MARY R. HAAS

Mary Haas, one of Edward Sapir's last surviving students, the guiding spirit of linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley, for nearly three decades, and the thirty-ninth president of the Linguistic Society of America (1963), died at her home in Berkeley on May 17, 1996. She was 86 and had been in declining health for several years.

Haas was born in Richmond, Indiana, on January 23, 1910, into a Pennsylvania German family that had settled in the area a decade earlier. A bright student with musical talent, she attended Earlham College, a Quaker institution in Richmond, where she acquired a firm grounding in the liberal arts and majored in music and classics. A strong and enduring interest in linguistics was kindled during her college years by reading William Dwight Whitney's *Life and growth of language* and Henry Sweet's *A primer of phonetics*, and she determined to pursue a graduate degree in comparative philology with Carl Darling Buck at the University of Chicago. She entered Chicago in the summer of 1930, and supporting herself with part-time work (including serving as a church organist), she took a full load of classes in Sanskrit, Old High German, Gothic, and the like, including, as she later recalled, an excruciatingly painful course in Germanic from Leonard Bloomfield:

> He gave [the course] in German [and] . . . he had the idea that if he spoke slowly enough you would understand it, but of course it was just the other way around. (Haas 1986:385)

Sapir, who had joined the Chicago faculty in 1925, was then at the height of his popularity and influence as a teacher, and Haas ventured into the Anthropology Department to take his introductory course.

> It was called Introduction to Linguistics or something, but it was actually his book *Language*. He lectured on all of the chapters . . . That's how I got started with Sapir, and of course I never lost interest. (Haas 1986:385)

Although still formally enrolled in comparative philology she soon found herself caught up in the exciting company of Sapir's graduate students in anthropology and linguistics, most of whom were already doing serious work on American Indian languages. Prominent in this cohort were Harry Hoijer, Stanley Newman, Walter Dyk, and Morris Swadesh, the last a brilliant and charming young Chicagoan, only a year older than Haas, with whom she fell in love. They were married in the spring of 1931, and spent their honeymoon on Vancouver Island, he doing fieldwork on Nootka and Nitinat, she recording Nitinat songs and trying her hand at phonetic dictation. The analysis of a Nitinat text, 'A Visit to the Other World,' authored jointly with Swadesh, was to be her first published scholarly work (Swadesh & Swadesh 1932).[1]

The following fall Sapir left Chicago for Yale, where he had accepted the Sterling Professorship of Anthropology and Linguistics. He was able to make arrangements with Yale for three of his graduate students—Newman, Dyk, and Swadesh—to join him, and Haas, who of course went with Swadesh, formally transferred from comparative philology at Chicago to linguistics at Yale. (Hoijer, who took his Ph.D. in 1931, stayed on at Chicago as an instructor.) Joining the Chicago transplants at Yale were Carl Voegelin (a student of A. L. Kroeber's from California), Benjamin Whorf (an insurance adjuster from Hartford), and two men who already had doctorates, the Ro-

[1] Haas maintained an interest in Nootkan phonology and grammar throughout her career and returned to the topic in two late papers (Haas 1969b, 1972).

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mance scholar George Trager and the Sanskritist Murray Emeneau, who had come to Yale to work with Franklin Edgerton and Edgar H. Sturtevant. In addition to these, Sapir also attracted several students in cultural anthropology, most significantly Willard (Nibs) Hill, Weston LaBarre, David Mandelbaum, and Beatrice Whiting. Nearly all of these men and women, fifteen or twenty years later, became the shapers of postwar American linguistics and anthropology.

The essence of the Chicago-Yale 'Sapir School' of linguistics was a distinctively Americanist mixture of historical perspective and descriptivist rigor, enlivened by Sapir's personal interests in semantics, psychology, and social theory. Sapir required his graduate students to master the analytic tools of the discipline, including thorough training in phonetics, and to use these skills in extensive predoctoral fieldwork on an American Indian language. In Haas's case, this was Tunica, a language isolate spoken in Louisiana, which she began work on in 1933, a year after Swadesh had begun his field study of nearby Chitimacha. She also worked extensively (as a graduate research assistant) on Sapir's documentation of Kutchin, a Northern Athabaskan language, and at one point Sapir apparently considered recommending that she do her dissertation fieldwork on Eyak.

Haas completed her dissertation, a grammar of Tunica, in 1935 and was awarded the Ph.D. the same year. It was the middle of the Great Depression, and even with training in anthropology as well as linguistics (this had been Sapir's suggestion: he feared that as a woman she might have difficulty finding an academic position in 'pure' linguistics) Haas's employment prospects were dim. A joint appointment for Swadesh and Haas at Berkeley seemed possible for a short while, but fell through, although Sapir did his best on their behalf.[2] (Haas's marriage to Swadesh ended in 1937.) Fortunately, with Sapir's help, Haas was able to obtain research grants (in 1936 and 1937 from the Department of Anthropology, Yale University, and in 1938–39 from the Penrose Fund of the American Philosophical Society) that allowed her to continue fieldwork on Southeastern languages in Oklahoma. Supported, if only minimally, by such funding, Haas devoted five nearly unbroken years to the documentation of three Muskogean languages—Creek (Muskogee), Koasati, and Hichiti—and the language isolate Natchez. She also did briefer fieldwork on other Southeastern languages, including Choctaw, Biloxi, and Mobilian Jargon.

[2] In a formal letter to A. L. Kroeber, dated June 17, 1935 (Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley), Sapir recommended Swadesh ('there is no better linguist in the country') for a research position or instructorship at Berkeley, adding: 'Mrs. Swadesh has just obtained her Ph.D. with an excellent thesis on Tunica [and] at no extra cost to your department, or at very little extra cost, you would be getting the benefit of another linguist.' He followed this up with a personal letter, dated July 24, 1935 (Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley), in which he wrote: 'Swadesh and his wife are . . . likely for an indefinite period—perhaps the rest of their lives—to be committed to specialist work in American Indian linguistics . . . the Swadeshes love languages as you love decorative art and chess. Their combined energy is enormous and a very little effort to fund them would be richly rewarded.' Two years later, Sapir once again recommended Haas to Kroeber for a position at Berkeley, this time independently of Swadesh: 'I do not know much of what your plans are for a geopgraphic survey of American Indian linguistics in general or California linguistics in particular, but if you have such a scheme in mind, I should think that Mary Haas would be a particularly good bet. My respect for her work has grown steadily from year to year. She is not as brilliant as Morris but more interested in historic problems and fully as accurate in her field methodology' (Sapir to Kroeber August 5, 1937, Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley). Haas once told Golla that she knew of these letters, but was neither surprised nor offended by the blatancy of Sapir's male chauvinism ('no extra cost', 'not as brilliant'). The reality of academic life in the 1930s, she explained, was that men were always given preference, and Sapir knew that it was easier to sell Swadesh than herself to a figure like Kroeber.

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Haas published only a small part of the data she collected on Southeastern languages. Only her Tunica materials were completely written up, in the form of a published version of her dissertation (1941a)—one of the most underappreciated masterpieces of American descriptive linguistics—a grammatical sketch (Haas 1946a), a volume of texts (Haas 1950b), and a full dictionary (Haas 1953a). Her massive documentation of Creek (probably the most extensive descriptive work she carried out) resulted only in a manuscript dictionary and an incomplete manuscript grammatical sketch, although she reported on her Creek materials in several papers (Haas 1938a, 1940a, 1941e, 1945a, 1948a), including two phonological studies written late in her career (Haas 1977a, 1977b), and cited her Creek data frequently in comparative work (Haas 1941c, 1941d, 1946b, 1947a, 1949, 1950a, 1956a, 1977c). Of particular value, and largely unpublished (except for Haas 1956a passim, 1979b, 1982), are the extensive grammatical and text materials on Natchez, which she obtained in 1934 and 1936 from the last fluent speaker.[3]

Haas's training in anthropology was evident in these early years in a number of publications that reflected a broad interdisciplinary interest in the Southeast. Her bibliography includes an ethnohistorical study of Creek towns (1940b); a now-classic description of men's and women's speech in Koasati (1944); an analysis of Natchez and Chitimacha clan structure (1939); a discussion of the aboriginal solar deity of the Tunica (1942d) and of the use of gourds in the area (1941f); and a survey of Southeastern Indian folklore research (1947c). But her primary research focus remained on historical linguistics. By the 1940s she had established a solid reputation with her pioneering work on comparative Muskogean (especially Haas 1941c, later extended in Haas 1947a and 1956a), and had begun the exploration of a possible genetic link between Muskogean, Natchez, and several other groups of the southern Mississippi valley that she was later to call 'Gulf' (Haas 1951b, 1952). In the 1950s this loose grouping, consisting of Atakapa, Chitimacha, Muskogean, Natchez, and Tunica, formed the basis of her search for ever larger and deeper genetic groupings of American Indian languages, leading her ultimately to explore the possibility of links between Gulf and Macro-Algonquian (Haas 1958c, 1963a), Siouan (Haas 1951b, 1952, 1964b), and Hokan-Coahuiltecan (Haas 1954a).

For Haas, as for most of the other linguists of her generation, the watershed of her career was the onset of the Second World War. In 1940–41, as the United States moved toward entering the war, a cadre of field linguists was recruited to learn and teach the lesser-known languages of the European and Pacific theatres. Before World War II Southeast Asia had been virtually the exclusive domain of scholars from the European countries that had colonized it politically—Britain, France, and the Netherlands. Hardly a soul in the United States knew anything about the rich profusion of languages and cultures of Indochina, Thailand, Burma, or the Indonesian archipelago. Recruited to study Far Eastern languages—and ordered to produce practical handbooks, teaching grammars and vocabularies, as quickly as possible—were such scholars as William S. Cornyn, who was assigned Burmese; Murray Emeneau, who was channeled into the study of Vietnamese; and Haas, who got Thai. Given the near total lack of teaching materials on Thai in those days, Haas, like Cornyn and Emeneau, had to learn her language from scratch, through direct elicitation from native speakers. This was no big

[3] Haas also had possession of a large corpus of data obtained by Victor Riste from the same speaker in 1931 (Haas 1979c:311,n.4). These notes, together with all of Haas's Southeastern materials, have now been deposited in the Library of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.

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problem for her, since she had merely to apply the classic fieldwork techniques honed to such perfection in her Amerindian work to this new language of utterly different phonological and grammatical structure—an effortless intellectual leap.

Haas spent 1941–43 at the University of Michigan acquiring a knowledge of Thai phonology and syntax through intensive fieldwork with Thai speakers, one of whom, Heng R. Subhanka, became her second husband. (That marriage also ended in divorce, in the late 1940s.) In 1943 she went to Berkeley where the Army Specialized Training Program had been set up, under the direction of A. L. Kroeber, to teach strategic languages to servicemen.

Mary Haas eventually became one of the leading Thai specialists in the world outside Thailand, taking her place in a select group that included three other towering scholars of her generation: André-Georges Haudricourt, a quintessential French scholar of the old school; Li Fang-Kuei, who, like Haas, was trained in Amerindian linguistics (he was one of Sapir's earliest students at Chicago), and who, along with Yuen-Ren Chao, must be reckoned one of the greatest Chinese linguists of the twentieth century; and William J. Gedney, who carried out extensive fieldwork on Thai dialects in the 1950s and 1960s in remote corners of Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

Haas made lasting contributions to Thai studies in areas these other scholars barely touched. Building on the pedagogical materials she had assembled during and after the war years (Haas 1942e, 1945c-e, 1954c, 1956b, Haas & Subhanka 1945), she taught Thai in the Berkeley Oriental languages department from 1947 to 1960. Her book *Spoken Thai*, co-authored with Heng Subhanka, was the culmination of this early work, and constituted the high-water mark of the Holt 'Spoken Language' series (Haas & Subhanka 1946.) It is notable for the clarity and accuracy of its grammataical notes, and the insight displayed in the organization of its drills and pattern practices.

Haas's analysis of Thai phonology has stood the test of time. Her elegant phonemic transcription (including her diacritical marks for the tones) was accepted as standard for decades, and even today has only undergone minor modifications by one writer or another. She was also among the first to describe the syntax and semantics of numeral classifiers in Southeast Asian languages, both for Thai (Haas 1942c) and for Burmese (Haas 1951a). She was particularly interested in Thai techniques of word formation, such as reduplication (Haas 1942b), intensification (Haas 1946c), and 'elaboration'. Her memorable 'Brief description of Thai' that serves as a preface to her *Thai-English student's dictionary* (see below) constitutes the best capsule account of Thai morphology ever written.

Haas's anthropological background led her to pay special attention to Thai linguistic phenomena that directly reflect aspects of Thai society and culture, a line of research in which she gave relatively free rein to the more humorous, even racy, side of her personality (see her discussion of the titillative malaise felt by Thai-English bilinguals when pronouncing innocent Thai words that fortuitously resemble naughty words in English (1951c), and her description of how speakers intentionally mutilate the phonological structure of dissyllabic collocations for comic effect (1957)). She also explored the complex realm of Thai terms of address within the family, where couples often start by addressing each other as if they were siblings; then, after having children, may settle into comfortable teknonymy, addressing each other as 'father'/'mother' (1969f).

The Thai system of writing (Haas 1956b) is far and away the best treatment of the subject in English (or any other non-Thai language). Beautifully clear and systematic, but without burdening the learner with historical explanations for the synchronic complexities, this is the indispensable introduction to the Thai writing system. Haas's

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crowning achievement in Thai studies is her wonderful *Thai-English student's dictionary* (1964a). Every entry is painstakingly crafted, with absolute consistency of format, and the glosses are clear and crisp, natural and unstilted, often with three or four English equivalents to delineate the precise range of meaning.

Haas's involvement with the Army Specialized Training Program led to her appointment at Berkeley as lecturer in Thai and linguistics in 1945, and then to an assistant professorship in Oriental languages in 1947. In addition to offering regular courses in Thai, she began developing a linguistics curriculum, and among her early students (1947–48) were two undergraduates, Harold Conklin and William Sturtevant, who went on to become central figures in anthropological linguistics. Once her position at Berkeley was secure, Haas joined forces with like-minded Berkeley colleagues, most importantly her erstwhile Yale compatriot Murray Emeneau, but also including Madison Beeler, Peter Boodberg, Yuen-Ren Chao, Douglas Chrétien, Yakov Malkiel, and Frances Whitfield, to form a Committee on Linguistics, which soon blossomed into a graduate department of linguistics with a program of teaching and research deliberately modeled on that of Yale in the 1930s. Thorough grounding in historical and comparative linguistics—particularly in Indo-European—was balanced by training in the latest analytical tools of descriptive theory. Students were expected to make a commitment to the long-term study of a particular language. Although other languages were not discouraged, it was hoped that most students would choose to work on an American Indian language, more particularly a California language, and in 1953 the Survey of California Indian Languages was formally established, with Mary Haas as director, as the principal research arm of the department.

The roster of Berkeley doctorates during Haas's period of influence, from the 1950s through her retirement in 1977, includes many of the leading figures of American Indian linguistics of the last two generations. William Bright, whose field language was Karuk, was the earliest of Haas's graduate students (he began his fieldwork in 1949, and completed his dissertation in 1955). She subsequently served on the doctoral committees (in the majority of cases as dissertation director) of over forty students who worked on American Indian languages. Among these (with the languages they studied and the dates of their doctorates) were Sydney Lamb (1958, Mono), Philip R. Barker (1959, Klamath), William Shipley (1959, Maidu), Sylvia Broadbent (1960, Southern Sierra Miwok). Karl V. Teeter (1962, Wiyot), Catherine Callaghan (1963, Lake Miwok), Harvey Pitkin (1963, Wintu), Esther Matteson (1963, Piro), Terrence Kaufman (1963, Tzeltal), William H. Jacobsen, Jr. (1964, Washo), Haruo Aoki (1965, Nex Perce), Robert Oswalt (1961, Kashaya Pomo), Wick R. Miller (1962, Acoma), Mary LeCron Foster (1965, Tarascan), James Crawford (1966, Cocopa), Margaret Langdon (1966, Diegueño), Sally McLendon (1966, Eastern Pomo), Shirley Silver (1966, Shasta), Russell Ultan (1967, Konkow), Thomas Collord (1968, Chukchansi Yokuts), Una Canger (1969, Mam), David Rood (1969, Wichita), Allan Taylor (1969, Blackfoot), Victor Golla (1970, Hupa), Robert Hollow (1970, Mandan), Julius Moshinsky (1970, Southeastern Pomo), Alva Wheeler (1970, Siona), Mauricio Mixco (1971, Kiliwa), Richard Applegate (1972, Ineseño Chumash), Leonard Talmy (1972, Atsugewi), Douglas Parks (1972, Pawnee), Bruce Pearson (1972, Delaware), Michael J. P. Nichols (1974, Northern Paiute), Geoffrey Gamble (1975, Wikchamni Yokuts), Brent Galloway (1977, Halkomelem), Kathryn Klar (1977, comparative Chumash), and Marc Okrand (1977, Mutsun Costanoan).

She also worked with several students after she retired, including Kenneth Whistler (1980, Wintun), Jon Dayley (1981, Tz'utujil Maya), Anthony Woodbury (1981, Yupik),

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Alice [Schlichter] Shepherd (1985, Yukian), and Katherine Turner (1987, Salinan). In addition, she graciously made her unpublished notes on Southeastern languages available to a number of students at other institutions, and she monitored several students whose dissertations were on Southeast Asian and Austronesian languages, among them Lili Rabel (1957, Khasi), R. B. Jones, Jr. (1958, Karen), Jesse O. Sawyer (1959, Achinese), Joseph R. Cooke (1965, Thai, Burmese, and Vietnamese), James A. Matisoff (1967, Lahu), and Jean Critchfield Braine (1970, Car Nicobarese). She also directed or greatly influenced the work of the Africanist William J. Samarin (1961) and the Slavicist Johanna Nichols (1973).

In her teaching, Haas emphasized the rigorous fieldwork-oriented training in skills and methods that she had learned from Sapir. She required a descriptive grammar as a dissertation, and insisted that her students in addition commit themselves to preparing and publishing a dictionary and a set of narrative texts. The University of California Publications in Linguistics has devoted well over half of its volumes to these works of her students, which collectively form the most enduring of Haas's scholarly legacies. When similar descriptive work by students of Haas's students, such as William Bright at UCLA and Margaret Langdon at UC San Diego, is included, the Haas legacy is even greater.

Although Haas collected small amounts of field data on Yurok and other California languages (see Haas 1970a), and carried out brief fieldwork on Chipewyan (Haas 1968b), her primary involvement in Americanist research after 1945 was in the comparative work that had initially attracted her to linguistics. She continued her Muskogean and Gulf research; she took up comparative Algonquian (Haas 1958a, 1966a, 1966d, 1967a, 1967b, 1967c, 1968c, 1968d) and demonstrated to the satisfaction of modern scholarship that Yurok and Wiyot have a genetic relationship to that family (Haas 1958a, 1966a).[4] She began work on comparative Hokan and explored its possible subgrouping (Haas 1954a, 1963b, 1964c, 1980). She was, above all, an enthusiastic participant in the classificatory 'lumping' of the late 1950s and early 1960s, putting forward such hypotheses as the relationship of Gulf to Algonquian (Haas 1958c), Tonkawa to Algonquian (Haas 1959, 1967e), Muskogean to Algonquian (Haas 1963a), Kutenai to Algonquian (Haas 1965a), and of Yuchi and Siouan to Na-Dene (Haas 1964b). Although she later abandoned most of these positions, and came even to doubt the total validity of the Gulf relationship, she remained a fervent advocate of long-range comparison and the reconstruction of protolanguages. This position was expressed most clearly in her methodological essay, *The prehistory of languages* (Haas 1969h), based on the Faculty Research Lectures she was invited to give at Berkeley during 1964–65. A major paper, 'American Indian linguistic prehistory', written for Sebeok's *Current trends in linguistics* (Haas 1973b) sums up her view of the results of classificatory and reconstructive studies for understanding the linguistic variety of the New World.

In her mature years, Haas balanced her earlier enthusiasm for genetic relationship with an interest in diffusion and areal phenomena. Her research focused on the Northwest California area made famous by Kroeber as the site of a 'cultural climax' involving speakers of three radically distinct languages, Yurok (Algic), Karuk (Hokan), and Hupa (Athabaskan), and resulted in two major papers: studies of the diffusion of diminutive consonant symbolism (Haas 1970a) and of shape classification in grammatical systems (Haas 1967d). In a more general paper (Haas 1976b) that was her final word on deep

[4] For an assessment of Haas's contributions to Algonquian studies see Pentland (1996).

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comparative linguistics in the Americas, she sketched an outline of a Northern California diffusion area and called for an integration of diffusional and genetic strategies in the study of Hokan and Penutian relationships in Western North America. In the last decade before Haas retired from full-time teaching in 1977 her interest turned to the history of American Indian linguistics. She wrote on the nineteenth-century origins of the Americanist tradition (Haas 1969a, 1969c, 1975b, 1977d), on the intellectual relationships among Boas, Sapir, and Bloomfield (Haas 1976b), and the history of Southeastern research (Haas 1969e, 1971, 1973c). Most of these were reprinted, together with earlier papers on sociolinguistics and historical and areal linguistics, in *Language, culture, and history: Essays by Mary R. Haas* (selected and introduced by Anwar S. Dil, 1978a).

Many honors came to Haas in her later career, none perhaps greater than being elected to membership in the National Academy of Sciences in 1978. She was also an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a Guggenheim Fellow, and a fellow of the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences. In 1963, as noted above, she was president of the Linguistic Society of America. After her retirement she was visiting professor at several institutions, including the Australian National University, Barnard College (where she delivered the Gildersleeve Lecture), Northwestern University (as the Edith Kreeger Wolf Distinguished Visiting Professor), UC San Diego, the University of Georgia, the University of Kansas, and Ohio State University. She spent a term as a Senior Killam Fellow at the University of Calgary, visiting several other Canadian campuses. At her retirement from the University of California in 1977 she received the Berkeley Citation, the highest honor the campus can bestow.

Mary Haas was the recipient of three festschrifts. Her sixtieth birthday was the occasion for a special issue of the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (vol. 90, no.1, 1970), as well as a collection of papers on American Indian languages (Sawyer 1971). In 1986, many of her students and her students' students gathered to honor her at the Haas Festival Conference at UC Santa Cruz, and the volume of papers arising from this meeting was published in 1988 as *In honor of Mary Haas* (edited by William Shipley).

In her last years she lived quietly at her home in Berkeley with a succession of dearly loved cats. At her request she had no public funeral, but a memorial service was held on the Berkeley campus and the remarks made at that service by her colleagues, students, and friends have been edited and published by Leanne Hinton (1997). A forthcoming issue of the journal *Anthropological Linguistics* will be devoted to an assessment of her life and work.

Mary Haas had no children. The institutions where she studied and taught were her real home, her colleagues and students were her extended family. In her will she left substantial bequests to Earlham College, Yale University, and the University of California at Berkeley, to support and encourage students of linguistics.

[Victor Golla, *Humboldt State University* and *University of California Davis*; James A. Matisoff, *University of California Berkeley*; Pamela Munro, *University of California Los Angeles.*]

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