

FOREWORD

Within the boundaries of their ^{Twenty Five} ~~twelve~~ thousand square mile reservation, some ^{ninety} ~~seventy five~~ thousand Navaho people are striving for existence on a land not productive enough to sustain their increased population. They are striving not only to exist, but also to meet an encroaching way of life with which they are, in a large measure, unfamiliar. It is only since about 1930 that the Navaho have been faced with this growing necessity for change,- a change so great for them, that we can scarcely comprehend it. Their traditional mode of living,- simple, carefree, undisturbed by the great pressures of our complex civilization,- has within this short span of approximately ^{thirty} ~~twenty five~~ years become changed with the need for adaptation to an existence utterly alien to them. In past years nature always provided sufficient pasture for their flocks of sheep, sufficient arable land for their simple farming, the trading post a market for their products. To-day, the Navaho find themselves with a population three times greater than their land can support. Where ^{thirty} ~~twenty five~~ years ago, they felt the "white man" far from their environs, save for those few with whom they traded, to-day they are surrounded by a constantly growing white population, and the avaricious who seek the recently discovered mineral resources of the reservation. Navaho Land

is no longer the far away wild country of the Southwest. This encroaching pressure is sharply felt and the Navaho are rising to meet it. ^{Thirty} ~~Twenty-five~~ years ago they were reluctant to go to the reservation schools; shy and diffident about learning the ways of our people. To-day they are clamoring for education, and there are four times as many children wanting to go to school as there are schools or teachers to fulfill this demand.

It is hard for us to realize that here within the boundaries of our Southwestern States, is a people whose whole concept of life and method of existence is utterly foreign to our own. To-day we are witnessing the heroic effort of this human group to adapt itself to the economic concept of our own vastly larger group with which it must mingle for self-preservation. To watch a people making such a change, to see their effort, their remarkable adaptability, their acute realism, their economic strife, while clinging to their sacred traditions,- to watch all this within the span of a quarter century, is indeed a moving experience. Since World War Two this change has been greatly accelerated, and with the passing of another generation most of the old Navaho life will be gone.

It has been my privilege to observe some of this transition. It has been intensely interesting, often heart-breaking, sometimes amusing, and in general filling me with profound admiration. Photography is essentially the medium with which to record and interpret such a change. There is no pretense here of a scientific~~ally~~ ethnological approach. This book is rather the pre-

sentation of the Navaho as human beings,- what they look like, how they live, the things they do. Some pictures were made as long ago as 1932, most of them during the past twelve years. This can only be a partial story. I have been fortunate indeed in the friends I have made, and the cooperation I have had from the Navaho People. Their interest in this undertaking has been of the greatest help. There are many books on the Navaho; books by scientists, psychologists, ethnologists, sociologists and physicians. Many of the authors have far more knowledge of the Navaho People than I. But, to me, most of these books lack visual image, and even though many have good illustrations, these are incidental. My theme has been to create a photographic vision of the Navaho and Navaho life, carrying it as completely as I was able with continuity through important phases of the lives of these people. I am well aware of many gaps. For those whose interest is awakened through vision, the bibliography contains a partial list of books which will give the reader scientifically based knowledge of many aspects of Navaho life and culture. This book is my visual interpretation of a wonderful people as I have found them,- a people who have great pride, great ability, and who deserve sincere respect.

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