

## FOREWORD

Within the boundaries of their twelve thousand square mile reservation, some 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 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 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. 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 scientifically 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 six years. It would take several volumes to give t the complete picture. 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 countless books on the Navaho; books by scientists of many kinds- ethnologists, sociologists , psychologists, physicians. Many of the authors have far more knowledge of the Navaho 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 try to create this vision carrying it as completely as possible through important phases of Navaho life, with continuity. I am well aware of many gaps. For those whose interest may be awakened through vision, the bibliography contains books which will give the reader scientifically based knowledge of many aspects of Navaho life and culture. This book, consisting chiefly of images, is my visual interpretation of a wonderful people as they are, and in their effort to take their place as an intergral part of modern America,- a people who have great pride, great ability, and who deserve deep respect.

Laura Gilpin  
Santa Fe, New Mexico

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PART I

CREATION OF THE NAVAHO WORLD

## THE NAVAHO MYTH OF CREATION

(Condensed from the version by Washington Mathews)

In the beginning WHITE appeared in the East, and it was day: BLUE appeared in the South, and it was still day: YELLOW came in the West, and it was evening: DARK came in the North, and the Twelve People of the First World lay down and spelt. The People of the First World were DARK ANTS: RED ANTS: DRAGON FLIES: YELLOW BEETLES: HARD BEETLES: STONE CARRIER BEETLES: BLACK BEETLES: COYOTE DUNG BEETLES: BATS: WHITE FACED BEETLES: LOCUSTS: and WHITE LOCUSTS. These twelve people began life in the First World.

There were oceans far off in each of the four directions and in each ocean a chief. And the people of the First World sinned and quarreled among themselves. Then the chiefs told the people that they must go elsewhere. But they did not go. Again the people sinned and quarreled, and a man and woman went <sup>to</sup> ~~in~~ each direction and as they tried to enter, they were driven out, and again told to go away. For four nights the women talked about it, and the following morning something white was seen in the East. Then they saw the same thing in the South, the West and the North. It was water flowing all around them. They climbed upward in circles and looking down saw that everywhere there was water. Then a blue head was thrust through the sky and called to the People saying-" Here in the East is a hole<sup>#</sup>. The people entered and ascended to the surface of the Second World. The color of the First World had been Red, that of the Second World was blue. And the Swallow People dwelt in the Second World. The

People sent two couriers, LOCUST and WHITE LOCUST to the East to explore the land. They traveled a whole day and reached the edge of the world, and in all their journey they saw nothing but bare ground. The People made friends with the Swallow People and begged that they be as one tribe. All went well for twenty three days when again the People sinned and quarreled, and the Swallow People told them they must go away. Then they saw a white head looking at them. It was the face of the WIND. He told them to fly to the South where they would find an opening. Here the People found a slit in the sky and entering it, found their way into the Third World. The color of the Third World was yellow, and the Grasshopper People lived here. Again the couriers were sent out to explore and again they found this world barren save for a great river flowing to the East. There were no others living in this world, so the People asked the Grasshopper People to join them as one tribe, and again the people mingled. All went well for twenty three days, but once more the People sinned and quarreled and were once more expelled. Up they flew in wide circles and again they found the top of the sky hard and smooth. As they searched for an exit, a red head emerged from the sky. It was the RED WIND who told them to fly to the West. Here they found a spiral passage, made by the wind, and up they flew until they came out into the Fourth World. Four Grasshopper People came with them, one white, one blue, one yellow, and one black, and to this day the People have grasshoppers of these colors.

The surface of the Fourth World was mixed black and white, but the sky colors were as in the lower worlds though they lasted in a different way. In the First World the white, blue, yellow and black lasted an equal time. In the Second World the blue and the

black lasted somewhat longer. And still longer in the Third World. In the Fourth World there was only a little of the white and yellow; the blue and the black lasted most of the time.

When the People entered the Fourth World, they saw four great snow covered Mountains on the far horizons of each of the four directions. Once again the Locust Couriers were sent out to explore. They traveled to the East but did not reach the Eastern Mountain, nor did they see any sign of life. They went to the South and still saw no sign of life but they did see tracks- the tracks of the deer and the turkey. Next day they went to the West and again found no sign of life. At last they journeyed to the North and when the couriers returned they told the People of finding a race of strange men who cut their hair square in front and who lived in houses in the ground and who cultivated fields. The following day two of these strangers- the Kisani (the Pueblo People) came to the exiles' camp and later guided them to water. The water was red and the Kisani told the People they must not cross the river on foot or their feet would be injured. The Kisani showed the People a square raft made of four logs,-a white pine, a blue spruce, a yellow pine, and a black spruce. So the People crossed the river and visited the homes of the Kisani. The friendly Kisani gave the People corn and pumpkins to eat. This land had neither rain nor snow and the crops were raised by irrigation. The People held a council and resolved to do nothing to offend the Kisani who had so befriended them.

Late in the autumn the People heard the sound of a distant voice calling. It came from the East. Three times more they heard the voice, each time nearer than before. At last four mysterious beings appeared before them. They were White Body, Blue Body

Yellow Body, and Black Body. These beings made signs to the People but they did not speak. After they had gone the People wondered what these signs meant. Three times more the gods visited the People, making signs but still not talking to them. On the fourth day, Black Body stayed after the others had gone and spoke to the People in their own language. "You do not understand the signs the gods make to you. I will tell you what they mean. The gods wish to make more people, but they want the forms of these people to be like themselves. You have bodies like theirs, but you have the teeth, the feet and the claws of insects. The new people are to have hands and feet like ours. Have yourselves well cleansed when we return which will be in twelve days". On the morning of the twelfth day the People washed themselves thoroughly. The women dried themselves with yellow corn meal, the men with white corn meal. Soon they heard the call of the gods shouted four times, each time nearer than before, and after the fourth call the gods appeared. Blue Body and Black Body each carried a sacred buckskin. White Body carried two ears of corn, one white and one yellow, each perfect with grains to the tip. The gods laid one buckskin on the ground with the head to the West. On it they placed the two ears of corn with the tips to the East. And over the corn they spread the other buckskin. Under the white ear they put a feather from the white eagle, and under the yellow ear, a feather from the yellow eagle. The gods told the People to stand away to allow the WIND to enter. The White WIND blew from the East and the Yellow WIND from the West, blowing between the buckskins. While the WINDS were blowing, eight MIRAGE PEOPLE came and walked around the skins four times. While they walked, the People saw the feathers move.

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The People from the Third World had been in the Forth World for eight years when one day they saw the Sky stooping down and the Earth rising up to meet it. From the point of contact there sprang from the Earth, COYOTE and BADGER, the children of the Sky. COYOTE, the elder, came and skulked around the People, but BADGER went down into the hole that led to the lower world and was rarely seen.

When the Mirage People had completed their fourth round, the upper buckskin was lifted. A man and a woman lay where the ears of corn had been. The white ear had been changed into a man, the yellow ear into a woman, and the WIND had given them life. It is the wind coming out of our mouths that gives us life- when it stops, we die. In the skin at the tips of our fingers we can see the ~~path~~ trail of the wind. Thus the gods created First Man and First Woman.

The first children born to First Man and First Woman were hermaphrodite twins. Again in four days a boy and girl were born. Three more sets of twins were born unto First Man and First Woman. In four days after the last twins were born, the gods came took First Man and First Woman away to the East Mountain, keeping them there for four days. When they returned all their children were taken to the same place. After they all returned they occasionally wore masks and when this happened they prayed for all good things, for rain and abundant crops. The children of First Man and First Woman married among the Mirage People. And again children were born every four days and grew to maturity in four days. Many of these offspring married among the Kisani and among the People from the Lower Worlds, and soon there were many people in the land with First Man as their Chief.

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One day, following a feast of deer meat, First Woman made a remark which made her husband very angry and they had a quarrel. The next morning First Man called all the men together telling them what his wife had said, and that the women thought they could get along without the men. "Let us leave them" he said "and see if they can till the fields and hunt game, and let us take the Kisani with us". So they went to the river to cross on the raft,

taking with them the things they had made. The Kisani went too, but they took their wives with them. All went well the first year; the women had plenty of food and they sang and had a merry time. The men had had only time to start small new fields so they did not have sommuch to eat. The second year the women did not do so well, while the men increased their fields and crops. In the third year the women did still less well, and the men still better. In the Fourth year the women had little to eat, and the men far more than they needed. And First Man began to think of what he had done and that the race might perish. He sent a man to the bank of the river who called to First Woman and asked her if she still thought she could live alone. And the answer came back that the women could not live without their husbands. So the women were brought across on the raft amidst great rejoicing. It was soon discovered that three were missing, a mother and her two daughters. After nightfall the voices of the missing ones were heard begging to be ferried across, but they were told to wait until morning. The mother could not wait and swam across but the daughters disappeared. For three days and nights the People heard nothing of the missing ones. On the morning of the Fourth day the call of the gods was heard, and after the fourth call, White Body appeared holding up two fingers and pointing to the river. White Body went away but soon returned with Blue Body, each carrying a bowl, one white and one blue. They put the bowls on the water, spinning them as <sup>they</sup> did so, and the water parted beneath the bowls giving entrance to <sup>a</sup> house with four rooms. The mother and her husband entered the house, and Coyote followed them. The rooms were in each direction and finding the first three empty they entered the fourth room to the north. Here they saw the Water Monster, and sitting beside him were the two daughters

and also two small children of his own. The man and woman demanded their daughters, and as Water Monster said nothing, they took them and went away. While this was going on Coyote slyly stole the two children of Water Monster and hid them under his robe. No one noticed this as Coyote always wore his robe folded around himself. The next day the People were surprised to see all sorts of game running past them, going from East to West. This went on for three days. On the morning of the fourth day after the white light rose in the east, the people saw a strange gleam in that direction. They sent the Locust couriers to see what it was and they returned to say that there was a vast flood approaching from the East. And the People and the Kisani assembled bemoaning their fate and knew not what to do. The next morning the waters were high as mountains and still approaching from the East. They all climbed a hill and held a council. Then they saw two men drawing near, one man was old and had grey hair, the other young. They passed right through the crowd without speaking and sat down on the top of the hill, the young man in front, the old man behind him and Locust behind both of them, and they all faced the East. The old man took seven bags from his robe and told the People that he had bits of earth from the seven Sacred Mountains. The People asked the old man if he could help them, and he replied that perhaps his son could, but the People must face the West for they must not see him at his work. Soon the people were called, and they saw the sacred earth spread on the ground and planted in it were four reeds with four joints, and as they watched the roots spread out and went into the earth and the reeds joined into one great reed which grew rapidly, and in its eastern side was a great hole. The young man told the people to enter, and when they had all gone in<sup>in</sup>, the hole closed behind

them, and as it did so they heard the splashing of the waters as the flood came near. They climbed inside the reed and soon it began to sway, but Black Body blew a great breath through the top of the reed, and <sup>a</sup>black cloud formed around the top and held it steady. And the People climbed as the reed grew higher and again it began to sway. Black Body took a plume from his head band and stuck it through the top of the reed to the sky. And that is why the reed now always carries a plume. The People sent Locust up to find a hole in the sky. He went through a little hole into the upper World and came out on an island in the middle of a lake. But the hole was too small for the People to get through so they sent Badger to dig it out. When Badger returned his legs were all covered with mud and that is why the legs of badgers have been black ever since. Then First Man and First Woman led the way and they all emerged to the surface of this present World. On the fourth day someone looked down ~~through~~ the hole through which they had come and saw that water was rushing up. First Man called a council and pointing at Coyote said that there was something wrong about Coyote for he never took off his robe. So the People searched Coyote and two strange small objects fell to the ground. ~~They~~ were the children of Water Monster that Coyote had stolen from under the river in the Fourth World. The People threw the children into the hole and at once the waters subsided.

On the fifth night one of the hermaphrodites stopped breathing, and they all wondered what had become of her breath and hunted for it everywhere. ~~Coyote suggested putting her to rest among the rocks.~~ While the People were hunting for the lost breath, two men looked down the hole of emergence, and there they saw the hermaphrodite sitting on a rock combing her hair. They told the People what

they had seen, but on the fourth day both of the men died, and ever since the Navaho People have feared to look upon the dead.

Now the Kisani were camped some little distance from the others, and one of the People found that the Kisani had brought an ear of corn with them from the lower world. Some wanted to <sup>take</sup> this away from the Kisani, others said this would be wrong, but some young men went to demand the corn from the Kisani and angry words followed. But the friendly Kisani offered to break the ear in two and gave the People their choice of the pieces. While the young men were considering which piece to take, Coyote grabbed the tip and ran away with it leaving the butt end for the Kisani,- and that is why the Pueblo People have always had better corn than the Navaho. After these angry words the Kisani moved away from the People,- and that is why the Pueblo People and the Navaho live apart.

Then First Man and First Woman, Black Body and Blue Body, built the seven Sacred Mountains with earth brought from the lower world. And the four Great Mountains were TSISDNADJINI to the East, TSOTSIL to the South, DOKOSLID to the West, and DEBENTSA to the North, and the three lesser mountains within, and these are still the sacred mountains of the DINE, the Navaho People.

Of the many experiences Miss Forster had during her years as a nurse on the reservation, one tragedy stands out in my memory. It was during the bitter winter of 1932 when the snow lay a foot or more deep over the land. In the middle of the night she was awakened by a pounding on her door. Outside stood a Navaho man dripping with perspiration and breathing heavily. As his three months old baby was very sick, he had run more than four miles through the snow for Miss Forster's help. After questioning carefully, she sent him to her interpreters house nearby to have him get the car ready while she prepared for expected emergency. Reaching the hogan after wallowing through the snow in the cold darkness she found the baby very ill with pneumonia. She learned that in spite of a medicine man's ritual, the baby was getting worse. Knowing that the only possible way to save the baby was to get to the hospital thirty miles away, she asked the little mother if she would bring the baby, still in its cradle-board, - they should go at once. While the interior of the car was warm from the heater, the tires made that crisp squeaky crunch that means extreme cold, as they cut through the icy snow. All was silent except for the whimpering of the sick infant. Somewhere along the way that sound ceased and Miss Forster feared the worst. They all went in to the hospital to find the doctor, but it was too late. After his examination, the parents decided to leave the little body at the hospital where the authorities would see to its burial in the cemetery nearby. As they were leaving the building, a weary, hard-boiled nurse scolded the baby's mother, telling her it was all her fault for not bringing it in earlier.

On the way home, out in the windswept flat beyond Shiprock, the father asked Miss Forster to stop. ~~Maxxary~~ She watched them in the light from the car as they walked a short distance from the road, where, clearing away the snow and with bowed heads, they placed the cradle-board on the ground. It would never be used again and given to the elements. The broken hearted parents returned to the car where Miss Forster tried to comfort them. The medicine man had done what he could but for this kind of illness the white doctor had newer medicine.

Such thoughtless, unsympathetic remarks as those used by the nurse at the hospital, have been one reason so many Navaho have hesitated or refused government help for so long a time. Looking back on that tragic night after a span of thirty years we can understand the conflict of thought in the minds of those parents. All their life long belief made them rely on the medicine man, who, for many illnesses was competent indeed, but respiratory infection was something the non-English-speaking Navaho little understood. Perhaps one of the greatest changes on the reservation in the past thirty years is the quality of the white personnel working with the Navaho. Now these doctors and nurses are better equipped with social and psychological understanding to win rather than force - to teach rather than admonish. Doctors of to-day are finding the abilities of the medicine men and are seeking their cooperation in many ways, while teaching them to understand the kind of help the white doctor can give.

## THE FOUR SACRED MOUNTAINS

While reading the Navaho Creation Myth, my thoughts traveled to the four sacred mountains bordering the Navaho world. It was then, I think, that it occurred to me that the best way to illustrate this beautiful story would be to photograph these mountains from the air. To do this two flights were necessary, the first for Tsisnajini, sacred mountain of the east, (known to us as Mount Blanca in Southern Colorado) and a second longer flight for the sacred mountains of the South, West and North. *Chas Taylor - the San Emiguel Plateau & the Navaho Plateau*

Perhaps it is my love for landscape and geography that makes me want to fly. From the air one can see the great structures of the earth's surface, the different kinds of mountains, the sweep of contours, the age old erosions. In the air one becomes detached and the mind goes deep into the past, thinking of Time in Depth.

Chartering a small plane, my pilot lifted us from Santa Fe one morning with the picture of Tsisnajini as our goal. As we circled to gain altitude the form of the Sandia Mountain Fault to the south of us became more and more visible, with its gently rising eastern slope and the sheer, abrupt western face. It was in a cave high in this western wall that the earliest existence of human life in this area has been found, remnants of migrants who came here twenty thousand years ago, so old is the history of our Southwest. These ancient primitives came to North America from outer Mongolia via Behring Strait, slowly moving southward over a period of perhaps centuries.

We headed north following the Rio Grande seeing clearly the canyons cut by the river through the volcanic slopes of the Pajarito Plateau. Crossing into Colorado, the superb mountain mass of Tsisnajini grew more and more impressive as we neared. Beneath us, the southern end of the San Luis Valley looked barren and uninhabited. Here once was an abundance of game-elk, antelope, deer and bison, -and here the ancient Navaho came to hunt seeing always their sacred mountain of the east before them. They must have come into this valley from the region over the mountains to the west, known as old Navaho Land. At the junction of the San Juan and Pine Rivers, just over the divide from where we were flying, the new Navaho Dam is being built, and here, during the field seasons of 1959-60 and 61, the salvage archaeology project of the Museum of New Mexico has produced the first comprehensive data of the early whereabouts of the Navaho and their Apache cousins. These recent unearthings have revealed simple, crude hogans (Navaho houses) dating from about the middle of the sixteenth century. This date, much later than all other sources of Indian life in New Mexico, seems to indicate that the Navaho may well have been the last migration from the north. The Spanish Conquistadores did not encounter the Navaho until 1626, nearly two centuries after Coronado's first arrival. The Benevides Chronicle of that year tells of the "Navahue de Apache" being farmers living the Old Navaho Land area. It is assumed that they learned the rudiments of agriculture from the Pueblo People with whom they must have come in contact, for the archaeologists found remnants of corn, beans and squash in these recent excavations.

Thinking always of the Navaho, where they came from and how they traveled, one could see from the air that the distance from Old Navaho Land to Tsisnajini is not great; and though there are mountains in between, there are passes through which travelers can find a way. Tsisnajini, because of its severance by a wide, low pass from the towering Sangro de Cristo Range, appears a mountain by itself and could easily become to the Navaho, their symbol of the East.

and it could be possible that future archaeologists will find evidence of the Navaho with Indian as foot pass