

The Life Story of Helen Sekaquaptewa: A Pioneer of Native American Education



Me and Mine: The Life Story of Helen Sekaquaptewa

by Dean Heath

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English



File size	: 3995 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 266 pages



Early Life and Education

Helen Sekaquaptewa was born on July 4, 1898, into the Hopi tribe at the First Mesa village of Hotevilla, Arizona. From a young age, she displayed a keen intellect and a deep passion for her culture. Despite the limited educational opportunities available to Native American children at the time, Sekaquaptewa's parents recognized her potential and sent her to the Sherman Institute, a boarding school in Riverside, California.

At Sherman Institute, Sekaquaptewa excelled in her studies, particularly in English and history. She also developed a strong interest in literature and music. Upon graduation, she returned to her home village and began teaching at the local school.

Activism and Advocacy

Sekaquaptewa's experiences at Sherman Institute had a profound impact on her. She witnessed firsthand the assimilationist policies of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the detrimental effects they were having on Native American culture and identity. Determined to make a difference, she joined the Society of American Indians (SAI), an organization dedicated to fighting for Native American rights.

Through the SAI, Sekaquaptewa became actively involved in advocating for improved educational opportunities for Native American children. She believed that education was essential for the preservation and revitalization of Native American culture. Together with other SAI members, she lobbied the government for increased funding and support for Native American schools.

Hopi High School

In 1936, Sekaquaptewa's vision for a culturally relevant high school for Hopi students became a reality. Thanks to her tireless efforts and the support of the Hopi Tribal Council, Hopi High School was established in Keams Canyon, Arizona. As the school's first principal, Sekaquaptewa ensured that Hopi language, history, and culture were central to the curriculum.

Hopi High School quickly gained recognition for its innovative approach to education and became a model for other Native American schools. It provided students with a strong foundation in their traditional culture while preparing them for success in higher education and the modern world.

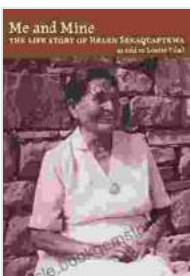
Later Years and Legacy

Sekaquaptewa continued to be a vocal advocate for Native American education throughout her life. She served on numerous boards and committees, including the Hopi Tribal Education Committee and the Arizona State Board of Education. Her tireless efforts and dedication earned her the respect and admiration of both Native American and non-Native American communities.

In 1980, Sekaquaptewa was awarded the National Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the United States, by President Jimmy Carter. She was also inducted into the Arizona Women's Hall of Fame and the National Women's Hall of Fame.

Helen Sekaquaptewa passed away on September 22, 1992, at the age of 94. Her legacy as a pioneer of Native American education continues to inspire generations of students and educators. Today, Hopi High School remains a thriving institution, serving as a testament to her unwavering belief in the power of education to empower Native American youth.

Helen Sekaquaptewa was an extraordinary woman who dedicated her life to preserving and promoting Native American culture and education. Through her unwavering activism, advocacy, and leadership, she made a profound impact on the lives of countless Native American students. Her legacy continues to serve as a testament to the transformative power of education and the importance of celebrating and supporting diverse cultures.



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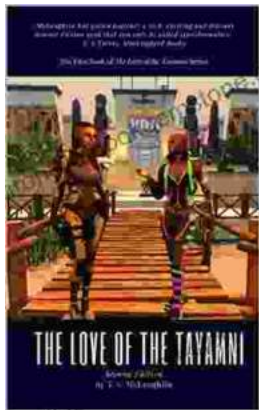
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