By LAURA GILPIN

The Pueblos: A Camera Chronicle
Temples in Yucatan
The Rio Grande: River of Destiny

THE ENDURING NAVAHO

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS, AUSTIN & LONDON

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It was a beautiful fall day and we took our time, stopping frequently to work or to look at whatever interested us. We passed numerous hogans, for this is the Canyon where many Navaho People live. We went all the way up to Mummy Cave, a cliff dwelling miles from the mouth of the Canyon. But just before we arrived at this spot we came to a group of hogans and, seeing several children running to meet us, Art stopped the car to give them candy we had brought along. In a few minutes two women appeared, one of them approaching Maria, saying to her in English, "Did you girls find the case you lost yesterday?" I was astonished at this, for we must have been about forty miles from the Valley Store. How could this news have reached these people in less than twenty-four hours, and how were we recognized? I did not have a camera visible and we were not in my own car. This was a striking instance of how news travels on the reservation and how carefully all strangers are observed.

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The next morning was Friday, the opening of the Window Rock Fair, so we broke camp and prepared to leave. We stopped at the trading post, as I wanted to tell Mr. Nelson about the loss of my case, in the event that any of the items showed up at his post. I bought some food for lunch and when I joined Maria at the car she was talking to two older Navaho People. She told me that these people wanted to know if we would take them to Window Rock. I said that we would be glad to, but that I wanted to go back to the Valley Store first to see if my case had been found. We all got in the car, the man riding on our camp beds in the back of the station wagon, the woman in front with Maria and me. Maria was engrossed in conversation and I soon realized that she was telling the woman about my missing case and also about my book, for she got it out to show the pictures. As neither of these people spoke any English, I had to guess what all the talk was about. There was no one around the Valley Store when we got there. I went inside to speak to the trader, but no sign of the case.

Getting back into the car, I started to turn around to head for the fair, inwardly bemoaning the loss of much valuable equipment, as well as the exposed negatives of Chairman Paul Jones and the Tribal Council. The woman spoke to Maria, asking me "to go around that hill where it would be quiet." I couldn't imagine what she wanted, but I have never failed to follow such a lead. We drove three or four miles to a place out of view of the highway, with not even a hogan in sight. Then she asked me to stop. She got out of the car, asking us to join her. She told Maria to put a rug down on the ground and asked me to get out a case like the one I had lost. I still couldn't imagine what this was all about, but I said nothing and followed directions. Maria told me to kneel down beside the woman. Then, to my complete surprise, she began a

hand-trembling ceremony over me. Hand tremblers are diviners—diagnosticians—and they are sought out by the Navaho People to find lost articles.[7] I could see Maria in wide-eyed wonder as the woman proceeded with the ritual. I watched the shadow of the trembling hand and arm in front of me and listened to the incantation. This lasted about fifteen minutes. Then the woman spoke to Maria, telling her that three boys had taken the case from my car. I was not to worry, as nothing would be hurt. I was to come back to the store in four days—two boys would bring the case back. I thanked the hand trembler for her services and made a small donation. Then we all decided that it was lunch time, made some sandwiches, and had our lunch right there.

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DEDICATED TO

ELIZABETH WARHAM FORSTER, R.N.

Dear Betsy:

This is as much your book as mine. Not only have you shared completely in the making of it, but also you have taught me to understand the Navaho People. Our association with the Navaho goes back to a vacation trip in the fall of 1930 when we were misdirected (by a white man) on the road from Kayenta to Chinle, Arizona, on the western side of the reservation, and got ourselves wonderfully lost, ending with an empty gasoline tank. How we laugh now over that experience. Yet how important it was, for it led you to a position as field nurse to the Navaho the following year.

I can see us now, sitting in the old Buick wondering what we should do. I, for some reason, thought I *had* to do something immediately. We were in the middle of a vast semidesert; visibility in every direction was fifty miles or more, but we saw nothing, not a distant hogan, nor a horse, nor a flock of sheep—just empty land. Leaving you to guard the car (from what I don't quite know!), I set forth on foot, with hope that another traveler might come along who would give you gasoline. How well I remember my thoughts as I trudged along, recalling every vivid tale I had ever heard of a similar experience. How mortified I was at having lost my way. I remember meeting a Navaho man and a little boy in a wagon, coming out of a wash. I tried to talk to them but they spoke no English. I pointed in the direction of Chinle, indicating that I would pay them to take me there, but the man shook his head; then, reaching for something under a canvas in the wagon bed, he handed me three cool, delicious peaches. Finally, after an emotionally stimulated walk of two and one half hours, I reached Frazier's trading post. The trader was away, but his understanding wife took me and the needed gasoline back to you and the car, a distance of more than ten miles. I remember imagining how worried you must have been over my long absence. Never will I forget topping a gentle rise in the undulating desert and seeing the lonely car completely surrounded by *Navaho Indians*, like a swarm of bees about a honeysuckle. When we arrived, there you were in the midst of the gathering, happily playing cards with your visitors! Your ensuing tale of how the Navaho had arrived, two or three at a time, seemingly from nowhere, to find out what the trouble was and to offer help, both surprised and interested me.

I recall my concern of a year later, when you told me you were accepting a position as field nurse to the Navaho, sponsored by a private organization. I wondered where and how you would live, what your work would consist of, whom you would have to help you. Later when I came to visit, I found you in snug though primitive quarters. As I listened to tales of your experiences, I, too, became interested in these people, impressed by their rugged character and their mode of life. From time to time my visits revealed the work you were doing, your understanding, your patience, your kindness, and your generosity, for you literally gave of your substance as well as your knowledge and nursing skill. I saw the response of the Navaho People to your attitude toward them, your willingness to go anywhere at any time when a call came for help. I know, too, the lives you saved and the succor you gave.

When the depression came and there were no more funds for the continuation of your work, you had to leave. I helped you pack and move. I can relive that final morning when six of your best friends arrived, watching our every act, then suddenly, solemnly, and without warning, stood, bowed their heads, and wept in unison.

During the past eighteen years, together we have hunted for old friends after a lapse of nearly thirty years, finding many, making many new ones, and exploring nearly the whole of the reservation. I have watched old friends turn to you for medical aid the moment they saw your face. What fun we have had evolving this book. Your help when I was after difficult pictures, your sound criticism, and your encouragement, finally, have brought the book to completion. As a tribute to our long and happy friendship, this is your book.

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PREFACE

Within the boundaries of their 25,000-square-mile reservation, more than 100,000 Navaho People, the largest tribe of Indians in North America, are striving for existence on a land not productive enough to sustain their increasing 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 within the last thirty years 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—is being changed through their adaptation to an utterly alien existence.

In past years nature provided sufficient pasture for the Navaho's flocks and sufficient arable land for their simple farming, while the trading posts offered a market for their products. Today the Navaho find themselves with a population more than three times greater than their land can support. Thirty years ago they felt the white man far away, save for those few with whom they traded, but today they are surrounded by a constantly growing white population. Navaholand is no longer the faraway wild country of the Southwest. This encroaching pressure is sharply felt, and the Navaho are rising to meet it. Thirty years ago many were reluctant to go to the reservation schools; they were shy and diffident about learning the ways of our people. Today, they are clamoring for education, for there are many more children who want to go to school than there are schools or teachers to fill this demand.

It has been my privilege to observe some of the old life and much of the transition to the new. It has been intensely interesting, often heartbreaking, sometimes amusing, and in general has filled me with admiration for these people. Photography is essentially the medium for recording and interpreting such change. There is no pretense here of a scientific or an ethnologic approach, but all factual statements have been checked with some of our leading scientists and, finally, with the Navaho People themselves.

There are many books about the Navaho, books by anthropologists, physicians, psychologists, and experienced laymen. Many of the authors have far greater knowledge of the Navaho than I. My endeavor has been to create a visual image of these people, together with an explanatory text. As pictures and ideas accumulated, they fell into four categories; therefore, it seemed quite in keeping with Navaho tradition to divide this book into four parts. First, "The Navaho World," with its geographic conception and mythology; second, "The Way of the People," depicting their mode of life and their activities; third, "The Coming Way," denoting the present transition from the old ways to the new; and fourth, "The Enduring Way," the way of Navaho belief, which binds the People together through their traditional ceremonialism.

Some of these pictures were made more than thirty years ago, most of them between 1950 and 1965 when the photographic work was completed. I am well aware of many gaps, but it is my hope that these pages will stir an understanding of this energetic tribe, and awaken an interest in its imaginative and poetic background.

I have been fortunate indeed in the friends I have made and the co-operation I have received from interested Navaho People. This, therefore, is an interpretation of a wonderful people just as I have found them, a people having great pride, dignity, and ability who deserve our sincere respect.

LAURA GILPIN

Santa Fe, New Mexico

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

So many people have helped in one way or another over the many years this book has been in the making, that it would be a long list indeed to name them all. To the following I am deeply grateful for their help and criticism.

To the many Navaho People who have willingly helped in allowing me to make these photographs and who helped in other ways, and to the following friends who have given specific help:

Sam Ahkeah	Ned Hatathli
Maria Teba Bia	Maurice McCabe
Sam Day III	Annie Wauneka

To Mr. and Mrs. Nathaniel A. Owings, whose interest in this book has led them to the generous act of providing nine of the color plates.

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CONTENTS

Dedication vii
Preface ix
Acknowledgements xi
Map of Navaholand xiii

PART I. THE NAVAHO WORLD

The Creation Story 3
Maize, *p. 9*
The Four Sacred Mountains, *p. 11*
The Dinéh 20

PART II. THE WAY OF THE PEOPLE

Habitation 61
Trading Posts, *p. 80*
Sheep Raising, *p. 96*
Farming, *p. 99*
The Landscape, *p. 106*
The Crafts 121
The Weavers, *p. 121*
The Silversmiths, *p. 136*
The Potters, *p. 150*
The Basketmakers, *p. 152*
The Painters, *p. 155*

PART III. THE COMING WAY

Tribal Government 161
Recent Tribal Leaders, *p. 166*
Health and Education, *p. 171*
Law and Order, *p. 181*
The Checkerboard Area, *p. 187*
Tribal Resources, *p. 188*
The Fairs 197

PART IV. THE ENDURING WAY

Heritage 213
The Mountainway, *p. 217*
The Blessingway, *p. 225*
The Enemyway, *p. 228*
The Elements, *p. 235*
The Nightway, *p. 237*
Epilogue 247

Appendices 253
Chronology, *p. 253*
Navaho Pronunciation Guide, *p. 254*
Bibliography 255
Index 257

PART I

THE NAVAHO WORLD

THE CREATION STORY

To understand the Navaho People, even in small measure, it is essential to know at least some part of their symbolic ritual. That they have so rich a tradition comes as a surprise to those unfamiliar with their background. The Navaho have retained their culture through centuries without the use of written language, without centers of education, and without a religious head, for there is no such office—it simply exists in every person, in every family, in every part of their land. As the legends, the chants, and the symbolism are myriad, and as knowledge of these must be handed down by word of mouth or they will perish, Navaho capacity for memory has become very great. There is always a medicine man who carries on these beliefs, who conducts the ceremonies, who teaches others. The Creation Story, as its title indicates, contains the roots of this symbolism, and signifies Navaho relation to all of nature. Like our Old Testament, the Navaho story contains a flood, expulsion from one world to another, and, throughout, a strong suggestion of evolution.

Beginning with Dr. Washington Matthews, an Army surgeon stationed at Fort Wingate in the 1880's, and followed by a number of students and anthropologists who gathered their information from many medicine men, this legend has been recorded, and, though there are variations, the basic characters are similar. From the Story has come the Blessingway Ceremony—the ceremonial most sacred to the Navaho People—and also the great variety of symbolic uses of plants and animals, birds and insects, colors and substances. The sacred number *four* permeates Navaho thinking. There are the four directions, the four seasons, and the four colors and substances associated with the four sacred mountains: white and white shell indicate the East; blue and turquoise, the South;

yellow and coral or abalone, the West; black and jet, the North. In most rituals there are four songs and multiples thereof, as well as many other symbolic uses of four.

The Navaho believe that the People came from lower worlds, passing through four of them (some say twelve) to emerge into this present Fifth World. Early Navaho concept, like that of all primitive peoples, was that the world was flat, that the sky was supported by supernatural beings, that the sun came in the morning and left at night, and that the moon and stars were hung in the sky to be seen after the sun had departed. They believe that the next world is the world of the spirit, beyond which is a world where everything merges into the cosmos. Their only concern, however, is with this present life in the Fifth World.

The Story tells of life beginning in a lower world, the First World, where it was predestined that the prototypes of living creatures, as well as inanimate elements, would come into being. Here began the duality of life, male and female. There were twelve kinds of people inhabiting this First World, which was dark, and though they are spoken of as people, they were insects as we know them. There were Dark Ants—Red Ants—Dragon Flies—Yellow Beetles—Stone Carrier Beetles—Dung Beetles—Hard Beetles—Black Beetles—Bats—White Faced Beetles—Locusts—and White Locusts. There were oceans far off in each direction, and in each ocean a chief or deity. The People quarreled among themselves and the chiefs told them they must go elsewhere.

Entering a hole in the East, the People emerged into the Second World. Here they found the Bird People, with whom they made friends. They sent out their couriers, Locust and White Locust, to explore the land, but though they reached the edge of the world, they found only bare ground. After a while there was more quarreling, and the Bird People told them they must go away.

Once more they flew upward and, finding a cleft in the sky, they found their way into the Third World. Again the couriers went out to explore and again found bare land, except for a great river flowing to the East. This was the female river, and flowing into it was the male river, thus symbolizing generation. Grasshopper People lived in the Third World and the People mingled with them, requesting that they might live as one tribe. But once again there was quarreling, and once more they were expelled. The People flew upward in wide circles but found 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 flying up through it they reached the Fourth World. Four Grasshopper People went with them, one white, one blue, one yellow, and one black, and to this day the People have grasshoppers of these colors.

When the People entered the Fourth World, they saw four great snow-covered mountains on the far horizon of each direction. Once again the couriers went out to explore. To the East they found no sign of life, to the South they saw tracks of the deer and the turkey, and to the West again no sign of life. But when they returned from the North, the couriers told of finding a race of strange men, who cut their hair square in front, who lived in houses on the ground, and who cultivated fields. The following day, two of these strangers—the Kiis'aanii (the Pueblo People)—came to the exiles' camp and later guided them to a river. The water was red, and the Kiis'aanii told the People that they must not cross the river on foot or their feet would be injured. The Kiis'aanii showed the People a square raft made of logs—a white pine, a blue spruce, a yellow pine, and a black spruce. The People crossed the river to visit the homes of these new friends, who gave them corn and pumpkins to eat. As this land had neither rain nor snow, the crops were raised by irrigation.

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. They were White Body, Blue Body, Yellow Body, and Black Body. These beings made signs to the People but did not speak, and after they had gone the People wondered what these signs meant. Three times the gods visited them but still did not talk. 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 will 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 drying 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. One buckskin was laid on the ground with the head to the West. On it they placed the two ears of corn with the tips to the East. Under the white ear they put a feather from the white eagle, and under the yellow ear, a feather from the yellow eagle. Over all they spread the other buckskin.

The gods told the People to stand away to allow the Winds 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, walking around the skins four times. While they walked, the People saw the feathers move. When the Mirage People had completed their fourth round, the upper skin 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 Winds 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 trail of the Winds. Thus the gods created First Man and First Woman.

The first children born to First Man and First Woman were hermaphrodite twins. Then more twins were born. After the birth of the last pair, the gods took First Man and First Woman away to the East Mountain and kept them there four days. When they returned, all the children were taken to the same place. After they had all made the journey to the Sacred Mountain, 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 they in turn bore many children. Some of their offspring married among the Kiis'aanii and the People from the lower worlds, and soon there were many people, with First Man as their chief.

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

One day, following a feast of deer meat, First Woman made a remark which made her husband angry and they had a quarrel. The next morning First Man called all the men together, telling them what his wife had said—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 Kiis'aanii with us." So they crossed the river on the raft taking with them the things they had made. The Kiis'aanii went too, but they took their wives with them.

During the first year all went well, the women had plenty of food, and they sang and had a merry time. As the men had to start new fields, they did not have much 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 better by far. In the fourth year the women had little to eat and the men much more than they needed.

First Man began to think about what he had done and that the race might perish. He sent a messenger to ask First Woman if she still thought she could live alone. The answer came back that the women could not live without their husbands. Therefore, amidst great rejoicing, the women were brought across the river on the raft. It was soon discovered that three were missing, a woman 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 they did so, and the water parted beneath the bowls, giving entrance to a house with four rooms, one in each direction. The mother of the missing girls and her husband entered the house, Coyote following them, and, finding the first three rooms empty, they entered the fourth room, to the north. Here they saw Water Monster, with two of his children, and sitting beside him were their own two daughters. The man and woman demanded their daughters, and, as Water Monster said nothing, they took them and went away. While no one was looking, Coyote slyly stole the children of the Water Monster, hiding them under his robe. No one noticed this, for 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, and on the morning of the fourth day they saw a strange gleam after the white light rose in the East. They sent the Locust Couriers to see what it was. They returned to say that there was a vast flood approaching from the East. The People and the Kiis'aanii assembled, bemoaning their fate and knowing not what to do. They climbed a hill to hold a council. Then they saw two men drawing near; one was old and had grey hair, the other was young. They passed right through the crowd without speaking and sat down on top of the hill, the young man in front, the old man behind him, and Locust behind them both, and they all turned and faced the East. The old man took seven bags from his robe, telling the People that he had bits of earth from the Seven Sacred Mountains. The People asked him 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 out on the ground. Planted in it were four reeds with four joints, and, as they watched, the roots spread out, going into the earth, and the reeds joined into one, growing rapidly; in the eastern side of the big reed was a great hole. The young man told the People to enter, and when they were all in, the hole closed behind them and they heard the splashing of the waters as the flood came near. Turkey was the last to enter the reed and his tail got wet with the foam from the flood, and that is why Turkey has white tips to his tail feathers.

As the People climbed inside the reed it soon began to sway, but Black Body blew a great breath through the top of the reed and a black cloud formed around the top, holding it steady. The reed grew higher as the People climbed, and again it began to sway. Black Body took a plume from his headband and stuck it through the top of the reed, fastening it 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, and finding a small opening he passed through it into the upper world, coming 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, the Fifth World. On the fourth day, someone looked down through the hole and saw the water rushing up. First Man called a council and, pointing to Coyote, said that something was wrong about Coyote, for he never took off his robe. The People searched Coyote and two strange objects fell to the ground. These were the children of the Water Monster whom Coyote had stolen from under the river. The People threw the children into the hole and at once the water subsided.

On the fifth night one of the hermaphrodite twins stopped breathing and all the People wondered what had become of her breath; they hunted for it everywhere. 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 men died, and ever since the People have feared to look upon the dead.

Now the Kiis'aanii were camped some little distance from the others, and one of the People found that they had brought an ear of corn with them from the lower world. Some People wanted to take this away from the Kiis'aanii, while others said that that would be wrong, but some young men went to demand the corn, and angry words followed. But the friendly Kiis'aanii offered to break the ear in two and give 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 Kiis'aanii, and that is why the Pueblo People have always had better corn than the Navaho. After the angry words, the Kiis'aanii moved away from the People, which is why they and the Navaho live apart today.

Then First Man and First Woman, Black Body and Blue Body built seven sacred mountains in the Fifth World, using the earth brought from the lower world. And the four great mountains were Sisnaajiní to the East, Tsoodzíł to the South, Doko'ooslííd to the West, and Dibéntsaa to the North. Within these boundaries were the three lesser mountains, Ch'óół'íí, Dzíł ná'óodiłii, and Naatsis'áán. These are still the sacred mountains of the Dinéh, the Navaho People.[1]

But times were bad and there were many Enemy Monsters who killed and ate people. One day First Man was standing on Dzíł ná'óodiłii, and looking to the East he saw a rain cloud resting on Ch'óół'íí. Each day it enveloped the mountain more and more, and on the fourth day it completely covered it. He told First Woman that something unusual was happening, and set forth to see what it was, singing a Blessing Song as he went.

When First Man reached Ch'óół'íí, he heard a baby cry; he found the baby lying with its head toward

[1] The contemporary locations of the sacred mountains are *Sisnaajiní*, Mount Blanca, San Luis Valley, Colorado; *Tsoodzíł*, Mount Taylor, north of Laguna, New Mexico; *Doko'ooslíid*, the San Francisco Peaks, near Flagstaff, Arizona; *Dibéntsaa*, Mount Hesperus, La Plata Mountains, Colorado; *Ch'óół'íí*, Gobernador Knob, in Old Navaholand, southeast of the reservoir; *Dzíł ná'óodiłii*, Huerfano Mesa, south of Farmington, New Mexico; and *Naatsis'áán*, Navaho Mountain, southeastern Utah.

the West. Its cradle was made of two short rainbows; over the baby's chest and feet lay the red beams of the rising sun; arched over its face was another short rainbow. Four blankets covered the baby: one was black, one was blue, one was yellow, and the fourth was a white cloud. Along both sides were rows of loops made of lightning, and, through these, sunbeams were laced back and forth. As First Man did not know what to do with the fastenings, he took the baby back to Dził ná'oodiłii to First Woman, telling her where he had found the baby in the rain and darkness. Soon they heard the call of Talking God, and then the call of House God, as the gods approached. Talking God clapped his hands over his mouth saying that something important had happened, for the baby was what the Holy People had been wishing for. Talking God placed the cradle on the ground and, with one pull of the strings, freed the lacings.

"This is my daughter," First Woman said, and First Man said the same. Days passed which were the same as years, and when two days had passed, the baby sat up, and in four days she walked. Then she was dressed in white shell. On the tenth day she was named White Shell Woman (she was also called Changing Woman), and thus she was brought by the Holy People to become, perhaps, the most pre-eminent of the supernatural beings, for she symbolizes fertility, and regeneration, and the bringing of all green things to life year after year.

Just below the junction of the San Juan and the Pine rivers in north central New Mexico, where the new Navajo Dam is now creating a large reservoir, there was a meadow on the eastern side of the San Juan. Along one side of the meadow was a cliff of reddish sandstone, and etched into the façade was a series of petroglyphs, chipped out of the rock with obsidian tools centuries ago.

Here also were the remnants of weatherworn rock paintings of the Twin Hero Gods (The Twin War Gods), sons of Changing Woman and the Sun, who slew the Enemy Monsters on this earth so that the Dinéh might safely live here. The story relates how a ray of light from the Sun passed through drops of water from a waterfall, impregnating Changing Woman. When the twins were born, one was called Monster Slayer, the other, Child-of-the-Water.

Nearby, on this sheer slab of rock was a petroglyph with all the attributes of Changing Woman herself: in one hand she holds an ear of corn; in the other, a corn tassel containing pollen; around her neck is the rainbow necklace, made from the sacred stones from the four sacred mountains—white shell, turquoise, coral, and jet.

Now these ancient pictures are submerged beneath the waters of the reservoir; but surely the spirit of Changing Woman will bless this water as it goes forth onto the dry and barren land, fulfilling her mission of renewal, and bringing new crops and a richer life to many of the Dinéh.

Maize

The domestication and hybridization of maize, or corn, has been perhaps the most important achievement of the American Indian, giving the Western

Hemisphere its most stable food. For many years scientists have searched for the true ancestor of corn such as was found in the Americas at the time of the arrival of the first European explorers. A good many years ago scientists found two wild grasses related to corn, but not true corn itself. Recently the great antiquity of corn was proved with the finding of corn pollen in drilled cores taken from strata at the bottom of the lake site on which Mexico City now stands. These pollen grains are estimated to be eighty thousand years old.

Following this discovery a systematic search has been under way since 1960, headed by Dr. Richard MacNeish of Canada[2] and his associates. Some previous findings in New Mexico and northern Mexico had produced corncobs which, when tested by the remarkable Carbon-14 method of dating substances, were approximately five thousand years old. Now, after four years of excavation and research, cave sites in the valley of Tehuacan, south of Mexico City, have yielded the final evidence of the true corn plant and the proof of its domestication and hybridization. In these caves, beneath twenty-eight layers of human occupation, corncobs from the true wild plant were found dating back to 5000 B.C. Each era of occupation left its evidence: in later levels dating about 4000 B.C., cobs from early domesticated corn were found; then an early hybrid variety dating 3000 B.C.; and finally, dating 1000 B.C., cobs from modern corn, such as that found in a growing state by the European explorers.

Dr. MacNeish's team, which included archaeologists, botanists, and scientists of other related subjects, has found that this hybridization was achieved with the use of the wild corn plant itself and the two related wild grasses, teosinte and tripsacum, thus producing the early corn of some three thousand years ago.

Of the three major cereals of the world—wheat in Africa spreading to Europe, rice in Asia, and corn in the Americas—it is only corn, modern corn, that is, which cannot perpetuate itself in a wild state. With its seeds tightly wrapped in sheaths, corn needs man's help to disperse the seeds so that they may grow. As domestication and hybridization of this plant increased, following the early uses of irrigation, knowledge of its cultivation spread from one Indian group to another and on to the far regions of both Americas where the plant could grow, and where it was found in its fully developed state by the first Europeans who set foot in the Western Hemisphere.

This food, so vital to existence for many centuries, has always been held sacred by Indian peoples. In the Southwest, corn is the symbol of the great dance dramas of the Pueblo People. To the Navaho, it is the symbolic emblem of life itself. It is treasured and revered. Every medicine man carries pouches of sacred corn pollen to be used in all rituals: in the Blessingway Ceremony; in the great ceremonials; in the blessing of hogans. Sacred corn mush is eaten simultaneously from the wedding basket by every Navaho bride and groom.

The Four Sacred Mountains

While I was reading the Creation Story, my thoughts traveled to the four sacred mountains bordering the Navaho World. It was then, I think, that it occurred to me to illustrate this beautiful story with photographs of these mountains from the air. To do this two flights were necessary, the first for Sisnaajiní, Sacred Mountain of the East, and the second, longer, flight for the other three. Perhaps it is my love for landscape and geography that makes me want to fly. From the air one can see so clearly 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.

In a small chartered plane, my pilot and I left Santa Fe early one morning with the picture of Sisnaajiní as our goal. As we circled to gain altitude, the form of the Sandia Mountain fault, to the south of us, became more distinct in structure with its rising eastern slope and the sheer, abrupt western face. In a cave high in this western wall, the earliest evidence of human life in this area has been found, remnants of migrants who lived here fifteen thousand years ago—so old is the history of our Southwest. The present theory is that these ancient primitives came to North America from Mongolia via Bering Strait, moving slowly southward over a period of centuries.

We headed north following the Rio Grande, seeing clearly the canyons cut by the river through the volcanic slopes of the Pajarito Plateau. As we crossed

[2] Dr. Richard MacNeish, "The Origins of New World Civilization," *Scientific American*, 211, No. 5 (November, 1964), 29–37.

into southern Colorado the superb mountain mass of Sisnaajiní grew 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 and antelope, deer and bison—and here the ancient Navaho came to hunt, seeing always their sacred mountain before them. To the West, over the continental divide, the new Navajo Dam has now been completed at the confluence of the San Juan and the Pine rivers. Just above the dam site during the field seasons of 1959, 1960, and 1961, the salvage archaeology project of the Museum of New Mexico uncovered more comprehensive data of the early whereabouts of the Navaho and their Apache cousins. These sites, farther north than excavations made some years ago by other archaeologists, have extended the area known as Old Navaholand. These recent unearthings have revealed simple, crude hogans (Navaho houses) dating from about the middle of the sixteenth century. This date seems to indicate that the Navaho may well have been the last migration to reach the Southwest. Whence and how they came has yet to be determined.

The Spanish colonists who arrived in New Mexico in 1598 came in contact with many Indian groups. During the years that followed, they wrote often of the Apaches, usually designating which Apache group, for there must have been several at that time, all speaking the Athabascan language. In the chronicle of Fray Gerónimo de Zárate Salmerón, written in 1626, he speaks of the "Apaches de Návahúu," who were living in a small pueblo on the Pajarito Plateau not far from Santa Fe. *Návahúu* is a Tewa Indian word meaning "cultivated-field-arroyo" and is the word from which *Navaho* is doubtless derived.[3] The Navaho learned the rudiments of agriculture from Pueblo Indians with whom they came in contact, for archaeologists working in the Old Navaholand areas have found both Pueblo and Navaho structures in close proximity to one another. In these Navaho excavations the archaeologists found remnants of corn, squash, and bean seed.

Thinking always of the Navaho, where they came from and how they traveled, we could see from the air that the distance from Old Navaholand to Sisnaajiní is not great, and, though there are mountains in between, there are passes through which travelers can find a way, and the Navaho doubtless came into the valley to hunt. Because of its severance by a wide, low pass, Sisnaajiní appears to be a mountain by itself and is a natural landmark—Sisnaajiní, Navaho Sacred Mountain of the East.

Following plans for a longer flight to photograph the Sacred Mountains of the South, West, and North, we left 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. Crossing the Rio Grande, we saw below us on the river's western bank the skeleton ruin of a 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 near its junction with the Rio Grande. As we crossed a low, hilly divide at the southern tip of the Jemez Range, a vast expanse of semidesert came into view, broken here and there by piñon-covered buttes, while stark forms of volcanic cones rose above the terrain. To the north of us lay Old Navaholand, dimly seen on the horizon, extending to the border of New Mexico and Colorado and a little beyond.

As we flew over this arid land, leaving the Jemez Mountains behind us, Tsoodził, Navaho Sacred Mountain of the South, rose in tiered mesas to its eleven-thousand-foot snow-tipped summit. We circled several times seeking the proper foreground for this picture, finding such different country from the empty areas of the San Luis Valley. Thick clusters of cedar and piñon trees, broken by parklike openings and rugged prominences, built up to the mountain peak. We saw isolated hogans, sometimes three or four in a group representing a family unit, with sheep corrals and, nearby, flocks grazing. There was an occasional horseman, a car, a truck or two—so few signs of life in

[3] Navaho can be spelled two ways: the phonetic spelling with an *h*, which assures correct pronunciation, or the Spanish spelling with a *j*. The latter has been adopted by the United States government, and a few years ago the Navaho Tribal Council officially adopted the *j*-spelling, in spite of years of using the *h*. Many authors, Dr. Washington Matthews, Father Berard Haile, and Dr. Clyde Kluckhohn, among others, have long used the *h*-spelling. To assure correct pronunciation, the *h*-spelling is used in this book, with the exception of certain official names and titles.

this big empty-looking land. It seemed hard to believe that more than 104,000 Navaho People live on this reservation.

Turning to a northwesterly direction we were soon over land free of timber but covered with desert grass and low shrubs. We crossed Chaco Canyon, looking down on the extensive ruin of Pueblo Bonito and other ancient sites of this once populous region. The Navaho have stories about these ruins and their long forgotten prehistoric inhabitants—the Kiis'aanii, ancestors of the Pueblo People. We crossed the Escavada Wash, a wide, dry river bed, capable of carrying a raging torrent following a summer thunderstorm. 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 homesites.

History tells us of the many conflicts between the Navaho and the Pueblo Indians and Spanish settlers. It was Coronado who first brought both sheep and horses to this country, and later, following the Spanish colonization, the Navaho, filled with envy, stole or traded for the animals they coveted. Horses gave them a new and better mode of travel and it was not long until they became stockmen. Horses also gave them incentive to hunt new pastures and remote canyons in which to hide their stolen booty, as well as giving them new and mobile means for war upon enemy Indians and raids upon the Pueblos and the Spanish settlers.

We crossed the fertile valley of the San Juan, circling for a landing at Farmington to refuel the plane and to have a short rest. As we turned, Tsoodził, still though distantly visible, lifted its snowy summit into the turquoise sky—the one high landmark—Tsoodził, Navaho Sacred Mountain of the South.

After a short rest and a second breakfast, we continued our journey, following the San Juan River toward the Four Corners, that unique spot where the states of Arizona and Utah meet Colorado and New Mexico. Below us were many farms, for this is the most cultivated part of the reservation. Green fields of alfalfa and ripening fields of corn and oats filled the pale landscape with rich color. After completion of the new Navaho Reservoir, and as its stored water becomes available for irrigation, the Navaho will expand this region to include many thousands of acres of new arable land, acres now bordering the narrow productive strip of the river's valley.

Shiprock, largest of the volcanic cones of the Southwest, rose more than 1,800 feet out of the desert sea, its two great flanking dykes bringing to mind the Navaho legend of an eagle with outspread wings. Beyond was the Red Rock area I knew so well, and I could trace the merging of the dun-colored landscape into opalescent red as we neared the Lukachukai Mountains, that small group which forms the northern boundary of the Chuska Range. This 9,500-foot range runs north and south, bisecting the reservation. It is densely covered with pine and fir, spruce and aspen, yielding a large timber reserve for the Navaho People.

To the south of us, as we crossed the Lukachukais, we could see the whole Chuska Mountain Range sloping into the Defiance Plateau, the timber changing to piñon and cedar as the elevation dropped. Beneath us were huge red sandstone promontories jutting out into the sage-covered foothills, like giant ocean piers.

Ahead of us, sun drenched and glowing red, we could see Monument Valley as the timbered plateau dropped beneath us to meet the western desert. The beauty of the monoliths was startling from the air, so different from the ground aspect, where one looks up at them into a contrasting blue sky. After circling the valley, we continued our western direction and in the span of a quarter of an hour were over the southern end of another timbered plateau which extends south from Utah into Arizona. Tsegi Canyon emerged beneath us, and following a tributary we saw suddenly the cliff dwelling of Beta-ta-kin, one of the most beautiful of all the thirteenth-century ruins of the Southwest. The gracefully arched cave, with its sheer clefts of rock at one end, protects the buildings from storm and wind. Rich green foliage nestles close to the spring which these early inhabitants were fortunate enough to have at their doorsteps. So completely do the buildings blend into the rose-colored rock of the high cave, that the shadowed rectangular doorways are all that make the cliff dwelling visible. This ruin, and others not far away, now comprise the Navajo National Monument.

Cutting across the western edge of Black Mountain, we turned southward over an expanse of yellow sand, as yet another desert extended to the Grand Canyon, the western boundary of the reservation. A short flying time brought us opposite Doko'ooslííd, and we saw the Little Colorado River marking a diagonal course in our foreground as it contributes its small share of water to its mighty brother, the Colorado.