

Ever since the Navaho obtained their first sheep and horses from the Spaniards sometime in the seventeenth century, sheep and wool have been the major economic resource of the tribe. Between that time and the year 1846 when the United States took possession of the Southwest following the Mexican War, Navaho sheep had increased to half a million head. A few years later when Kit Carson defeated the Navaho through his scorched earth policy, much of livestock was captured or killed. Only some 5000 head were moved to Fort Sumner with the Navaho people; many of these died along the way for they had not sufficient time to graze, and more died later.

When at last the Navaho were freed to return to their old land in 1868, they had nothing but the hope of the promised new start that the Government would send them, - seed, tools, and three sheep per family. It was more than a year, a time of near starvation, before this promise was fulfilled. Before the exile, there had been some small groups of Navaho who, with their flocks, had hidden in the remote, wild canyons of northern Arizona, as Colonel Carson was rounding up the rest of the tribe. There is a legend that one leader of this group urged ~~him~~ the people to conserve their sheep so that they might help their fellow tribesmen when the day of their ^{liberation} return came. Doubtless some of the returning Navaho found their way to these regions to join their relatives or friends. The rest struggled through that first year until the promised sheep and seed were finally delivered late in the fall of 1869.

By the year 1870 there could not have been many sheep on the reservation, yet between 1870 and 1894 sheep and other stock had increased in number estimated at more than a million and a half. During these first years following the exile, Government Agents were sent to certain points on the reservation to maintain contact with the Navaho People.

Among these was Agent Edwin Plummer, who, in 1894 realizing the great increase in livestock, sent an urgent plea to Washington for more grazing land for the People, but his plea was turned aside. The next important effort to intercede in behalf of the Navaho, was by Father Anselm Weber from Saint Michales Mission established not far from Fort Defiance in 18 . Father Anselm became aroused when a group of non-Indian stockmen tried to bring political pressure to bear on the Indian service regarding one phase of the 1868 treaty. This was a provision for assignments of 160 acre tracts of land to individual Navaho families. This kind of division and ownership was incomprehensible to the Navaho, ^{or could not possibly have functioned in much of the desert area.} Nothing was done about it at the time, but as years went by these non-Indian stockmen tried to revive this in order which would have declared all other land as "surplus" and open grazing territory ~~xxxxxxx~~ In 1914 Father Anselm attacked this effort, sending urging the defeat of this measure ~~xxxx~~ long reports to Washington with the result that new ~~grazing~~ areas were added to the Reservation to the west, greatly increasing grazing facilities.

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which would have declared all other land as "surplus" and open grazing
territory. ^{subject to outside home trader} In 1914 Father Anselm attacked this measure, sending in
reports to Washington showing the need for increased areas for the
Navaho. He seems to have been the first who realized how the fine
pastureage was being destroyed by overgrazing, and the danger of the
destruction of fine ^{natural} gramma grass so necessary for stock of all kinds.
He saw too, how ~~the~~ certain areas of land were being eroded where the
sheep who crop so close and often pull up the grass by the roots, were ^{actually}
destroying the range. He urged Congress not only to preserve the
Navaho range lands, but to increase range areas. Father Anselm was
successful in his mission, and ^{not only were the old land order rescinded but} new areas ~~of~~ land were added to the
Western section of the reservation. ^{as well as} However, ~~but~~ nothing was done about over-

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stocking the range.

Following World War I there was much discussion about the land and the sheep but no one seemed to have any plan. Finally in 1930 an Indian Bureau Forester, Wm. H. Zeh, was appointed to make a general survey of range conditions on the whole reservation. Mr. Zeh's report showed that due to shortage of stock water, the distribution of stock was very uneven. Consequently there were great inroads of soil erosion, and stock of all kinds, sheep, horses, cattle, mules, burros and goats were far in excess of the available range. He urged a stock reduction program. Once more there were delays and the detailed grazing surveys were ^{not} commenced until 1933- completed in 1935. It was then apparent that the reservation range could support only about half a million head and that the range was at that time overstocked by far more than 200%. (there were more than 2,000,000 head) These were the depression years, and the price of wool and lambs was at a low point and the Navaho were just not selling their lambs, thereby adding still more stock to the overgrazed land.

With the advent of the new administration in 1932, new agencies were created, the Soil Conservation Service, new range regulations for all parts of the United States, ^{The Public Works Program.} ~~to name but two.~~ These services together with the reports from the Indian Service brought to focus the necessity for the Navaho stock reduction program of the 1932-1942 decade. This produced an economic and social revolution, for the Navaho at that time did not have the education nor the understanding to comprehend the necessity for this long scale program. ^{nor did they think about at that time what they could see the damaged areas.} To a people who had been shepherds for more than two centuries, to be told that they must reduce their flocks came as a shock.

Until this time the Navaho had no centralized government of their own. In the early days before the exile, they had been governed by chiefs in various areas of the Navaho country. After the exile

the Indian Service had divided the reservation into districts of administration. Now, in 193 , the new Tribal Council was ~~xxxxxx~~ established creating for the Navaho a government of their own, under the guidance of the Indian Service. This change was not ^{comprehended} ~~understood~~ ^{of the} by many people in far away parts of the reservation.

The first steps taken by the new commissioner ^{of Indian Affairs} were in the field of ~~x~~ land conservation, to be carried out by the Public Works Program giving work to many ~~unemployed~~ Navaho men. Steps were taken to develop greater water supply, by drilling new wells and building drainage reservoirs. Then came the time when the whole program was clearly stated and explained to the Tribal Council, showing them how too many sheep were destroying the grass and causing many areas of destructive erosion. To compensate for the reduction in the flocks of sheep, a new education program would be put into effect which included the building of some fifty new ^{day} schools. The construction of these buildings would be done by Navaho labor. The Tribal Council understood the program and approved it. Work was commenced. The Relief Administration was to purchase 100,000 head of sheep ~~xxxxxxx~~ immediately, in the fall of 1933, the total number

tions
to be divided among the several ~~Jurisdiction~~ of the reservation.
But many of the large sheep owners refused to comply. A compromise
was finally reached on a percentage basis, but this worked hardships
on the small flock owners. Suspicion and resentment reached a high
pitch, for to the Navaho wealth is thought of in terms of livestock-
not in money- and they seemed unable to understand that money earned
in wages would in any way compensate for loss of ~~some~~ sheep. While
the Council supported the program, enforcing it was something else,
and also placed them in a difficult position with their fellow Navaho
who disapproved. ^{the plan} There were several years of turmoil, climaxed
when the Relief Administration purchased 150,000 head of goats, 50%
of them females. At this point the women of the tribe became ~~very~~ ^{even more} ~~very~~ ^{very} agitated
and hostile to the entire program. These goats were to be
delivered to small packing plants between September and December of
1934. ^{Purchase price \$1.00 a head.} Unusual weather, and great distances for hawling slowed
the program and a suggestion was made that the Navaho slaughter all
the goats they could use, even though they had already been ^{sold to the Govt.} ~~purchased~~.
Frustrated in getting some 3500 of these goats to the railroad from
one far distant point, ^{because the cost of hawling exceeded the purchase price} ~~then~~ someone ordered that these be shot and just
left to rot. ^{Goats} Even though these animals had already been purchased
by the Government and no longer belonged to the Navaho, this act sent
a shudder of apprehension throughout the tribe. Whoever was responsible
for this evidently knew ^{little} ~~nothing~~ of the Navaho or Navaho psychology,
for such an act was utterly antagonistic to Navaho concept of life
and all living things. Animals are killed only to provide food.
This was a tragedy which had left scars of mistrust, and even though
the program was eventually completed ^{to a certain extent} and the stock reduced to a ^{better} ~~proper~~
level, it is still a matter of concern. ^{continuing} In completing the program
range management districts were established and the Tribal Council now
is impowered to issue their own grazing permits. ~~War~~

But here again, to the Navaho who have always been free, to be restricted by law, ^{even by their own people} to the number of sheep they can raise still is a matter of concern. *debate.*

The coming of World War II alleviated this tension, for many Navaho went into the army, many more in to war work of various kinds. Some went to California into defense plants. And they did a superlative job. ^{was} These experiences also taught the Navaho a great deal for ^{many of them had never been off the reservation} they are quick to learn through observation. ^{about the white man's ways} Following the war, many more things have happened to help the live stock situation. The discovery of uranium in extensive deposits on the reservation brought both money into the Tribal Fund, ^{and} ~~but~~ work for many young men. This was followed by the development of new oil fields. The Tribal Fund has done much to produce new water supplies, build new roads as well as many other projects which are helping to solve their economic life, and sheep are no longer the only means of livelihood.

(While there are still many sheep on the reservation - they

Add about Kind of sheep & introducing new strains. The effect ^{on} the wool for weaving. Ask if change in wool made possible such fine spinning as Daisy Taugheke's.