

An Online Chemhuevi Dictionary

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Introduction

- Chemehuevi is a Uto-Aztecan language closely related to Southern Paiute (Sapir 1930a, b; 1931)
- More distantly related to languages such as Shoshoni (Crum and Dayley 1993, Gould and Loether 2002, Miller 1972, 1996).
- It is spoken in Western Arizona and Eastern California on two reservations:
 - the Colorado River Indian Reservation in Arizona
 - the Chemehuevi Valley Indian Reservation in California

Introduction continued

- To our knowledge there are approximately 5 speakers of the language; all are over the age of 50.
- No children are currently learning the language as a first language.

Previous Print Documentation

- Previous documentation of Chemehuevi is rather sparse.
- Kroeber's "Notes on Shoshonean Dialects of Southern California" (1909).
- J. P. Harrington collected large amounts of Chemehuevi vocabulary and texts.
- Carobeth Laird published two books on Chemehuevi ethnography which include short texts in Chemehuevi and fair sized word lists (Laird 1976, 1984).
- Margaret Press's UCLA Ph.D. Dissertation (1975, 1979) represent the most detailed linguistic studies of the language.

Previous Audio Documentation

- Roy Major (1969) Doris Duke Indian Oral History Program, worked with several speakers eliciting approximately 11 reels of narrative, songs and language data.
- Guy Tyler (1972)
 - Guy Tyler was an amateur ethnographer who traveled primarily around the southwest eliciting recording language data from native speakers of 22 languages.
 - See <http://www.nativeland.org/ilrp.html> for a complete list of languages.
- Margaret Press (1973-74) audio recordings made as part of her dissertation.

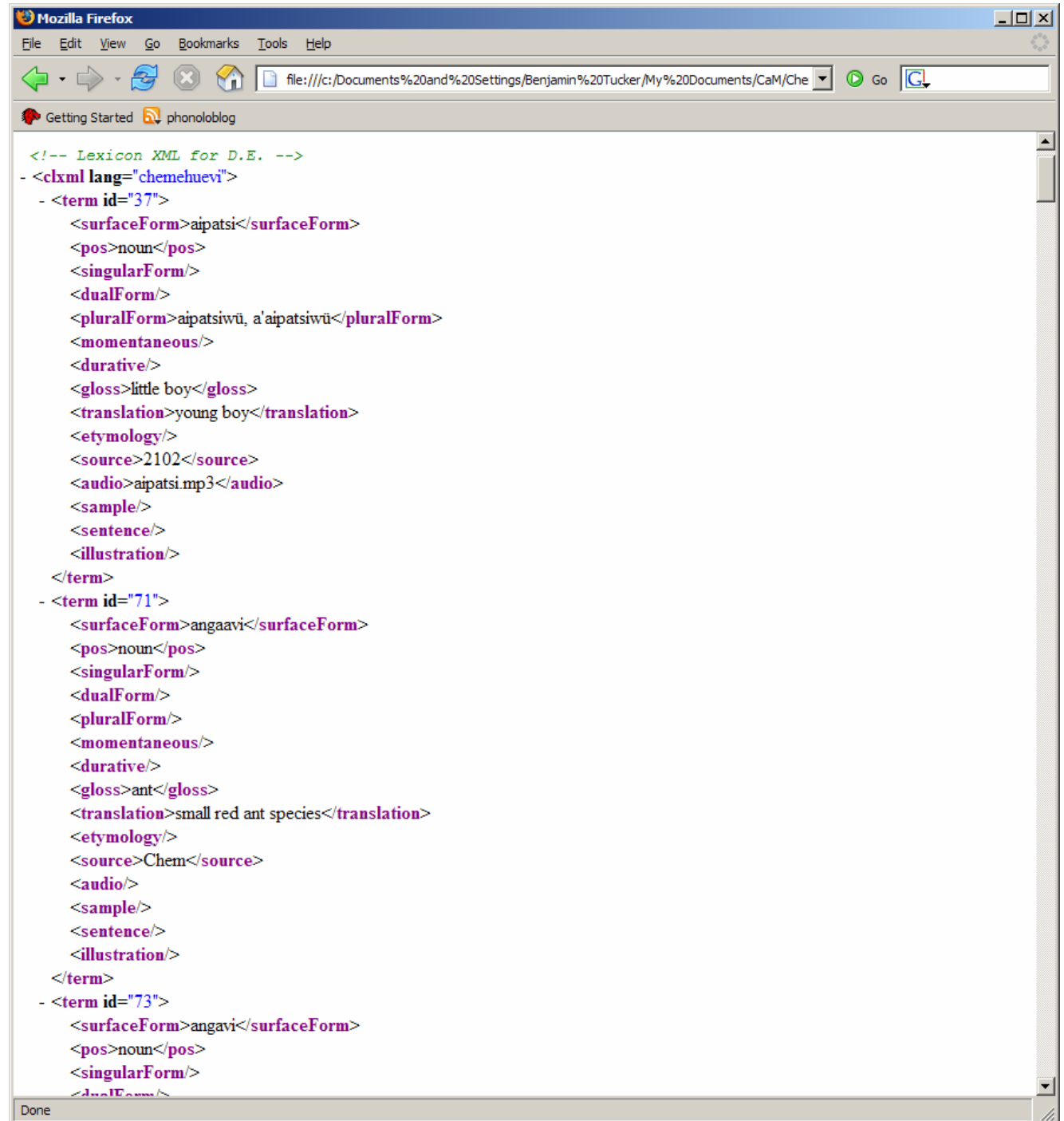
The Dictionary

- In the summer of 2003, Elzinga constructed a database which served as the foundation for an electronic dictionary of the language.
- The source material
 - Word lists found in Laird 1976, Laird 1984
 - Word lists from Press 1979
 - Lexical items gathered during interviews with native speakers
- The database was created in Excel converted to XML using a Visual Basic script and then to HTML.

Why XML and what is it?

- XML stands for Extensible Markup Language.
- XML is the suggested best practice (emeld.org).
- Advantages to XML
 - XML is open source, therefore no reliance on proprietary software and can easily be updated as technology changes.
 - The researcher has complete control over the data and the database structure.
 - Ability to use XSLT or Extensible Stylesheet Language in conjunction with an XML database. XSLT allows the user to create an RTF, PDF or HTML output of a database.

View of our XML database



The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window displaying XML data. The address bar shows the file path: file:///c:/Documents%20and%20Settings/Benjamin%20Tucker/My%20Documents/CaM/Che. The browser window contains the following XML content:

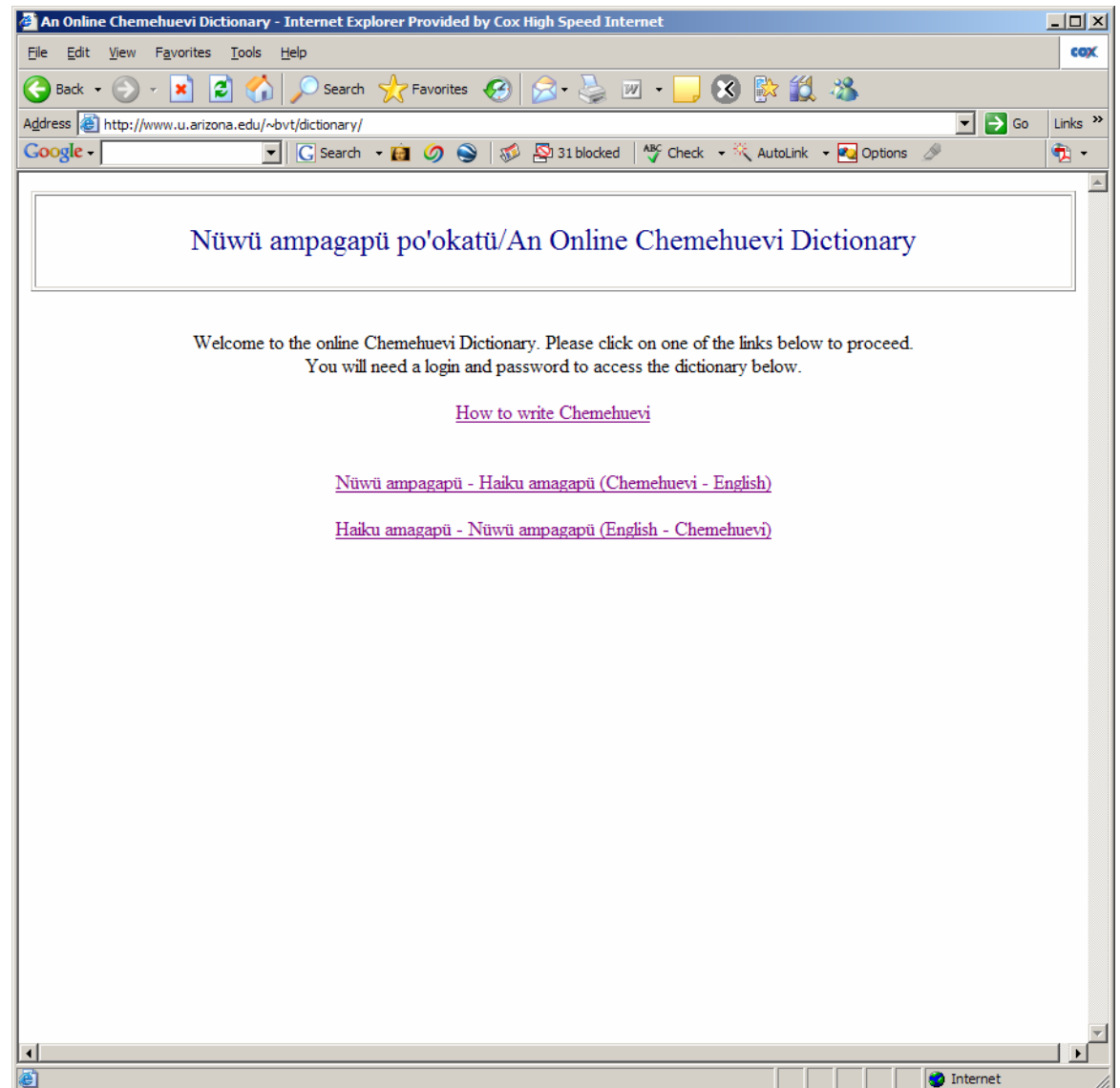
```
<!-- Lexicon XML for D.E. -->
- <clxml lang="chemehuevi">
  - <term id="37">
    <surfaceForm>aipatsi</surfaceForm>
    <pos>noun</pos>
    <singularForm/>
    <dualForm/>
    <pluralForm>aipatsiwü, a'aipatsiwü</pluralForm>
    <momentaneous/>
    <durative/>
    <gloss>little boy</gloss>
    <translation>young boy</translation>
    <etymology/>
    <source>2102</source>
    <audio>aipatsi.mp3</audio>
    <sample/>
    <sentence/>
    <illustration/>
  </term>
  - <term id="71">
    <surfaceForm>angaavi</surfaceForm>
    <pos>noun</pos>
    <singularForm/>
    <dualForm/>
    <pluralForm/>
    <momentaneous/>
    <durative/>
    <gloss>ant</gloss>
    <translation>small red ant species</translation>
    <etymology/>
    <source>Chem</source>
    <audio/>
    <sample/>
    <sentence/>
    <illustration/>
  </term>
  - <term id="73">
    <surfaceForm>angavi</surfaceForm>
    <pos>noun</pos>
    <singularForm/>
    <dualForm/>
```

Why XML and what is it?

- Disadvantages to XML
 - XML and XSLT are two independent programming languages
 - Must be learned by researcher or a programmer must be hired
 - Learning their basic structures and approaches however is not extremely difficult.
 - Easier to use and learn software packages (e.g. Microsoft Excel).

The Dictionary

Dictionary Demo



The Dictionary

- How to write (pronounce) Chemehuevi (soon to include audio examples)
- Chemehuevi – English, English – Chemehuevi
- Alphabetic sort
- Ability to listen to sound files
 - Several speakers representing
 - both genders
 - several dialects
- Search can be performed using the browser search function (not a particularly intuitive search)

The Dictionary: Main Goals

- Document the language
 - A synthesis of research done by Laird and Press in the form of a written dictionary with original audio recordings from Major (1969), Tyler (1972), Press (1973-74), and recent work by Penfield, Serratos, & Tucker (2005-2006).
- Produce a resource for the community
 - A researcher has an ethical responsibility to the community to give something back to the community.
 - Frequently this is accomplished by the giving a copy of research to the community or to the local archive. However, for most community members this product never reaches them or if it does it is not very useful.
- The dictionary created as a means to both document the language and return something to the community.

Future Development of the Dictionary

- Data clean-up, fix errors, typos
- Include data from Harrington notes
- Ethnographic information and sort function (the hardest part is the data entry)
- Inclusion of images and videos
- Increased encryption
- Internal search function