

P. O. Box #113
Window Rock, Arizona
7 April 1954

Miss Laura Gilpin
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Dear Laura:

After talking with Maxwell Yazzie and other Navaho regarding the "four-day cradle board" observed by you in the Shonto, Arizona region, I get the following information.

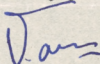
This board, one of which we have, showing details, has no ceremonial significance, and is used as a temporary affair until the regular board is made.

There seems to be no specific number of days before the cradle board is made. The wood was usually gathered according to ritual pattern before birth. I have some of the songs used while the wood was being obtained.

The board was assembled in one day, specific measurements being made, and the correct number of holes being drilled, etc. When finished, it was coated with mutton fat mixed with red ochre. After this, the songs prescribed for such an occasion by the Blessingway were sung by a Medicine Man.

Hope this will be of some help. Of course there may be variants.

Sincerely yours,



Richard F. Van Valkenburgh

RFVV/jlc
CC: Sallie P. Van Valkenburgh