

1821
965
1846
119

THE NAVAJO TRIBE
WINDOW ROCK, ARIZONA

RAYMOND NAKAI
CHAIRMAN, Navajo Tribal Council

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Navajo Land Claim
Box 128
Window Rock, Ariz, 86515
16 October 1964



Mrs Laura Gilpin
Box 1173
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Dear Mrs Gilpin:

Mr McCabe recently asked me to go over the manuscript which you had sent to him to make what comments I might be able on the basis of our data obtained in the course of the land claims research. I found the manuscript very interesting and welcome the opportunity to comment on it. I have made a few minor changes on the manuscript itself, as I note that it is a carbon, such as correcting a few dates and spelling in a place or two.

In addition, I have a few other comments and suggestions which I will include here and which you may use at your own discretion.

The first is suggested spellings for Navajo words, which Mr McCabe particularly asked me to undertake. I have based these spellings on the alphabet developed by William Morgan and Robert Young, as it is the most adaptable to use with modern type. If the type available to the printer does not allow for the use of accent marks to indicate high tone, the use of the bar 1 (Y or 1) or the other specialized diacritical marks, these could be omitted without greatly distorting the intelligibility of the words. The use of ' for the glottal stop could be replaced by the use of a question mark, preferably without the dot under it, if you feel that this might be confused with tone or accent the way I have used it. The following are the suggested spellings:

✓ Blanca Peak - Sisnaajini
Mt Taylor - Tsoodzil
San Francisco Peaks - Doko'oes'iiid
La Plata Mts - Dibentsaa
Navajo Mt - Naatsis'aan
Huerfano Mesa - Dzi' Na'oodi'ii
Gobernador Knob - Ch'601'i'i
Pueblo People - Kiis'aanii
bow-guard - k'eet'oh
crescent pendant (naje) - názhahí (also sometimes pronounced nazhahái)

Some of my following comments will have to do with matters of historical documentation and I believe that they will be of definite

✓
A-boat-Navaho
Maries Taylor & Son
Maries Taylor

Hopi Say they were there first
before the Navaho

Navaho Say they were there first

value. Others are frankly matters of opinion, sometimes in dispute among students of Navajo culture and I will indicate these, particularly where my own opinion differs from that of others, so that you may decide for yourself.

✓ First a matter of opinion, the characterization of the Museum of New Mexico's work on salvage archaeology of the Navajo Reservoir as "the first comprehensive data of the early whereabouts of the Navaho and their Apache cousins." The people at the museum may feel that way about it, but I think that it gives an undeserved slight to the work of others, not only our own, but that of Dr Keur, Hurt, Vivian and VanValkenburgh's early work in archaeology, as well as work in history by Dr Reeve (published in the New Mexico Historical Review) and perhaps others. The museum has published a good deal more on Navajo archaeology than has previously appeared in print from any other single project and they deserve plenty of credit for what they have done, but their work has been within a very restricted geographic area.

Next a matter of both opinion and documentation. You wrote that the Spaniards did not encounter the Navajos until 1626. It is true that the earliest use of this name, in the form "Apaches de ~~Nabaju~~ Nabaju," that has been located in the early documents dates from that year. Few historians dispute, however, that some of the earlier references to Querechos and ~~Apaches~~ Apaches and a fair number of the later references to Apaches which do not specify which tribe of Apaches, may well refer to Navajos. The principal dissident to this interpretation, and the only ^{one} who disagrees in almost every instance of such usage, is Albert H Schroeder, who was the government's witness against the Navajos in the claims case. Regarding the 1626 use of the term Apaches de Nabaju, the writer was Fray Geronimo de Zarate Salmeron. Fray Benavides first wrote of the Navajo, insofar as the surviving documents reveal, in 1630. Benavides account is of great importance as it is the first account that gives any description in detail of the tribe, however. Zarate Salmeron's "Relacion" can be found in a translation by Lummis in The Land of Sunshine, Vol XII, Dec 1899 to May 1900, pp. ~~33-39~~ 39-48, 104-13, 180-87 and Vol ~~XXX~~ XI, pp 336-46, which I expect should be available in one of the local libraries there. There are a number of translations of Benavides account, both of the 1630 version and his revised manuscript of 1636.

✓ I might note that the Tiguez friendly welcome of Coronado's party did not last for long, but it is a minor point and not particularly relevant to Navajo history.

You have frequent references to the Hopis preceding the Navajos to Canyon de Chelly and indicate the first Navajo settlement there was in the 1700s. A number of authorities would ~~xxx~~ agree with you on this, but others are in definite disagreement. My own opinion is that

Anti dating Navaho

14th Cent. Hopi Pottery brought as this to 19th -
Very strong for 14-17th Cent. after that diminished

No permanent Hopi structures.

the Navajos settled in the area very early, that the Hopis who lived in the canyon were refugees from droughts and disputes at Hopi who came to live with the Navajos for a while, some of whom later returned to Hopi while others intermarried with the Navajos and were absorbed into the tribe. The data that we have available is subject to either understanding or even to supporting that both of these events took place. While I feel that the weight of the data favors my ideas, it is frankly one of the problems that is not ultimately solved and is worthy of further investigation.

Your reference to "Knee bread" I think is used for the same type of corn bread that I have usually heard called "kneel-down bread" because it is cooked in the ground and one must kneel down to prepare it. As there does not seem to be a standardized translation in the literature, it might be worth including the Navajo name, *ntsídógó'i*.

While the Navajo began raising sheep in the seventeenth century, I would not be inclined to consider them a "major economic resource" until toward the end of the eighteenth century. Sheep raising required the acquisition of a number of skills and considerable adjustment of social and political life before it could really attain importance. I think that this correlates well with the fact that most references to Navajo weaving ~~xxx~~ in the documents appear after 1770. There are some earlier references, however. The earliest is for 1706, based upon observations that seem to have been made primarily in 1705, which appears in Hackett's Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches Thereto, to 1772, in Cuervo y Valdez' letter on pp. 381-83. There are also frequent mentions of weaving in Hill, W. W., "Some Navaho Culture Changes During Two Centuries (With a Translation of the Early Eighteenth Century Rabal Manuscript)", Smithsonian Miscellaneous Series, Vol 100, all referring to the period from about 1705 to 1745.

Look up

One of the most surprising items that I found while going through the historical documentation in the claims case did not have to do with an extremely early period, but was within the last 100 years. The earliest recognition of the need for livestock reduction that I have found is dated August 14, 1883, by D. M. Riordan, who was then the Indian Agent at Fort Defiance. He also recommended bringing in better stock to help the Navajos improve the breed of sheep. I don't want to discredit Father Anselm Weber and no story of the Navajo would be complete without mention of him, but Riordan is another man who should be mentioned. He was one of the few Navajo agents who was on a par with Dodge and was far ahead of his time in his recognition of Navajo problems. The letter by Riordan may be found in the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1883. Riordan's recommendation is certainly evidence of the rapid economic recovery of the Navajos following Fort Sumner and I believe, had more attention been paid to Navajo livestock problems back in the '80's, the tragedy

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of the '30's might well never have happened. ~~XXXX~~ Incidentally, I would like to recommend Downs' recent study of Navajo animal husbandry which was published by the University of California. While there are a few places where I disagree with him, it is an excellent job and I think that you would enjoy reading it.

Regarding the mention you make of the treaty measure for the individual allotment of land, I do not believe that it or any other articles of the Treaty of ~~xx~~ 1868 have ever been rescinded. The government did follow a policy of trying to allot lands in the southwest for a while, but finally gave it up and none of the allotments were made within the Treaty Reservation.

The sheep brought to the Southwest by Onate were not Merinos, but a breed called churro in Spanish. I think that Amsden gives some data on this. As was too frequently the case in the Spanish monarchy, there was a royal monopoly on merinos and they were not allowed in the colonies.

There are enough references to the use of cotton by the Navajos to suggest that the Pueblo refugees from de Vargas did bring cotton seeds with them and that the use of cotton persisted for sometime in Navajo culture, but that it was completely lost by the beginning of the United States rule. I doubt that it was ever as important as wool in Navajo woven goods. There is some use of cotton twine for warp in the cheaper Navajo rugs made today.

Your quote from McNitt is not given in Bent's own words. I would recommend that you merely quote McNitt and say that he bases this on Bent, or go back to check the original source. In 1846 Arizona was a name that referred only to a small place south of Tucson and the Coconino Plateau was in country then considered a part of New Mexico. I do not believe that the name Coconino Plateau came into use until considerably later.

Regarding the greatest number of Navajos at Bosque Redondo at any one time, the highest figure that I find in the monthly post returns is 8567 for Decmber 1864.

The Treaty of 1868 is not the only treaty ever ratified by Congress of the many Indian treaties, nor is it even the only treaty with the Navajos that was ratified. Washington's treaty of 1849 was ratified in 1850. See Navajo Tribal Code, Vol. 2, pp. 279-282.

While Mexico's struggles for independence lasted for some time, 1821 is the date usually taken for the beginning of Mexican rule and Iturbide's success in that year was celebrated in Santa Fe. Fort Defiance was founded at Canyon Bonito in the summer of 1851, see Abel, Annie Heloise, The Official Correspondence of James S. Calhoun, pp 416-419 for Col. Sumner's report of the event. Kit Carson did not begin his Navajo campaign until 1863. In 1862 he was engaged in the campaign against the Mescalero Indians. Narbona's attack on the Navajos in Canyon de Chelly was January 17th, 1805. In spite of the general consensus by historians, I am not fully convinced that this was the attack on Massacre Cave, although it may well have been. In the ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~

incomplete documentation in the Santa Fe archives there are hints of other expeditions that also penetrated Canyon de Chelly in the Spanish and Mexican periods. There is no doubt that Narbona did gain a victory of considerable proportions in the Canyon de Chelly, but some of the details given in his report are quite different from the Navajo tradition of the Massacre Cave attack, particularly with regard to the proportion of warriors to women and children killed. I see no good reason to doubt either story, so am inclined to think that there were two different attacks, but could be wrong.

My only other point is that I am of the opinion that Navajos were doing blacksmithing before Dodge brought in a smith to teach them. Their work was undoubtedly by very simple methods and Dodge's aid would have been of great value in teaching new techniques, but I do not think that he ~~deserves~~ deserves credit for introducing the ~~craft~~ craft. The situation is comparable to the sending of several farmers out to teach the Navajos agriculture. They probably helped introduce new crops and methods, but the Navajos had been farmers for centuries. I base this opinion in part upon the statements of Navajo informants, in part upon two tree ring dates of 1830±G and 1846±G from the anvil supports from two old Navajo smithies and the following statement from a letter by Dodge, addressed to Governor Meriwether from Ft Defiance and dated Sept. 30th, 1855, "If the treaty is confirmed I respectfully suggest that in carrying out the provisions that the Navajos may be furnished with four sets of blacksmith tools and one thousand pounds of iron. They have eighteen native blacksmiths who work with the hand bellows and the primitive tools used by the Mexicans with which they make all of the bridle bits, rings, buckles, etc." (Dodge to Meriwether, National Archives, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, New Mexico Superintendency, Letters Received, File Mark N-12/1856 encl.) I believe that it was in carrying out the provisions of this treaty, even though never ratified, that a blacksmith was sent out to help teach the Navajos.

I think this covers all of the points that I have in mind and I hope that the above data and opinion will be of value to you. I enjoyed reading the manuscript and think that you have done a good job, in spite of my numerous comments, which I hope you will feel free to use or ignore as you wish and to agree or disagree with me as seems best to you.

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Sincerely,

David M Brugge

David M Brugge
Assistant Anthropologist