

Government

Up to the U.S. occupation of the Southwest,
the Navaho were loosely governed by a group of "head men"

There was no political entity.

According to earliest legend, there were 12 Peace Chiefs
& 12 War Chiefs, functioning as necessity required.

Both the Spanish & Mexican Govts had tried both
retaliation & bribery, to win a peaceful co-existence

Almost immediately after Gen. Kearny was established
in Santa Fe, Navaho raiding groups stole some of his stock
& raided settlements along the Rio Grande, thus bringing the
U.S. into conflict with the Navaho & thus to the necessity for
for means to negotiate with people who were not organized
into any political group.

Treaty of 1849 - signed at Bear Springs
H. Wengate 1849
by two head men & Col. Davis's men.

~~This was~~ ⁸⁴ by two head men & Col. Davis's men.
wording just not possible for Navaho to understand
These two did not represent the whole Tribe. Other
head men continued to raiding parties - bringing
about necessity for Gen. Carleton's Indian War
Never had been "head" of tribe prior to Ft. Sumner.
After return to Res. still traditional gov. by extended
family (possibly clan) groups.

1901-1934 -

~~Development of Chapters~~ - Division
of Six separate agency jurisdictions. This did not
develop tribal unity.

1927 John Hunter, Superintendent Leupp Agency
developed Chapters - local community organizations
This brought local people to gether with representatives
of the BIA. for improvement of livestock - + agricultural
techniques & advancement of education. Other jurisdictions
took up the Chapter idea, & the movement spread.

Stock reduction program brought it to a halt 1932-1950.
Revived after 1950 steady gain. today 96 Chapters.

Prior to the occupation of the Southwest by the United States, the Navaho existed as groups of people, united by language, by tribal culture, but with no political entity as we know it. There were chiefs or head men who were leaders in different areas. This was the cause of much confusion to the Spanish Government in New Mexico for when peace was made with one Chief - disturbance broke out somewhere else led by another Chief who seemed to have no relation to other groups. Government as such was non-existent and not understood. But there were notable characters among these early Navaho Chiefs of the early nineteenth century, many of them destined to be conquered by Colonel Kit Carson and sent into exile. Their names appear on the Treaty of 1868, signed for the United States by General Sherman and ^{by} twenty eight Navaho leaders. This list includes famous Navaho names, such as Barboncito - Chief. Mamehito, Narbono, Gaxido Mueho, and others.

While the Navaho are of Athabaskan origin and speak the Athabaskan language - they are in reality ^{somewhat mixed tribe} ~~a somewhat mixed tribe~~ due to the ^{intermarriage with} ~~mixing of~~

and culture. Perhaps This also accounts for their exceptional vigor.

During the exile at Fort Sumner, General Carleton tried to establish a single form of Government, but the old order of family and clan groups, each with its own head man, could not be changed, any other way of living was incomprehensible ^{to the Hawaiians}. After the return to the reservation in 1868, and the establishing of the U.S. Gov. Agency at Fort Defiance, the old order, of course continued. This first Agent to the Hawaiians, isolated by distance and lack of communication, secured the aid of some of the Hawaiian leaders who had signed the Treaty, to assist him in maintaining law and order. Councils ^{of the leaders} were called in an effort to further understanding of just what the U.S. Gov. really was. But as time went on the agents found it necessary to be more autocratic. ~~By~~ By 1901 the Bureau of Indian Affairs divided the Hawaiian Country into districts, with Agencies ^{or} in each. Six districts (including the Hopi) were developed during this period of 1901-1934. This system of smaller areas of jurisdiction, greatly facilitated the work of each agency.

Oil was located in the San Juan district, the Shiprock Area and discussion arose as to whether these oil leases were to be executed by ~~this future negotiator~~ ~~would go~~ to this district or by the Tribe as a whole. Article X of the treaty signed by General Sherman required the consent of at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of all adult male Indians, regarding the cession of any portion of the reservation. Therefore the Department of the Interior ruled that these oil leases should be for the benefit of the whole tribe, and authorized the Commission to the Navaho Tribe to sign oil & gas leases in their behalf.

The establishment of a governing body, however was a slow process.

But the Department of the Interior notified the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that the Govt. acted in favor of the Tribe as whole & that a council of Navaho Men from all districts must be created ~~to~~ whose members were qualified to act on matters concerning the Tribe. Thus began the task of developing a democratic representative Tribal Government for the Navaho People. ~~It was not~~ in ~~the beginning for~~ The first council was elected in 1923 and held its first meeting July 7 of that year.

The first move toward a tribal gov. was the formation
of a business council, composed of Chu Dodge,
Charlie Mitchell & Dugal Chee Betziss, who acted
as ~~for~~ ^{for} the tribe in the matter of oil leases.
By the next year, however, realizing that a more
representative body was necessary, a new Council
was appointed with a delegate & an alternate for
each of the six districts of the Reservation. This
was quickly enlarged to 12 delegates & 12 alternates.
Chamman Shosen Creek side council & Vic Chamman
one of the Council.

By 1928 new regulations were adopted
with several changes. One a provision for voting
by both men & women, establishing the terms of
office at 4 years. The council met once a year
for a period of two days. ~~This continued~~ ^{This continued} host
of the business had but little effect on the every
day lives of the people. This council continued
until 1936. During the early years of the
1930 decade, the issue of grazing controls
became a matter

but it did nothing to bring the Tribes together as a whole. Communication was still difficult and in many areas, travel was still only possible by foot or horseback.

Each political change in Washington ~~over the past~~ ~~eighty years~~ has brought a new Commission of Indian Affairs, and each has had new ideas and adopted changes in policy that must have been ^{bewildering} ~~confusing~~ indeed ^{bewildering} ~~indeed~~ to the Indian. The result for the Navaho has been ~~a~~ ^{indeed} procession of changing policies that must have been ~~confusing~~ ^{indeed}.

John Hunter

In 1927 the Superintendent of the Leupp Agency (in the Southernmost part of the Reservation) developed local community organizations called Chapters. These Chapter meetings made it possible to bring people of ^{this particular} ~~each~~ locality together, where representatives from the BIA could bring about better understanding of the Bureau's efforts to improve agricultural conditions, ~~and~~ the improvement of live stock. ^{of the necessity for schools.} This Chapter organization plan proved

to be most beneficial and the idea spread rapidly over the whole reservations, with the result of much better ^{understanding} ~~between~~ the the Navaho ^{the} BIA.

But it was the discovery of Oil in 1921 that was to bring to focus the need for a Tribal Government as a whole.

The discovery of oil in the ~~south~~ San Juan (Shinarump) area in 1921 brought to focus the need for a Tribal Government, for there was much discussion as to whether these oil leases were to be under the jurisdiction of this one area, or whether it was a matter for the whole tribe. Article X of the 1868 treaty stated that "no future treaty for the cession of any portion or part of the reservation herein described, which may be held in common, shall be of any validity or force against said Indians unless agreed to & executed by at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of all the adult male Indians occupying or interested in the same" - - -

The Department of Interior, ^{ruled that these benefits should be for the whole Tribe and} authorized the Commissioner to the Navaho Tribe to sign oil and gas leases on ^{their} behalf ~~of the Tribe~~.

The new Tribal Council, during its first ten years, met for the short period of two days - once a year. ~~While the first Council consisted of members~~ Membership of the first Council consisted of one delegate and an alternate from each of the six Superintendencies, who in turn elected a Chairman and Vice Chairman. This was revised in April of 1923, to include twelve delegates ¹² & alternates, apportioned among the jurisdictions in proportion to the population. There

The Chairman was chosen outside the Council Membership with one of the delegates being chosen as Vice Chairman. Council Meetings were called by the Commissioner of the Tribe and could not be held except in his presence. Other changes were made during these formative years, one a provision for voting by both men and women and the calling of meetings by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs rather than the Com. of the Navaho Tribe. Terms of office were established at four years. By 1936 the Council Membership was criticized as allegedly not representing the leadership of the Tribe. The people still could not comprehend leadership beyond the local level, and it was the issuance of grazing controls that brought home to each locality that the Council rather than the local head men were making the decisions.

Within a few years the Tribal organization was to undergo revision, and enlargements as its members learned the techniques of government.

(oil royalties accumulated in
the U.S. Treasury 1921
to 1957)

Prior to the occupation of the Southwest by the United States, the Navaho existed as groups of people, united by language, by tribal culture, but with no political entity. There were chiefs, or head men, who were leaders chosen by ^{each} ~~their~~ group; there seemed ^{no} ~~no~~ reason ^{no} need for any further government, ~~for~~ ^{for} their tradition ~~controlled~~ ~~behavior~~. There were notable characters among these ~~early~~ chiefs of the early nineteenth century, most of them destined to become prisoners of war and sent into exile at Fort Sumner. Their names appear on the treaty of 1868 - signed for the United States by General Sherman, and by twenty eight Navaho leaders. This list includes famous names, such as Barboncito, Chief, Manuelito, Narbono, Ganado Nincho and others.

While the Navaho are of Athabaskan origin, and speak the Athabaskan language, there is a considerable blood mixture among the people today, the result of intermarriage with captives of other Indian origin, the Pueblos, the Utes, and some Spanish and Anglo mixtures. This diffusion becomes all Navaho very quickly, for there is an unseen unity of thought, of spirit

~~other~~ bloods, other Indians - such as a number
of the differing Pueblo groups - ^{the} ~~latter~~ ^{and} some Spanish
and anglo mixtures - They are in a sense Americans
of differing ~~blood~~ inheritance - a melting pot of
^{Indian} ~~foreign~~ ^{different} bones - just as we are a melting pot of
European origins - These mixtures became the haaha.
however, for there is an unseen unity, of thought, of
spirit and culture, and perhaps this ^{also} accounts for their exceptional
vigor.

During the exile at Ft. Sumner General Carleton
tried to establish a form of Government, but the
old order of family and clan groups with ^{its} ~~their~~ one
head man; could not be changed; any other way of
living was incomprehensible.

after the return to the reservation in 1868 and
the establishing of the U.S. Gov. agency at Fort Defiance
the haaha, of course, returned ^{completely} to their old order.

When one thinks of the ~~distance~~ ^{U.S.} remoteness of
this first agency at that time & the distance both
in miles and then from other ^{outposts} ~~places~~ of our government
the problems of the early agents must have been
legion. Especially this first Agent, Dodge
secured the aid of some of the haaha leaders
who had signed the treaty to assist him in maintaining

of these leaders

law and order. But as these ^{older} men died, ~~the~~ the
Councils were called, and an effort made to further understanding of just what the U.S. Gov. really was.

agents found it necessary to become more autocratic.
By 1900 the Indian Bureau ^(?) divided the Navaho Country ^(incl. the Hopi) into districts, with Agencies in each. Six in all were developed during this period of 1901-1934. While this system of smaller areas greatly facilitated the work of each agency, it did not bring the Tribe together as a whole. Communication was still difficult and in many areas, travel was ^{still} only possible by foot or horse back.

→ In 1927, the Superintendent of the Leupp Agency (in the Southwestern part of the Reservation) developed local community organizations called Chapters. These Chapters made it possible to bring together the people of each locality where representatives for the B.I.A. could bring about better understanding of the Bureau's efforts to improve livestock and agricultural conditions. This Chapter organization plan proved most beneficial and ~~it~~ ^{the} idea spread rapidly over the whole Reservation.

~~in 1921~~

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It was the discovery of oil ~~in~~ ^{at} the Reservation that brought to focus the need for a Tribal Government as a whole. ~~The~~ ^{The} discovery of oil ~~was discussed in~~ ^{on} certain areas in the northern ~~Province~~ - the Shiprock area, for some time there was (and perhaps still is) much discussion as to whether this pertained to the Tribe as a whole, or to the jurisdiction in which the oil was found.