

THE CHECKERBOARD AREA.

East of the present boundry of the Navaho reservation, is the land known as the Checkerboard area where disputes over land ownership have prevailed for many years. When the Navaho People returned from Fort Sumner in 1868, many of them, regardless of the Government decreed reservation boundries, drifted naturally to their former homes where they and their forebears had lived for many generations. Some of these were in this eastern area. By 1875 some non-Indian sheep men in New Mexico began to graze their stock where the Navaho lived. Disputes over ownership arose as fences were built to keep Navaho stock away from water sources they had long used.

When the Santa Fe Pacific Railroad was built in 1882, some portions of the right-of-way crossed the southern portion of the reservation proper. Here the Federal Government granted to the Railroad, every other section of land on both sides of the track, taking away from the Navaho much of their good grazing areas. Under the leadership of Manuelito, a group of head men went to Washington to plead with President Grant for the return of this land, but to no avail. Other land north of the San Juan River was offered instead. However, some exchanges did occur in a few regions leading to the naming of this large area as the Checkerboard. Various efforts to make adjustments were attempted during the ensuing years backed by several who had fair dealing at heart; but land speculators managed to defeat these efforts.

At the time of the Homestead Act in 1916 Navaho people could have filed for this land, but who was there to explain to the Navaho people who had lived on this land for generations that they must establish legal claim? Within the Checkerboard area Navaho ownership amounted to 49%: 20% was Federal; 16% was railroad; 7% was State land; 3% was owned by the New Mexico-Arizona Land Company, and 4 % was privately owned.

Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes withdrew the entire four

million acres from entry in this disputed area. Between 1933 and 1935 the Governor of New Mexico, and Senators Bronson Cutting and Carl Hatch, prepared an Act to define these reservation boundries. The Bill passed the Senate in 1935, but before it reached the House of Represetatives, Senator Cutting was killed in an airplance accident. As he had been the chief proponent of this Bill, the opposition caused the withdrawal for reconsideration with the end result that the Bill was dropped. Through the Arizona Boundry Bill (1934), some land along the southern boundry of the reservation in Arizona, was purchased by the Federal Government and added to the reservation. In New Mexico, however, some disputed land still exists, and in the meantime the Navaho Tribe has purchased several large ranches. It is certainly to be hoped that the Indian Service will be able eventually to restore, ~~or create new areas,~~ land areas to which the Navaho have an inherited claim.

the "spirit path", a narrow strip where the design does not quite meet, for the Navaho believe that to complete the circle would imprison the spirit of the maker. This is also true of some Pueblo potters, for a similar trail will be found on much decorated pottery. When a basket is nearly complete, the rim is finished in a herring-bone, or false braid, technique. The final end of the rim is always directly above the spirit path. In ceremonies where a basket is full, the medicine man knows where the spirit path is by finding the end of the rim, and the basket is placed so that the spirit path always faces the east.

There are numerous ritual uses of baskets. They are used as drums by turning them upside down and beating with small drum sticks. They are used to contain ritual paraphernalia such as prayer sticks, medicine bags, fetishes, and other articles. They are used as containers for ritual baths. They are used as food containers in certain ceremonials. They are used for the corn meal porridge in wedding ceremonies, this use having given them the name of wedding baskets. They are used as portions of masks in certain nine-night ceremonials. They are used in minor rituals in the home. They are used to contain the sacred corn pollen.

There are many strict taboos in connection with basket making, as with all the other crafts. While a woman is making a basket she must not be touched by anyone. No one may step over the materials being used to make a basket, otherwise the material will break. Should a man make a basket, he will become impotent.

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C O N T E N T S

Part I

PREFACE

THE CREATION STORY

THE DINEH (The People)

Part II

HABITATION AND OCCUPATION

THE CRAFTS

Part III

TRANSITION AND GOVERNMENT

~~RECREATION~~ — THE FAIRS

Part IV

TRADITION

APPENDIX

MAP

CHRONOLOGY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Acknowledgements

← add Epilogue

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These are but three of the honor students who either have been, or are being, helped through the Endowment Fund. There are many others, following a variety of occupations such as doctors, dentists, nurses, lawyers, and other professions, all of them bringing back to their own people the benefits of their learning, for a stipulation with each grant is that each student must devote a minimum of two years' service to the Tribe following the completion of his work.

This Education Endowment Fund is one of, if not the most valuable of all the Navaho projects, giving many young people of ability the opportunity to receive the highest education. From this group will doubtless come the leaders of tomorrow. That the Tribal Council had the wisdom to establish such a Fund shows again the ability of these people to make practical decisions

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Nancy Rose's parents are fine old-type Navaho who, though they speak but little English, passed on their capacities to an able daughter. This young woman is a superlative example of Navaho ability to learn new ways and a new kind of life, yet to retain the finest of traditional ways.

A third honor student receiving an Endowment Fund Grant is Shirley Sells. Shirley, now twenty-four, was born in Shiprock and received her elementary schooling through the tenth grade in Gallup. Then she spent a year in California with a teacher whom she knew, going to school there. Returning to the reservation, she graduated from the Window Rock High School, and went on to the University of New Mexico, where she majored in anthropology and speech, receiving her diploma in June 1964.

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159

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In whatever future work Herbert undertakes, his clear thinking and scholarly mind will stand him in good stead. He has an extraordinary use of the English language, and may someday prove to be an able writer.

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In 1963, the members of the Tribal Council, together with representatives of McKinley County and the city of Gallup, appointed Herber as manager of the Gallup Indian Community Center. There had long been a great need in Gallup for some place where visiting Indians could get a night's lodging for a nominal cost, have a place where they could meet, have some form of recreation, a cafeteria, and other facilities. This building, erected in 1952 through the Navaho-Hopi Rehabilitation Act, was operated for a number of years by the Unitarian Service Committee. Now the Board of Directors of the Community Center has taken it over, and is operating it with the united help of the Navaho Tribe and the city of Gallup.

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One of the most worthwhile acts of the Tribal Council has been the establishment of an Education Scholarship Fund for higher learning. In 1953, a sum of five million dollars (later increased to ten million) accrued from oil, gas, and uranium earnings, was set aside for the special purpose of giving aid to honor students who were selected for these grants. One of these students is Herbert Blatchford, who graduated from the University of New Mexico in 1956, where he majored in education. His first work was for the McKinley County Public Schools as an Attendance Counselor, working out from Gallup, New Mexico. In these schools Navaho children were being accepted with the regular school body, and it was Herbert's duty to check on any absentees. I went out with Herbert into the area surrounding Gallup, to see just what his field work was in this capacity. At one hogan there was an eleven year old girl who had been absent from school for several weeks. Herbert went directly to the child, not to the parents. We ^{entered} ~~went~~ into the hogan where Herbert commenced talking to the child. Seeing that she was very shy, I thought my presence there might be disturbing to her, so I went outside to wait. Soon I heard voices in conversation as Herbert was getting answers to his questions. Then there was a long quiet talk from Herbert as he told the child how important it was for her to continue her

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156

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The same slow process in education is paralleled in medicine. For many years it was unthinkable for a Navaho to turn to a white medicine man. But slowly progress was made in such fields as the eye disease, trachoma, and other special lines. Since the war, young white doctors have come to work at some of the hospitals and health centers, finding themselves filled with enthusiasm over the people, the work to be done, and for the first

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Women's Clubs, Washington, D. C.

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196

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Following two years on the reservation during which time he recovered his health, he entered a business college in Grand Rapids, but before completing his course, he took a business position in Chicago. In July 1933, he returned to the reservation with his family to commence work for the Bureau of Indian Affairs where he served in several capacities, including interpreter and liaison representative at Window Rock. Later he was District Supervisor at Pifon, Arizona. He was elected Chairman of the Tribal Council in 1955.

Mr. Jones is a member of the following organizations:

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- Governors Interstate Indian Council (composed of members from seventeen states)
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During the past thirty years, it has become more and more necessary for young Navaho men and women to seek employment off the reservation. Those who had learned to speak English were the first to do so. For many years now, both the Santa Fe and Union Pacific railroads have employed Navaho men for maintenance work along their lines, and occasionally one may see them boarding a train for work at some distant point. Many others go into off reservation parts of New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Colorado for seasonal crop harvesting. A good many young women find employment of various kinds, in restaurants, motels, etc., in the nearby towns. Many also have studied typing and have taken the place of former Indian Service typists at Window Rock, where they have proven to be efficient and skilled office workers.

The Indian Service has made some effort to relocate families, which has been partially successful, some Navaho moving to California, Colorado, the larger cities of New Mexico and Arizona, and even farther afield where they have found satisfactory work for their livelihood.

As many of the new projects on the reservation have developed, more work for Navaho people has arisen at home, such as road building, work in the oil fields, the uranium mines, the saw mill project and other lines of work replacing the sheep

industry on the over-used land. Mechanical ability seems to be natural to all young Navaho boys, and they find work in garages along the border towns of the reservation. And it is interesting to see the skill with which these young men handle big machinery, so far removed from their old life of a generation ago.

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Large sums of money were coming into the treasury from the uranium mines and the new oil fields. Much of this income has been soundly invested, the rest providing many new benefits for the Tribe, such as greater water development, new and better roads, new hospital facilities in collaboration with the Public Health Service, the establishment of the Education Scholarship Fund, the Tribal Enterprises, the ten day work program whereby every Navaho in need of work is guaranteed ten days of work a month -- an impressive list of accomplishments.

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RECENT TRIBAL LEADERS

Sam Ahkeah

Sam Ahkeah, who became Chairman of the Tribal Council in 1946 following the death of Chee Dodge, was born March 8, 1896. He grew up in the Shiprock area, going to school at Fort Lewis, near Durango, Colorado. As a young man he worked at Mesa Verde National Park; later moving to Santa Fe for a position at the Laboratory of Anthropology. During his years away from the reservation, he was quietly learning the ways of the white man, methods of business, the way government was conducted, and in many ways preparing himself for his role as leader of the Tribe.

In 1954 I went to Window Rock at the time of the Tribal election when Sam was defeated by Paul Jones. While Sam had served nearly two full terms, only one had been an elected office. But many of the people felt that he was running for a third term, and voted against him. The day after the returns were all in, I asked Sam if I might make his portrait. I wanted to do this in the Council room, at the Chairman's desk, so we went over to the building. While I was setting up my equipment, I said to him, "Sam, you have done a wonderful work for your people since you have been chairman." He was silent for a few minutes, then he said, "Well, I think I have waked them up to what they can do for themselves." This eloquent remark summed up his eight years of hard work in the fewest possible words, for indeed he aroused his people to their own potentials in this changing world.

I heard such a nice story about Sam. During one of those years when he was making frequent trips to Washington, his son was in training at an Army base nearby. Meeting his father at

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areas, that a man must never speak to his mother-in-law. We spent several hours visiting this family. They were interested in us and in the things we observed. They looked at every picture in the book with the greatest of interest, pointing out differences in costume, ornaments, or possessions. We watched the making of kneel-down bread, green corn cut from the cob, put through a meat grinder, salted, packed into the green husks, and baked in an outdoor oven. It was very good. We have found when visiting families such as this, that a time comes when their courtesy to us has been fulfilled, their curiosity is satisfied, and normal work or occupation must be resumed. It is well to be sensitive to this approaching moment and to take one's leave before wearing out a welcome.

At Navaho Mountain we found a distinct difference in costume from other parts of the reservation, such as a broader collar on the women's blouses, different stitching, different use of silver buttons. Later, we were to learn that many areas have distinctive identifying stitching on the sleeves of the women's blouses. Before the days of American Occupation, the old apparel consisted (for the women) of two hand-woven mantas^{✱ ✱ ✱} secured at each shoulder and tied about the waist with a woven belt. When the women saw the pioneer white women's long cotton dresses of the 1870-1880 period, they copied them, though they quickly made adaptations to suit their own needs, eliminating the tight bodices and supplementing loose, comfortable blouses. At present there is a change from the cotton skirt, worn for so long a time, to one of rayon and the like, and shorter in length. When C. N. Cotton introduced Pendleton blankets in about the 1890s, their use as wearing apparel was quickly adopted, the men wearing the full blankets, the women the fringed large shawls.

* rectangular piece of cloth

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Navaho fences have very ingenious construction. Utilizing the natural crotches in piñon or cedar, a fence will be built by entwining cross pieces in the crotches. Such a fence is built without a nail or any fastening whatever. It is sturdy and will last for years.

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Frustrated in getting some 3,500 of these goats to the railroad from one far distant point, and because the cost of hauling far exceeded the value of the animals, someone ordered that these be shot and left to rot. This may have been a practical solution, but its effect on the Navaho was catastrophic and sent a shudder of apprehension throughout the tribe, for to the Navaho animals are killed only for food. This was a tragedy which has left scars of mistrust, and even though the program was continued and the stock reduced to a better level, it is still a matter of concern. In continuing the program, range management districts were established, while the Bureau of Indian Affairs still issues the grazing permits.

The coming of World War II alleviated this tension to a considerable extent, for many Navaho men went into the army, many more into war work of various kinds. Some went to California into defense plants. They all did a superlative job. These war experiences also taught the Navaho a great deal about the ways of other people, for they are quick to learn through observation, and to many this was a new experience, for they had never been away from the reservation. Following the war, many more things have happened to help relieve the livestock situation. The discovery of extensive uranium deposits brought money into the Tribal Fund, as well as work for many young men. This was followed by the development of new oil fields. The Tribal Council is doing much to produce new water supplies, build new roads, and other projects, all of which are helping to solve their economic life. While there are still many sheep on the reservation, they are no longer the only means of livelihood.

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long-continued occupation, seventeen centuries, from A. D. 200 to the present. Not only do these canyons contain evidences of ancient habitation, but through all these centuries the canyon floors have been farmed by successive tribes of Indians.

First came the ^{so-called} Basket Makers of A. D. 200 to approximately 700, followed by the Pueblos, who built the famous White House in Canyon de Chelly, and the cliff dwellings in Mummy and Massacre Caves and others in Canyon del Muerto. Then, according to some archaeologists, came some Hopi, who left behind quantities of pottery in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Lastly came the Navaho in the early part of the eighteenth century. This is still an inhabited region, for some three hundred Navaho live and raise their crops within the Canyons, sheltered by their high protective walls. As visitors travel up the Canyons today, they are conscious of small farms of corn and alfalfa, but it is only from the air that the full extent may be seen.

Throughout the summer, irrigating ditches bring water from higher regions as it flows down the Canyons following heavy thunderstorms. There are small peach orchards in Canyon del Muerto whose origins stem from trees brought to the Hopi Villages by seventeenth century Spanish Padres. In September, the Navaho dry quantities of peaches to be stored for winter use.

There has long been misunderstanding regarding the names of these canyons, de Chelly and its largest tributary, del Muerto. De Chelly is a Spanish corruption of the Navaho word Tseghi meaning "between the rocks", hence canyon. Many have thought

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THE POTTERS

Following the Spanish re-occupation of New Mexico in 1698,³ some Pueblo Indians, ~~principally from Jemez Pueblo~~, fled into Old Navaholand. During the recent archaeological excavations in this area, evidence came to light of the close proximity of these Pueblo groups to those of the Navaho. During the ensuing century pottery fragments from Navaho sites indicate definite Pueblo influence, as sherds decorated with red, black, and occasionally white designs had been fired to the high temperature used by the Pueblo People.

Later came utilitarian pieces, some of good size, with thin walls made of crumbly clay with sand for temper. Shaped with the use of corncob scrapers, many had exceptionally beautiful form. These storage jars had pointed bottoms, being held upright by the use of basket rings or set in depressions in the floor. Water bottles were also made of pottery with narrow openings with handles on the sides through which horsehair ropes were inserted. These were flattened on one side for ease in carrying, and some had designs. Legend tells of water bottles being made of the four colors, white, blue, yellow, and black for carrying water for ceremonial purposes, gathered from the four sacred mountains. These water bottles are very rare now, for they were replaced by other types of containers as soon as they became available. Bowls of various shapes and sizes, spoons and dippers and dolls, many with finely executed designs, were the products of years gone by.

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127

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