

On 8 July 1912, Tewanima took his place alongside ten other runners in the Stockholm Olympic Stadium in front of thousands of spectators. When the race began, people “showered” Tewanima with “cheers as he glided around the track.” But by the second lap, Hannes Kolehmainen of Finland secured the lead and never gave up this position for the duration of the race. By lap six, Kolehmainen pulled a complete lap ahead of Tewanima and defeated him by 20 seconds with a time of 31 minutes, 20.8 seconds.⁴⁰ Tewanima came in second place, “300 yards behind Kolehmainen,” to win

³⁶ Jack Newcombe, *The Best of the Athletic Boys: The White Man’s Impact on Jim Thorpe* (Garden City, NY, 1975), 179 and “To Begin Work For Olympics,” *Washington Post*, 15 March 1912, p. 8. For a critical discussion on the term *redskin*, see Suzan Shown Harjo, “Fighting Name-Calling: Challenging ‘Redskin’ In Court,” in *Team Spirits: The Native American Mascot Controversy*, ed. C. Richard King and Charles Fruehling Springwood (Lincoln, 2001), 190. For Sullivan’s comments on Tewanima, see “U.S. Athletes Sail,” *Washington Post*, 15 June 1912, p. 8 and “Lewis Tewanina Looks Good for the Marathon,” *Augusta (GA) Chronicle*, 28 April 1912, p. 3.

³⁷ Tom Derderian, *Boston Marathon: The History of the World’s Premier Running Event* (Champaign, 1994), 63. Historian Joseph B. Oxendine observed that Tewanima earned a place on the U.S. team based on his past performances “in spring meets,” and not by competing in an American Olympic Committee-sanctioned event. Oxendine, *Sports Heritage*, 216.

³⁸ “U.S. Athletes Sail,” p. 8; James Edward Sullivan, *Olympic Games: Stockholm 1912* (New York, 1912), 37; and George Retzer, “Retzer Tells of Long Trip,” *Los Angeles Times*, 13 September 1912, pp. 1, 4.

³⁹ Bill Mallon and Ture Widlund, *The 1912 Olympic Games: Results for All Competitors in All Events, with Commentary* (Jefferson, NC, 2002), 82–3; “Olympic Events Find Americans in Front,” *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans), 8 July 1912, p. 2; and “The 10,000 Meters,” *Rhodesia Herald* (Harare, Zimbabwe), 12 July 1912, p. 12.

⁴⁰ Lars Anderson, *Carlisle vs. Army: Jim Thorpe, Dwight Eisenhower, Pop Warner, and the Forgotten Story of Football’s Greatest Battle* (New York, 2008), 242. Tewanima did not compete in the 5,000-meter race at the 1912 Olympic Games. For an official list of the 5,000-meter starters and winners, see Mallon and Widlund, *1912 Olympic Games*, 80–2.

the silver medal, and Albin Stenroos of Finland won bronze. Reflecting on the 1912 Games, Sullivan noted that Tewanima “gave a remarkable exhibition of grit and persistency” and that with “Kolehmainen out of the way, he was superior to all other long distance runners.”⁴¹

Tewanima’s and Thorpe’s achievements in the 1912 Olympics unleashed a flurry of excitement among the students, teachers, and officials at Carlisle. With the headline “Carlisle Honors Her Olympic Victors on the Return from Stockholm,” the *Carlisle Arrow* noted that Tewanima, Thorpe, and Coach Warner arrived in the city by train at 12:30 p.m. on 16 August 1912. Shortly thereafter, officials drove the men by carriage to the Cumberland Valley Station, “where a committee of prominent citizens received them and congratulated them on their great achievements.” Later that day, seven thousand people gathered on the Herman Bosler Biddle Athletic Field, on the campus of Dickinson College, to participate in a celebratory ceremony. Superintendent Friedman delivered the second speech. He began by noting that “[a]ll America” was “proud” of the two runners’ achievements in Stockholm.⁴²

Friedman referred to the men as “real Americans” whose “forefathers were on the reception committee which welcomed” to this “glorious New World the famed first settlers who arrived here on the Mayflower.” Friedman said that Tewanima had come to Carlisle as a “prisoner of war.” He talked at length on how he and the other Hopis on the reservation had given the U.S. government “much trouble” and had opposed “progress” and “education.” He referred to them as “pagans” who had disregarded “American civilization” prior to their enrollment at the school.⁴³ At no point in Friedman’s public remarks did he praise the runner for his athletic achievements or inform his audience that Tewanima had come from a people of great runners. Not wanting to showcase Tewanima’s culture, Friedman attempted to demonstrate how the civilizing influences of Carlisle had created Olympic athletes, which in turn brought recognition and honor to the school.

While the Carlisle Indian School celebrated Tewanima’s silver medal, other Americans voiced their disappointment in his performance. Since he had dominated middle-distance events in the United States prior to the 1912 Olympics, many Americans assumed that he would defeat the competition, including the “little Finn phenom” Kolehmainen. A writer for *The Washington Post* noted that Tewanima’s loss

⁴¹ “Americans Take All in 800 Event,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 9 July 1912, p. 14 and Sullivan, *Olympic Games, Stockholm 1912*, 77. Lars Anderson noted that Tewanima was not “at his peak” on the day of the race and that the “transatlantic voyage had given him a severe case of seasickness, and his internal compass was still a tick off.” Anderson, *Carlisle vs. Army*, 242. Tewanima also competed in the 1912 Olympic marathon and finished in sixteenth place while his Carlisle teammate Andrew Sockalexis came in fourth. “Marathon Won By South African; American Is Close Third,” *Albuquerque Morning Journal*, 15 July 1912, p. 1.

⁴² “Carlisle Honors Her Olympic Victors on the Return from Stockholm,” *Carlisle Arrow*, 13 September 1912, p. 1 and “Parade Escorts Victors to the Campus and Great Reception Follows,” *Carlisle Arrow*, 13 September 1912, p. 3.

⁴³ “Parade Escorts Victors,” p. 3.

was a “slap” at American pride. The writer argued that the “first wallop . . . came when the cable brought” the people of the United States the “news that a diminutive little Finlander . . . had trimmed Tewanima, [Louis] Scott and [William] Kramer” in the 10,000-meter race. Although Tewanima established an American record in the event that stood until Oglala Lakota runner Billy Mills won the same event at the 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo, his rank as a world-class runner had diminished. Even 1908 U.S. Olympic coach Mike Murphy, who once claimed that Tewanima was one of the best runners in the world, could not deny the significance of Kolehmainen’s Olympic victories. This “Finn,” Murphy remarked, “is the greatest runner I have ever seen, and greater than I ever expected to see.”⁴⁴

While some Americans expressed their disappointment in Tewanima, and argued about the significance of his loss to Kolehmainen, the Hopi runner prepared to leave for his home in Arizona. In September 1912, one newspaper columnist noted that he planned to “give up athletics for good” to farm and “settle down to domestic life.” Shortly before he migrated back to the reservation, he took several of his running medals and gave them as parting gifts to his peers at the school, including girls who used them to fashion “buckles on their shoes.” Tewanima had little use for his running medals and trophies on the reservation. Even early in his running career at Carlisle, he did not seem to place much emphasis on or importance in his awards. For example, immediately after he won the race in Madison Square Garden, he forgot to pick up his trophy, a “three-foot Mercury on a handsome base.” As he sat on the floor of his dressing room, race officials handed the Hopi runner his award, but Tewanima gestured to Warner that he had no use for it.⁴⁵

Philip J. Deloria once observed that while sports involved various layers of meaning for Native athletes, “it was not the stuff of life and death.” Tewanima and other Hopi runners seldom ran in any marathons after their terms at Indian boarding schools expired.⁴⁶ The schools and various athletic clubs had provided Hopis with

⁴⁴ “Kohlemainen Gives Jolt to Pride of United States Athletic Booster by His Victories at Stockholm, in Olympics, and Successes Since on These Shores,” *Washington Post*, 29 December 1912, p. S2; Oxendine, *Sports Heritage*, 277; and “Kohlemainen Gives Jolt,” p. S2. American runner Louis Scott did not finish the 10,000-meter final event, and William Scott, also a runner from the United States, did not qualify to compete in the same event. Mallon and Widlund, *1912 Olympic Games*, 82.

⁴⁵ “Notes of the Game,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, 21 September 1912, p. 7; “Tewanima to Marry and Quit Athletics,” *Washington Times*, 13 September 1912; Newcombe, *Best of the Athletic Boys*, 189; and “Tewanima Was Too Busy.”

⁴⁶ Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 133. In his remarkable book on Native runners, anthropologist Peter Nabokov noted that Hopi artist Fred Kabotie once told him that he and his father saw Tewanima compete in a marathon in Winslow, Arizona. Tewanima was outpaced by Zuni and other Hopi runners and ultimately failed to complete the race. Also, Nabokov suggested that Tewanima won first place in the 1925 Bunion Derby from New York to California, but was “disqualified for an infraction of the rules.” Nabokov, *Indian Running*, 182. However, this account, which may have come from Nabokov’s interview with Kabotie, appears to be in error in two ways. The first Bunion Derby took place in 1928 and the race stretched from Los Angeles to New York City. Cherokee runner Andy Payne won the event. A second, and far less popular,

opportunities to run in city, regional, and international running events beyond the mesas. When Tewanima ran for Carlisle, the school paid his entry fees, transportation costs, and a host of other related expenses. Once runners returned home, their formal association with their schools ended. Although Tewanima had reached celebrity status beyond his village, he knew that many runners back home had the ability to outrun him and every other Hopi who competed at Indian boarding schools. Newspaper reporters had often remarked that the runner from Shungopavi was the best runner in the nation. But it is doubtful that Tewanima agreed with these flattering statements.

Within a few months after arriving in Shungopavi, Tewanima challenged two older men in their fifties and another young Hopi named Philip Zeyouma, of Sherman Institute, to a 12-mile footrace on Second Mesa. Zeyouma had secured a place on the 1912 Olympic team by winning the Los Angeles Times Modified Marathon of 12 miles and was scheduled to compete against Tewanima, but he chose not to participate due to his father's objections and returned to the reservation. So he and Tewanima organized a race in order to compete against each other. On the appointed date, "all the inhabitants of Hopi-land assembled at the starting point" and cheered for their "favorite" runner. But before the start, the two older men teased the young runners about their school outfits and said that they could "beat them easily." Proud of his accomplishments in American marathons, and having just won a silver medal, Tewanima responded, "If you don't like our looks, get in and show what you can do." Unable to resist the Olympian's challenge, the men took their place alongside the young runners. At the 6-mile mark, the older men were so far ahead that Tewanima and Zeyouma quit the race. One reporter for Sherman observed that news of Zeyouma's defeat was "painful" to the school's pride and pointed out that once he and Tewanima gave up, the two older men likely "made an all day jaunt of it."⁴⁷

Prior to this footrace, people on the Hopi Reservation, especially those on Second Mesa, knew about his victories in American marathons and of his Olympic performances in London and Stockholm. Yet many Hopi runners remained unimpressed with Tewanima's accomplishments. While the older men were among the first to challenge Tewanima to a race after he returned home, it did not take long for younger runners to

Bunion Derby took place in 1929 and the path went from New York City to Los Angeles. For more information on the Bunion Derby, see Charles B. Kastner, *Bunion Derby: The 1928 Footrace Across America* (Albuquerque, 2007).

⁴⁷ "Beat Olympic Winner," *New York Times*, 1 February 1913, p. 9 and "School Sports," *Sherman Bulletin*, 30 October 1912, p. 4. See also Matthew Sakiestewa Gilbert, "Hopi Footraces and American Marathons, 1912–1930," *American Quarterly* 62 (March 2010): 77–101. *The New York Times* noted that Tewanima spoke to the older men in English. However, Tewanima most likely spoke to them in a language that they could understand. It is quite possible that Tewanima responded to the men in Hopi saying, "Um itamuy pevewne, um itamumi naamataqtani," or "If you doubt us, get in and show what you can do." I thank Hopi archivist Stewart B. Koyiyumptewa of the Hopi Cultural Preservation Office and Hopi scholar Sheilah Nicholas for providing me with the Hopi translation.

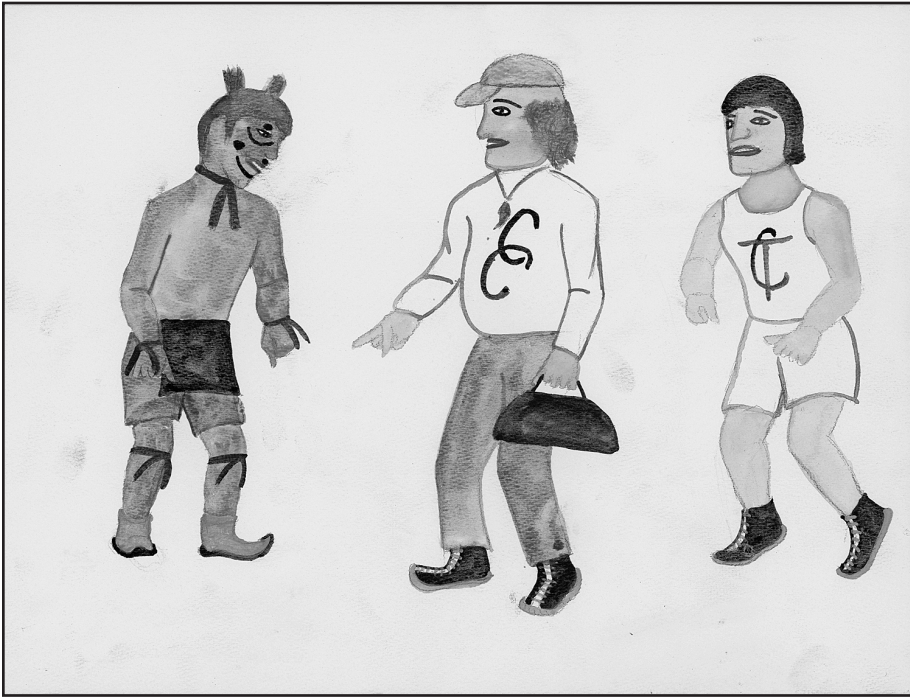


Figure 5. Piftukas or Imitator Clowns, by Marshall Lomakema (of Shungopavi), before 1966, watercolor, 23/7553, photo by Photo Services, reprinted in Byron S. Harvey III, *Ritual In Pueblo Art: Hopi Life in Hopi Painting* (New York, 1970), 49–50, figure 115. Courtesy of the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution.

try to outdistance the Hopi Olympian in other footraces. For example, in October 1913, former Carlisle student Joshua Hermeyesva, from Shimopavi, brother to Washington Talayumptewa, wrote Superintendent Friedman that his village recently hosted a “foot race” and that Tewanima came in second place to a Hopi “boy.”⁴⁸

In the same month of Tewanima’s defeat on Second Mesa, Friedman wrote to him and inquired how he and the other returned students were “getting along.” “I want to get some news from you,” he wrote. “I am writing to ask you if you will not take the time and write me a long letter, giving me the names and addresses of the various boys and their occupations, and any other information which you have concerning them.” In his letter, which was similar to letters he sent to other returned students, Friedman did not mention Tewanima’s past running achievements or how he had brought prestige to the school. Instead, he focused on determining whether Tewanima and the other former

⁴⁸ Joshua Hermeyesva to Friedman, 28 October 1913, Hermeyesva, Joshua, file 3732, box 78, Records of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, Carlisle, PA, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1793–1989, Record Group 75, National Archives and Records Administration (Washington, DC).

“savages” and “sun worshippers” had applied their skills and so-called civilization on the reservation. An unpopular superintendent among students at Carlisle, Friedman wanted information about their current status and told Tewanima that if he did not know the answers to his questions, that he should ask his “friends” on the reservation.⁴⁹ Although Friedman never fully attributed Tewanima’s running success to the centrality of running in Hopi society, Tewanima’s desire to join Carlisle’s track team and his participation in marathons was deeply rooted in who he was as a Hopi Piqöswungwa runner.

Hopis on the reservation did not need the Olympics or American-sponsored marathons to affirm their identities as long-distance runners. While Friedman failed to acknowledge Tewanima’s culture, the Hopi people never forgot his accomplishments and demonstrated their respect and honor to him in his old age. This was evidenced, possibly during the early 1960s, when Hopi clowns at Shungopavi performed a skit that highlighted his achievements. (See Figure 5.) In the skit, which Tewanima attended, one of the clowns dressed up as a Carlisle cross-country coach, with “CC” written on his shirt. Another clown represented a cross-country runner from Carlisle, and a third clown remained in typical Hopi clown attire. Confident that he could beat the Olympian, the younger runner challenged Tewanima to a footrace and invited him onstage. As Tewanima took his place alongside the clown who represented the runner from Carlisle, people laughed and hollered as the skit played out in the village square. After Tewanima “won,” the clowns showed their respect to the elder Hopi by asking him to display his running trophies for everyone to see. While anthropologist and art collector Byron S. Harvey III once argued that the skit shows the “high values which the Hopi place upon racing and physical fitness,” it also demonstrates the continuity of Hopi running and the people’s belief that each clan possesses great runners.⁵⁰ When Tewanima returned to the Hopi Reservation as a celebrated Olympic runner, the village elders reminded him of those beliefs. But when Tewanima was an old man, the people used him and his many running victories to teach a younger generation of Hopi runners, especially those who competed at Indian boarding schools, that they came from a long tradition of great runners.

While government officials sent Tewanima to Carlisle as a “prisoner of war,” he came to the Indian school as an ambassador for his people.⁵¹ Contrary to a reporter who

⁴⁹ Friedman to Louis Tewanima, 1 October 1913, Tewanima File. Historian David Wallace Adams noted that Friedman was “so despised by students that on various occasions he had been hooted and jeered and even made the target of such epithets as ‘old Jew,’ ‘Christ-Killer,’ and ‘pork-dodger,’ perhaps out of resentment to the superintendent’s penchant for calling students ‘savages.’” David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875–1928* (Lawrence, 1995), 324.

⁵⁰ Byron S. Harvey III, *Ritual In Pueblo Art: Hopi Life in Hopi Painting* (New York, 1970), 49–50, figure 115. For a detailed explanation of clowns in Hopi society, see Barton Wright, *Clowns of the Hopi: Tradition Keepers and Delight Makers* (Walnut, CA, 2004) and Emory Sekaquaptewa, “One More Smile for a Hopi Clown,” in *The South Corner of Time*, ed. Larry Evers (Tucson, 1980), 14.

⁵¹ Historian Pamela Cooper has argued that when runners, especially those from underrepresented ethnicities, succeeded in marathons, they enhanced the “honor of an entire group.”



Figure 6. Runners at the 37th annual Louis Tewanima Footrace on Second Mesa, Shungopavi, AZ, 2010. Photo by author.

portrayed a romantic image of Tewanima “roaming the forests” of his homeland before coming to school, he arrived at Carlisle as a Piqöswungwa runner and he continued the tradition of running far beyond Hopi ancestral lands. Sports historian John Bloom once noted that while a “tradition like running” at an Indian school “might be seen as a debasement” that fragmented a “cultural form from the contexts in which it was originally meaningful,” it also provided indigenous athletes with a “resource from the past” that gave them a lens to comprehend their “present circumstances.”⁵² Tewanima used this opportunity to create a privileged experience for himself at the Indian school. His success in marathons and other events gave him notoriety that extended well beyond his school community, and his involvement in national and international marathons expanded his understanding of the world in the early twentieth century. Similar to the practices of Tuwawungwa runners who brought blessings to their villages in the form of rain, Tewanima brought honors to his community and provided the people with a running legacy that continues today.

Five years after Tewanima’s death in 1969, the Hopi Athletic Association and members of his family began hosting the annual Louis Tewanima Footrace of 6.2 miles at the village of Shungopavi to honor him as a great long distance runner.⁵³

Pamela Cooper, *The American Marathon* (Syracuse, 1998), 2.

⁵² “Indian Race, Perishing, Gives Nation Men of Influence,” *Evening Standard* (Ogden, UT), 28 December 1912, p. 11 and Bloom, *To Show*, 74. Another newspaper writer described Tewanima and the other Hopi prisoners as “savages” and “Wild Hopi Indians.” “Wild Hopi Indians,” *Colfax (LA) Chronicle*, 20 April 1912.

⁵³ Twelve years after he was inducted in the Arizona Sports Hall of Fame, Tewanima died

(See Figure 6.) The race attracts runners from around the world and testifies to the importance of running in Hopi society and the understanding that runners are best honored when their village hosts a race. But the race does more than honor Louis Tewanima. It celebrates the continuity of running and reemphasizes the cultural reasons for running in Hopi society. While Tewanima spent his marathon career competing in events far beyond his ancestral lands, the annual footrace calls Hopis to return to the running trails of their people. It reminds Hopi runners, particularly those who aspired to marathon honors off the reservation, of their responsibility to their villages, and it demonstrates the ways Hopis used Tewanima's accomplishments to affirm old Hopi running practices and introduce new ones in the twentieth century.



on 20 January 1969, near his village of Shungopavi. The Hopi Olympian was walking back to his house at night when he accidentally fell off a 70-foot cliff. "70-Foot Fall Kills Louis Tewanima," *Washington Post*, 21 January 1969, p. C2. For more information on the annual Louis Tewanima Footrace, see Annual Louis Tewanima Footrace, accessed 8 December 2011, <http://www.tewanimafotrace.org/>.