

our plane

We approached Gallup, New Mexico, and as I looked north~~ly~~ across the reservation, I could see Shiprock standing above the desert more shiplike than ever, from this height and distance. Beyond, glistening on the far horizon, were the snowy summits of DEBENTSA, Navahe sacred mountains of the North.

Following plans for a longer flight to photograph the sacred mountains of the south, west and north, my pilot and I took off from Santa Fe shortly after daylight on an early spring morning. We headed west toward the low end of the Jemez Range beyond which stretches the expanse of the Navaho Reservation. Our plane crossed the Rio Grande and below us on the river's western bank lay the skeleton ruin of the once great Pueblo of the Tiguex Indians who, in 1540, gave a friendly welcome to Coronado and his entourage. In a matter of minutes, seconds really, we could see on our right the living Pueblos of Santa Ana and Tsia, sun baked on the adobe banks of the Jemez River a short distance about its confluence with the Rio Grande. Crossing a low, hilly divide at the southern tip of the Jemez, a vast expanse of semi-desert came into view, broken here and there with pinon covered buttes, and the cores of extinct volcanos whose stark forms rise above the terrain. To the distant north of us lay Old Navaho Land, dimly seen on the horizon, extending to the border of our States of New Mexico and Colorado, and a little beyond.

As we flew over this ^{arid land} desert-like area, leaving the Jemez Mountains behind us, Tsotsil (Mount Taylor), Navaho sacred mountain of the south, rose in majestic mass to its thirteen thousand foot snow capped peak. We circled several times seeking an adequate foreground for this second picture, and finding very different country from the empty areas of the San Luis Valley. Thick clusters of cedar and pinon trees, with here and there a parklike opening and rugged rocky prominences built up to the mountain peak. We saw isolated Navaho hogans sometimes in groups of two or three representing a family unit with sheep corrals and flocks grazing a short distance away.

Turning in a northwesterly direction we were soon again over land free of timber, but covered with grass and occasional low shrubs. We crossed Chaco Canyon looking down on the large ruin of Bonito and other nearby ruins of this once populous region. The Navaho have stories about these ruins and their inhabitants whom ^{they} the Navaho called the Kisanis. We crossed the Escavado wash, a wide dry river bed, capable of becoming a raging torrent following a summer cloud-burst. Soon we could see the green valley of the San Juan River imagining how the Navaho must have followed it as the more adventurous among them sought new home sites. History tells us of the many conflicts between the Navaho and other inhabitants of New Mexico; the Pueblo Indians and the Spanish Settlers. It was Coronado who first brought horses and sheep to the Southwest. When the Navaho saw these animals in the possession of others, they wanted them, possibly trading for some, stealing others. Horses gave the Navaho a new and better mode of travel and it was not long until they turned more and more to the raising of stock. This too, gave them the incentive to hunt out new pastures, and ^{find} hidden canyons in which to hide their stolen goods. By the early part of the eighteenth century the Navaho had left their early homeland moving west along the river, finding new country in which to live.

We crossed the fertile valley of the San Juan circling for a landing at Farmington to refuel and a short rest. As we turned, Tsotsil still, though distantly visible, lifted its snowy summit into the turquoise sky- the one high land mark- the sacred mountain of the south.

by the beginning of the 18th Century

first

Following the ~~early~~ contacts with the early Spanish settlers the Navaho saw horses and sheep, brought to the Southwest by Conquistadores. The Navaho wanted these animals and having no other way to obtain them, they stole them, ~~hiding~~ their booty in remote unknown canyons. It was the acquisition of horses that gave the Navaho ~~mobility~~ *greater means of locomotion* and changed them into stockmen.

To the south of us, as we crossed this semi-desert area, Tsotsil (Mount Taylor) Navaho sacred mountain of the south, rose in majestic mass to its ~~xxxxxxx~~ 13,00 foot snow capped peak. We circled several times seeking out adequate foregrounds for this special picture.

Turning north we crossed the Chaco Canyon and the wide Escavado Wash. We saw the large ruins of Pueblo Bonito and other remains of this once well populated region. Here many hundreds of Pueblo Indians lived in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Kisani, ~~the~~ Navaho called them in the Navaho myths of their own. Flying on, we approached the present city of Farmington, ~~and circled~~ for a landing. Refuelled, and re-fed, we proceeded on our way following the San Juan River to the four corners area. Shiprock rose from the desert sea, its two winglike dykes branching out, dark masses against the pale yellow of the desert floor. We crossed the Lukaichukai Mountains at their northern end and before us across the Chinle wash we could see the red glow of Monument Valley. On our right cut out of the densely timbered plateau was Canyon de Chelly and its adjoining Canyon del Muerto. One could visualize those Spanish Soldiers of A.D. 1803 hunting for Navaho raiders hidden in the endless folds of the Great Canyons. For 150 years the Navaho ~~had~~ *had* molested the Spanish settlements as well as the peaceful living Pueblo Indians, stealing their livestock & occasionally women and children as well. The Spanish government officers in Santa Fe, sent a company of soldiers under the command of *along the Rio Grande* to find the troublesome Navaho. It must have taken many weeks for this small band of soldiers to traverse this unknown, difficult land that we had just crossed in the short space of two hours. Coming finally to the rim of

Canyon del Muerto, the Spanish saw a large cave containing many cliff dwellings while moving about were a number of Indian figures. They set up their small canon and fired several rounds into the center of the cave, killing many of the inhabitants. ~~These they killed xxxxxxxx killed xxxxxx for the xxxxxxxx xxxxxx field xxxxxxxx trip xxxxxx~~ Returning from a distant hunting trip, the men from this Cliff dwelling found their homes a shambles and most of their families killed. So the cave became known as massacre cave and the Canyon, Canyon del Muerto. Those who lost their lives in this incident may have been ancestors of the some of the Hopi Pueblo people, who later came to live on the Mesas far to the west.

We circled Monument Valley, looking down on the great sandstone spires and some minute figures, Navaho shepherds, grazing their sheep along the edges of the yellow shaded talus slopes surrounding the spires and buttes of this spectacular valley.

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* Here and there we saw isolated Navaho hogans, ~~prairie~~ sometimes groups of two or three representing a family unit, with sheep corrals and a short distance away, a flocksgrazing. Wagon roads linked these disunited dwellings, and we saw an occasional horseman, a team, or a and old car, traveling doubtless to the nearest trading post, miles away.

~~Circling the mountain range~~

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+ the Sacred Mt of the South