

Section from the first draft of a "Guide for Contributors". For criticism and revision.

Orthographies, Etymologies, Synonymies

Proper names and all other forms from Indian languages which have been incorporated as regular English words should be spelled with their customary English spellings. Spellings of "tribal" names will be standardized throughout the Handbook, and the usage preferred by authors of tribal entries will establish the standard. The General Editor suggests that simpler spellings and those more accurately reflecting the English pronunciation are preferable unless other factors intervene (as in the case of "Navajo," which is to be used rather than "Navaho"). However, where significant--and especially in the tribal entries and the biographies--the etymologies of such words from Indian languages are to be given. Here and wherever else forms in Indian languages are respelled from the usual or historical form, indicate somehow the basis for respelling, distinguishing between (a) a guess from the English orthography; (b) a linguist's guess from other related languages; (c) the guess of a modern speaker of the language; and (d) citation of a known, existing modern form.

For each Indian language the best orthography must be chosen and consistently used. This should be briefly described in a footnote to the appropriate tribal sketch. Where a language has a systematic orthography recognized to be useful, authors should convert their own spellings into this if they can do so without loss of information (and they should indicate to the editor which orthography they have used).

Linguists are urged to use transcriptions based on the most common recent Americanist practices: unitary rather than compound symbols (χ , \ddot{t} , \check{s} , \check{c} , \grave{a} , \acute{a}), y for the semivowel rather than for the vowel \ddot{u} . Insofar as possible the editors will encourage use of a standard system throughout the Handbook.

There should also be a separate discussion (which will be set in smaller type at the end of the entry) of the etymology, history, and synonymy of the tribal name. This should be a revision and improvement of the synonymy in the 1907-10 Handbook. The earliest known occurrences of the names should be cited--where significant, in French, Spanish, or Russian as well as in English. Major spelling variants are needed, with dated citations (preferably to the earliest occurrences). Synonyms likely to be encountered in the historical literature should be included, grouped according to some logical scheme (e.g. Sioux is 'cut throat' in several different languages which should be listed together). Give the sign-language sign where known. Omit mis-prints in secondary sources, minor and obvious spelling variants, and equivalents in geographically far removed Indian languages. Errors in previous sources, especially in the earlier Handbook, should be explicitly corrected.