Navajo History, 1850–1923

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Navajo history during the period 1850–1923 could well be described as "what might have been." At times during this period there were Americans in positions of action and authority who understood the Navajo and recognized the fact they were more sinned against than sinning. Yet, unfortunately and tragically these men were transferred, resigned, or killed. Consequently, the Navajo were usually dealt with by men who neither understood them nor were sympathetic to their needs and predicament. Historical accounts dealing with the Navajo during this period are full of biased and one-sided reporting, to the effect that the Navajos were untrustworthy.

Later authors have suggested a very different picture of the Navajos. Forbes (1960:281–285) stated that the Spaniards and not the Athapaskans were responsible for the increased warfare after the arrival of the Spaniards. Bailey (1966:73) declared that the documentary record shows that "the Navajos did not make war just to steal and kill; they earned their reputation as warriors fighting to protect their lands, property and families—and a just cause it was."

Events Leading to the Long Walk

The Murder of Narbona

On August 31, 1849, Col. John Washington, accompanied by Indian Agent James Calhoun, met in the Chuska Mountains with a group of Navajos under the leadership of Narbona and José Largo. At the conclusion of the meeting, a Mexican with the American troops declared he saw a horse that had been stolen from him with the Navajo. Washington demanded that the horse be turned over to the Mexican. The Navajos refused and turned to leave. The order to fire on the departing Navajos was given, and Narbona was shot in the back and killed along with six other Navajos. As the Navajos fled on horseback several shots were fired from the artillery. Richard H. Kern, an artist on the Simpson expedition, wrote in his journal that Narbona, the head chief (fig. 1), was shot in four or five places and scalped (McNitt 1972:138–146; Simpson 1964; Hine 1962:77).

This incident created additional mistrust in the minds of the Navajo; how could it have had any other effect? Actually, Narbona was one of the most influential Navajo leaders, who tried to keep a state of peace between his people and the New Mexicans. His death, and the manner in which it occurred, did nothing to allay the fears the Navajos felt toward the intruders. While the Navajo were usually required to return prisoners and allegedly stolen livestock, the New Mexicans were never forced to do so; combining this with incidents of gross criminal action, such as the murder of Narbona, on the part of the Army or others with no corrective action taken, helps explain the hopelessness and disbelief in obtaining justice that the Navajos must have felt in their dealings with the Army, the New Mexicans, and other outsiders.

The Fort Fauntleroy Massacre

A large group of Navajos went to Fort Fauntleroy in September 1861 to receive rations as negotiated by Maj. Edward R.S. Canby in his treaty with the Navajos of February 15, 1861. The treaty stipulations indicated an understanding of the Navajos and of the fact that they had been subjected to devastating slave raids. Canby in a February 27, 1861, letter to Army Department Commander T.T. Fauntleroy deplored the continuing slave raids by the New Mexicans despite the treaty, adding that he himself would "have no hesitation in treating as enemies of the United States any parties of Mexicans or Pueblo Indians who may be found in the country assigned to the Navajos" (Bailey 1964:139).

In keeping with the treaty, Navajos went to Fort Fauntleroy periodically to receive their promised rations. On the ration day of September 22, 1861, 12 Navajo women and children were shamelessly shot by soldiers under the command of Col. Manuel Chaves. Chaves was an "experienced Indian fighter" who had earlier raided the Navajo for slaves.

On this as well as on most ration days, a series of horse races was held (fig. 5), with heavy betting between the soldiers and the Navajos. The featured race pitted a thoroughbred owned by the post's assistant surgeon, Finis Kavanaugh, against one of the best Navajo horses. Both got off to a fast start, but it became evident within a few seconds that the Navajo horse and rider were in serious difficulty as the Navajo horse ran off the track uncontrolled. Upon examination it was apparent that

Academy of Nat. Sciences, Philadelphia: Coll. 146 #44.
Fig. 1. Watercolor portrait of Narbona, by Edward M. Kern from a sketch made by Richard H. Kern on the day of Narbona's death, Aug. 31, 1849. One of a set of watercolors by the Kern brothers, many of which were published as lithographs in the expedition's report (Simpson 1850).

Smithsonian, Dept. of Anthr.: 281,473.
Fig. 2. Man's shoulder blanket of black, white, red (bayeta), dark and light blue wool. Often called chief blankets, although not associated with rank, the earliest were striped only. In the second phase a block design was added to the stripes and in the third phase, shown here, the blocks were replaced by a diamond motif. When worn, the joining of the ends at the front of the body forms a repeat of the diamond on the back. First woven about 1800, the various chief blanket patterns continue to be made. Size 162.5 by 198.0 cm, collected by Washington Matthews, 1880–1882.

the bridle reins had been slashed with a knife so only a slight pull resulted in a broken rein that caused the rider to lose control of his mount. The Navajos thought they had been tricked, but the judges of the race, all soldiers, decided otherwise, and Kavanaugh's horse was declared the winner. The Navajos were dissatisfied and so indicated. In this state of confusion shots were fired.

Chaves declared that the Navajos attempted to rush the fort so he ordered the troops to fire. An investigation showed that a single drunken Indian tried to get into the fort. A shot was fired by the sentry and the Indian fell. The troops then began killing other Navajos, despite the attempts of at least two sergeants to stop the slaughter, and Col. Chaves ordered his howitzers to fire on the Indians.

An effort to court-martial Chaves was unsuccessful. This incident was one of many that "impressed the Navajos as being unjust, inexcusable and unforgiveable" (Keleher 1952:297–300; McNitt 1972:426–442).

Slave Trade

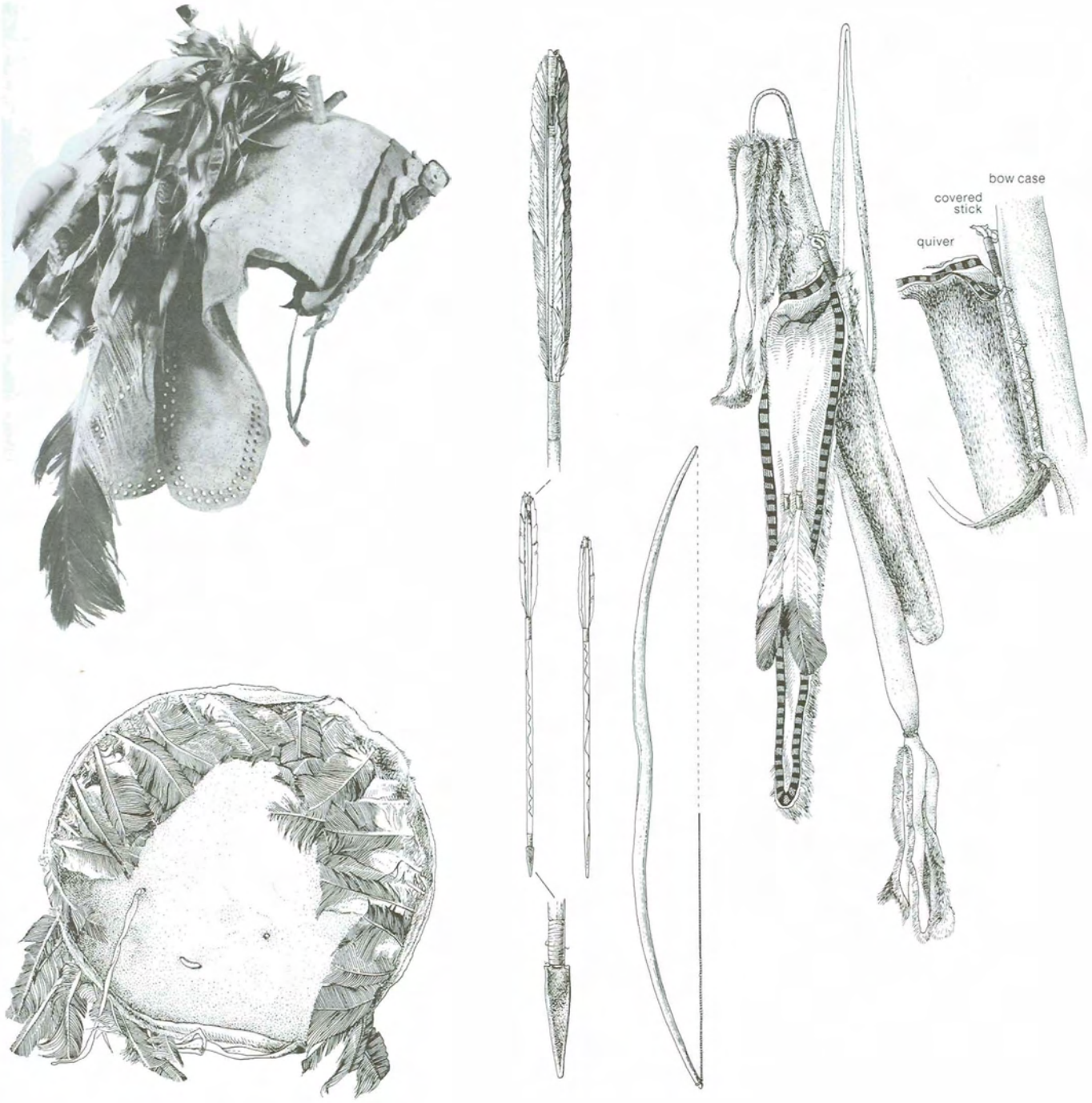
Thousands of Indians were held as slaves in the territory of New Mexico (Keleher 1952:366, 482–483, 497; McNitt 1972:379, 386, 399, 406–409, 441–446; Bailey 1966:73, 114, 116, 177–178, 180–181, 188). On a list of 148 Indian captives held in two Colorado counties in July 1865, 112 were identified as Navajo (McNitt 1972:443–446). The slave traders wanted to keep war going between the Navajos and the government so as to continue their opportunities for raids to capture Navajos.

Even after the Civil War, Navajos were held as slaves by residents of New Mexico. In 1865 Julius Graves was appointed by the Office of Indian Affairs to examine the practice of Indian slavery. He reported it to be widespread, with the superintendent of Indian affairs for New Mexico himself owning six slaves, and suggested that the loss of their children to slavers was a Navajo motive for warfare (Bailey 1966:180–182).

Land and Gold Pressures

As the Mexicans and Anglos expanded into territories claimed by the Navajo, tensions and problems increased.

On February 10, 1854, Maj. Henry L. Kendrick wrote New Mexico Gov. David Meriwether that he was in-



bottom left, Mus. of N. Mex., Santa Fe: 1877/12; Smithsonian, Dept. of Anthr.: right, 166,614, top left, 129,572.

Fig. 4. War equipment of Navajo men traditionally included a shield, bow and arrows, lance, and sometimes a club. bottom left, Painted rawhide shield decorated with a strip of red flannel hung with feathers. right, Combination quiver and bow case of sinew-sewn mountain lion skin; the bow case has the fur side in and is fringed at both ends and has a wooden stiffener inside; the quiver has the fur side out, with a feather-decorated flap lined with red flannel edged with black tape decorated with white seed beads; the 2 containers are lashed together with a decorated cloth-covered stick between them. Although sinew backed bows were often used in warfare, this is a simple wood bow used for hunting game as well. The arrows are fletched with 3 split feathers lashed on with sinew, and have incised zigzags on the shafts (probably representing lightning); one has a hafted metal point, the other a sharpened end. The secondary arrow release was used and a piece of leather served as a wrist guard. Multi-layer leather shirts were sometimes worn as armor and a decorated hat completed the outfit. top left, War hat of tanned leather with 2 flaps with perforated edges in back and a plume of owl feathers attached to the top with 2 pieces of rolled leather in front of it. The front edge is decorated with a strip of green cloth over which is a piece of scalloped leather with abalone shell attached. Whether the hat design signified status or clan is unclear. Shields and war hats were evidently not used after 1870, but bows and arrows were used until about 1890. For descriptions of war equipment and its use see Hill (1936), and Kluckhohn, Hill, and Kluckhohn (1971). top left, Length 29 cm; bottom left, width about 60 cm, rest to same scale; right, collected by James Mooney in 1893, top left by Washington Mathews in 1887.

Smithsonian, NAA:74-7224.

Fig. 5. Navajo horse race, with numerous spectators in attendance, about 1904–1906. Navajo horse-racing, with associated wagering, was fairly common at this time, with horses specifically trained to race (Franciscan Fathers 1910:154). In earlier times, races were more normally run with only two horses at a time, often the best horse from each of 2 groups or communities (Kluckhohn, Hill, and Kluckhohn 1971:387–388). Photograph by Simeon Schwemberger, probably in the vicinity of St. Michael's, Ariz.

(McNitt 1972:359). Capt. John G. Walker in a report written on August 3, 1859, stated:

> I would remark that the Navajoes everywhere evinced the most earnest desire for peace. I am not prepared to say what would be the better line of policy towards them, but there is no doubt that a war made upon them now by us would fall the heaviest upon the least guilty, would transform a nation which has already made considerable progress in civilized arts into a race of beggars, vagabonds and robbers. What consideration such views should have in the settlement of our difficulties with them—difficulties based upon exaggerated demands—which every animal in the Navajo country would scarcely be sufficient to satisfy, it is not for one to suggest, but before severe measures are resolved on and a course of policy initiated that would entail poverty and wretchedness upon the entire tribe, it may be that some little forbearance might be the part of true wisdom (McNitt 1972:368–369).

After meeting with Navajo headmen at Laguna Negra on September 25, 1858, Maj. John Smith Simonson expressed a similar view and pointed out that "the treaty binds the Navajoes to make restitution, but leaves them without redress for injuries inflicted upon them" by New Mexicans and Pueblo Indians, despite clear evidence "that the Navajoes understood that restitution was to be mutual" (McNitt 1972:375). Despite such advice, the military authorities went ahead with their punitive campaign.

Navajos Attack Fort Defiance

Unable to find understanding or justice and goaded into retaliation by increased slave raids by the New Mexicans, the Navajo in the early morning hours of April 30, 1860, attacked Fort Defiance, which had been founded in the heart of the Navajo country in 1851. There have been only a few documented attacks by Indian tribes against established Army forts. Although most were armed with bows and arrows, the Navajos almost succeeded in capturing the fort before they were finally repulsed. On July 9, 1860, the secretary of war ordered that active operations be instituted against the Navajos as soon as possible, using no volunteers, only regular troops (McNitt 1972:384). These orders were a response to the action of Governor Rencher, who had given his approval for the formation of two companies of volunteers, declaring that "these people prefer to carry on Indian wars in their own way" (McNitt 1972:385), that is, presumably, as a means to capture slaves. When Rencher later cooperated with the Army and opposed the volunteers, he was subjected to criticism from both sides (Keleher 1952:105–107; U.S. Congress. Senate 1861, 2:64).

The Long Walk

Planning the Long Walk

In the fall of 1862, Brigadier General Carleton became the new military commander for New Mexico. He arrived as commanding officer of a column of troops from California whose purposes were to subjugate the Indians, protect the territory from a Confederate invasion, and open an overland mail route (Keleher 1952:229). However, after a 10-month trip from the Pacific to the Rio Grande the column arrived too late

to be involved with any fights with the Confederates. Carleton's California troops wanted action or a discharge, and he almost immediately began making plans to curb Indian hostilities (Keleher 1952:277–278; Thompson 1976:11).

Gov. Henry Connelly and Brigadier General Carleton agreed to start a war first against the Mescalero Apaches and then against the Navajos (Keleher 1952:279), placing Col. Christopher (Kit) Carson in command of the troops in the field. Carson was not at all enthusiastic about undertaking the campaign as he believed the Indians could be brought to terms without war. Furthermore, he had resigned as Indian agent during the Civil War in order to defend the Territory of New Mexico from the Confederates and not to fight Indians. He was clearly a reluctant campaigner who succeeded through perseverance rather than military ability (Kelly 1970:7–12; Keleher 1952:279).

The war with the 500 or so Mescalero Apaches lasted only five months (Bailey 1964:146). Carleton had made arrangements to move the vanquished Mescalero Apache to a new military post he established on the Pecos River, which he named Fort Sumner (also known as Bosque Redondo). Actually, a board of officers who visited the site prior to the establishment of the Fort recommended to Carleton that another location be selected because of poor water, lack of wood, and threat of floods (Bailey 1964:146–147); nevertheless, Carleton had his mind made up and Fort Sumner was created at the place he had selected in east-central New Mexico as the home for captured Mescalero Apaches and Navajos.

With the subjugation of the Mescalero Apache, Carleton and Carson (fig. 8) were prepared to move against the Navajo. In April 1863 Carleton met with leaders of the peaceful Navajo and told them they would have to move to Fort Sumner (Kelly 1970:20). Then, on June 15, 1863, he issued General Order Number 15, which stated:

> For a long time past the Navajoe Indians have murdered and robbed the people of New Mexico. Last winter when eighteen of their chiefs came to Santa Fe to have a talk, they were warned—and were told to inform their people—that for these murders and robberies the tribe must be punished, unless some binding guarantees should be given that in future these outrages should cease. No such guarantees have yet been given: But on the contrary, additional murders, and additional robberies have been perpetrated upon the persons and property of our unoffending citizens. It is therefore ordered, that Colonel CHRISTOPHER CARSON, with a proper military force proceed without delay . . . and . . . prosecute a vigorous war upon the men of this tribe until it is considered at these Head Quarters that they have been effectually punished for their long continued atrocities. . . . These troops will march from Los Pinos [near Albuquerque] for the Navajoe country on Wednesday, July 1, 1863 (Kelly 1970:21–23).

In a letter dated June 23, 1863, to Lt. Col. J. Francisco Chaves, commanding officer at Fort Wingate, Carleton ordered him to call in the peaceful Navajo leaders again and "tell them they can have until the twentieth day of July of this year to come in—they and all those who belong to what they call the peace party. *That after that day every Navajoe that is seen will be considered as hostile, and treated accordingly*" (Kelly 1970:21).

While issuing these demands to the "peace party" Carleton was making preparations for war on the general population of the Navajo, whom he regarded as hostile. He made no attempt to communicate his ultimatum to all the Navajo, who were scattered throughout a 30,000-square-mile territory, and he ordered Carson and his troops into Navajo country three weeks before the July 20 deadline, on July 1. Carson arrived at Fort Defiance exactly on July 20 and began military operations two days later (Keleher 1952:303; Kelly 1970:26–29).

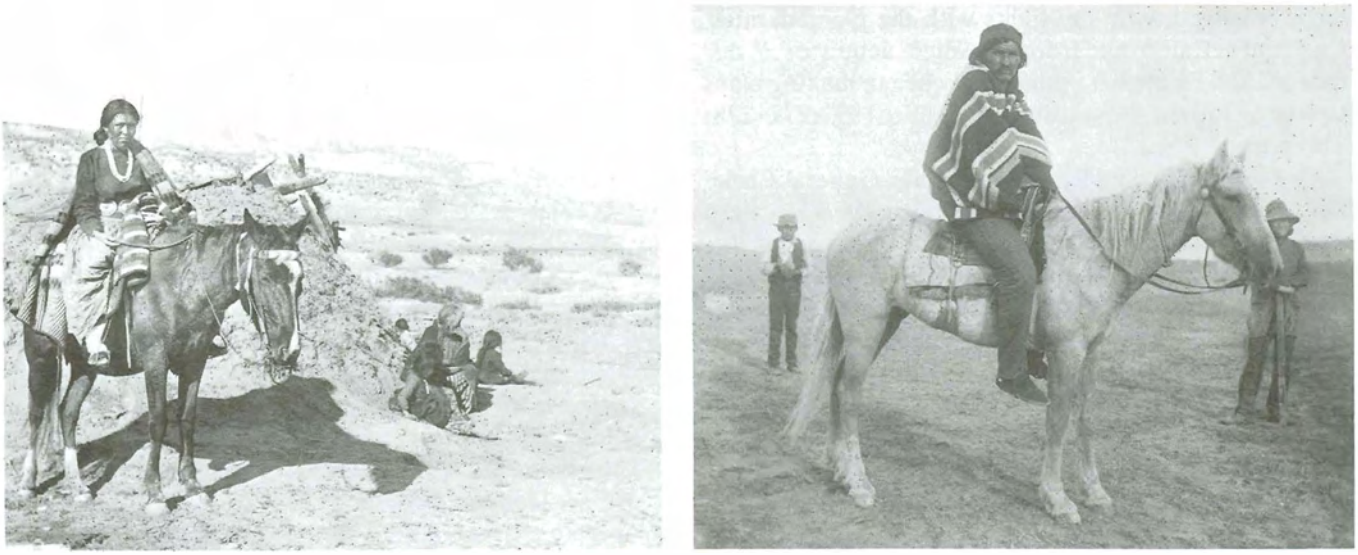
The Long Walk Itself

Not only did the Navajo have to contend with the United States Army and Kit Carson, but also their land was filled with other Indians (Ute and Pueblo) and New Mexicans determined to pillage and capture slaves, particularly women and children, to be sold as domestics. Companies of irregulars were being organized and equipped with Carleton's blessings. The frontier towns of Cubero, Cebolleta, and Abiquiu served as jumping-off points for the slave-raiders, who were disguised as "volunteer troops" (Bailey 1964:154).

By September 1863 Carleton had developed and begun implementation of his campaign policy. In a letter to Carson dated September 19, 1863, Carleton stated: "Say to them, 'Go to the Bosque Redondo [Fort Sumner], or we will pursue and destroy you. We will not make peace with you on any other terms. You have deceived us too often and robbed and murdered our people too long—to trust you again at large in your own country. This war will be pursued against you if it takes years . . . until you cease to exist or move' " (Kelly 1970:52).

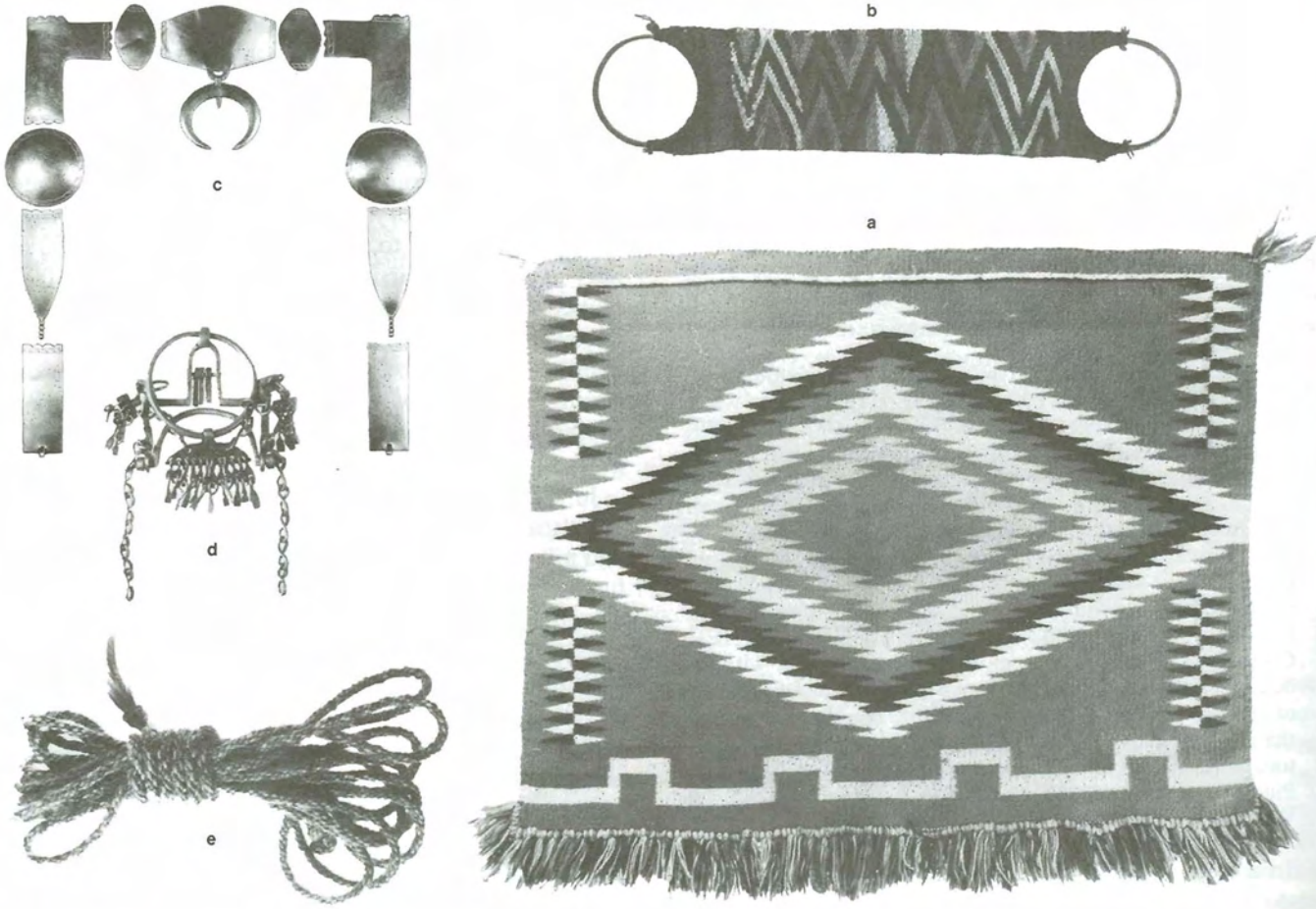
In Carleton's own words Fort Sumner would serve as a "spacious tribal reformatory, away from the haunts and hills and hiding places of their country" (fig. 9). He further said that the Navajos were not to be trusted any more than "the wolves that run through the mountains" (Keleher 1952:310, 311).

While forbidding the use of captured Navajos as slaves, Carleton did authorize payment of a bounty to each soldier for the capture of horses, mules, and sheep (Kelly 1970:31–32). The scorched-earth policy of Carleton, in which the troops destroyed cornfields, peach trees, hogans, water holes, animals, and people, began to pay dividends as the Navajo had nowhere to hide and little or nothing to eat. The statistics for 1863



Calif. Histl. Soc., Los Angeles: Title Insurance Coll.:3236, 3263.

Fig. 6. Navajo riders about 1900. Horses were reported among the Navajo as early as the 1650s (Haines 1966:11; see also Forbes 1959) and quickly became valued. left, Navajo woman, wearing Pendleton blanket, in front of a forked roof, mud-covered hogan. The horse has a silver-mounted bridle and a decorated bit similar to those of native manufacture described as early as 1856 (Kluckhohn, Hill, and Kluckhohn 1971:82). right, Navajo man. Both he and the woman are mounted on horses with Navajo (Spanish-derived) saddles, consisting of wooden saddletrees covered with rawhide and decorated with brass-head tacks. The men's and women's saddles were differentiated by the pommel construction; the woman's saddle had a horn designed to accommodate a cradleboard (Kluckhohn, Hill, and Kluckhohn 1971:84–85). Photographs possibly both by G. Wharton James (left copyrighted by James and Pierce 1901).



Mus. of N. Mex., Santa Fe.:9826.

Fig. 8. Col. Christopher (Kit) Carson (left), commander of the 1863–1864 campaign against the Navajos and later Military Superintendent of Indians at Ft. Sumner, with Brig. Gen. James H. Carleton, advocate and designer of the Ft. Sumner reservation scheme. The original concept of Navajo removal to a remote reservation, though not the details of the plan, had been inherited from Maj. E.R.S. Canby, whom Carleton replaced as departmental commander of N. Mex. in Sept. 1862 (Thompson 1976:7–9). Detail from a group portrait of Masons, taken at the Masonic Temple in Santa Fe, N. Mex., by Nicholas Brown, Dec. 26, 1866.

showed that the Navajo campaign resulted in 301 Indians killed, 87 wounded, 703 captured. The losses for the Army numbered 14 soldiers killed, 21 wounded, 3 officers killed, and 4 wounded (Keleher 1952:315).

On January 6, 1864, Carson departed with 375 troops for Canyon de Chelly. It was bitter cold and there was heavy snow on the ground. Sixteen days later he returned to Fort Canby (Fort Defiance) with more than 200 prisoners. Carson was generous in his treatment of those who surrendered, and his kindness toward the captives was one reason so many surrendered (Kelly 1970:97). The Navajos at Canyon de Chelly told Carson that their people were starving and that many had already died. Many captives had eaten only berries and piñon nuts for many days preceding their surrender. The captive Navajo women, dressed in rags, feared that their children would be taken from them (Keleher 1952:316).

During the remainder of the winter of 1864, many Navajos surrendered at Fort Canby as well as at Fort Wingate. On February 26, 1864, Capt. Joseph Berney and his troops left Los Pinos with 1,445 Navajos for Fort Sumner (fig. 10) (Kelly 1970:114–116).

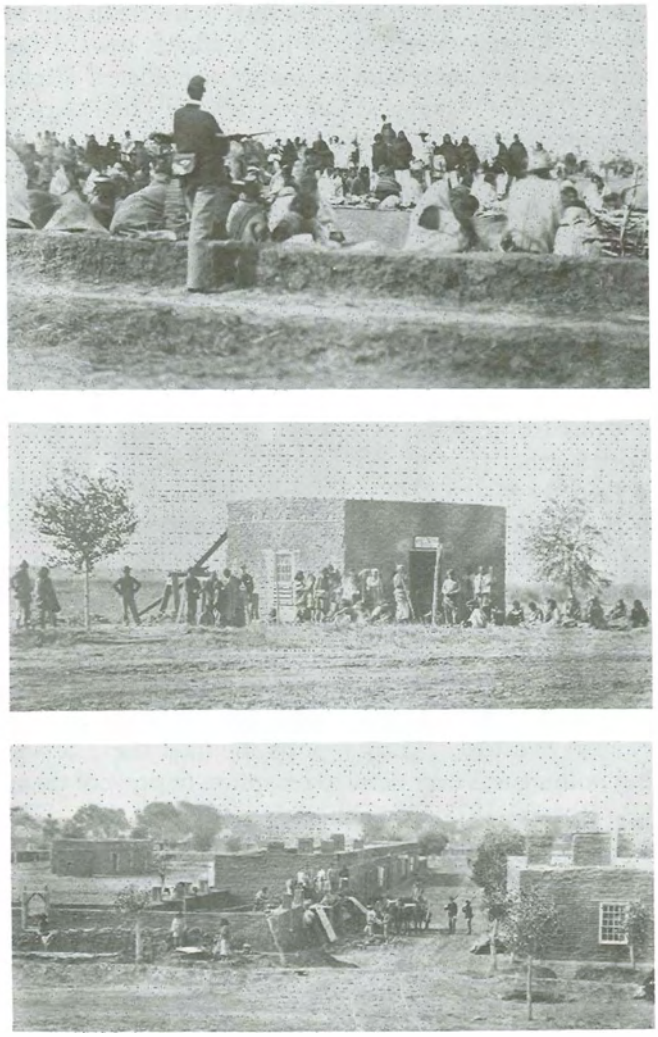
In early March 1864 a second convoy of over 2,500 Navajos left Fort Canby for Fort Sumner. Counting those Navajos that died at the Fort before leaving with those that died on the way, 323 Navajos died before reaching Fort Sumner, which was a death figure in excess of 10 percent for the second convoy.

Frequently on the fearful trip to Fort Sumner, New Mexicans would capture Navajo stragglers as well as Navajo livestock. Army reports mention these losses but nothing was ever done to recapture or prevent them (R. Roessel 1973:187–239; Kelly 1970:166, 120, 125, 130). The journey was one of hardship and terror. Navajos remember that "there were a few wagons to haul some personal belongings, but the trip was made on foot [over a distance of 300 miles]. People were shot down on the spot if they complained about being tired or sick, or if they stopped to help someone. If a woman became in labor with a baby, she was killed. There was absolutely nó mercy" (R. Roessel 1973:103–104).

Carleton had estimated the total number of Navajos at 5,000; by late February 1864 over 3,000 had surrendered. He felt the war was nearly over and his experiment at Fort Sumner ready to succeed. Unfortunately for the Navajos and for Carleton's plans there were many more Navajos than Carleton had anticipated. A census prepared by Capt. Francis McCabe showed, as of December 31, 1864, a total of 8,354 Navajos at Fort Sumner (Keleher 1952:502), and by March 1865 there were 9,022 Navajos (Bailey 1964:214). From that date until the return of the Navajos in 1868, the number of

Smithsonian, Dept. of Anthr.: a, 129,959; b, 16,498; d, 16,501. e, 401,383; c, Mus. of the Amer. Ind., Heye Foundation, New York: 22/8176.

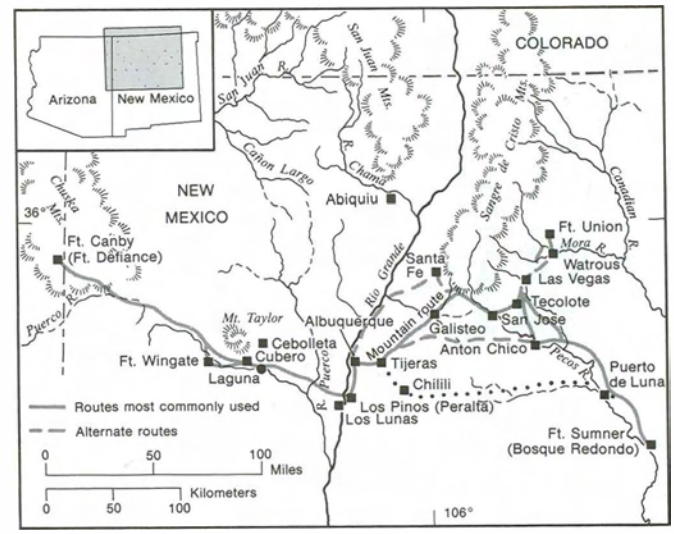
Fig. 7. Horse equipment. a, Saddle throw of red, yellow, yellow-green, light orange, dark blue, and white wool, used on top of the saddle for comfort and show. A blanket about twice as long (often twilled) was folded in half for use under the saddle. b, Saddle girth or cinch of black, red, white, green, and light orange wool, used to fasten the saddle to the horse. The warp is attached directly to the iron rings and the cinch was woven between them (Matthews 1884:382–383). c, Silver headstalls, probably copied from Spaniards (Adair 1944:41), are attached to the leather bridle by loops on the backs of the silver pieces. This simply engraved example, complete with naja (Navajo *názhahí* 'crescentic pendant'), is by the early smith Atsidi Chon. Later examples are stamped and may have turquoise settings. Silver conchas also appear as bridle decorations. d, Iron bits with a metal fringe to jingle as the horse walks were based on Mexican examples; this one is said to be made from horseshoe nails. e, Ropes were an important part of a rider's equipment. This one is 4 strands of twisted brown and tan horsehair. Ropes are also made of leather or wool. Whips or quirts were made of leather or horsehair. Length of b 59.5 cm, rest to same scale; a, collected by Washington Matthews, 1888; b and d collected by W.F.M. Arny, 1875; c, collected 1880–1885 and e, collected 1898.



Natl. Arch.: U.S. Signal Corps. Coll.: 111-SC-87964, 111-SC 87966, 111-SC-87973.
Fig. 9. Navajos at Ft. Sumner. top, Navajo group being counted by soldiers. Several of the men appear to be carrying bows, and all are wearing blankets (the striped ones of native manufacture, and the dark ones probably government issue). center, Navajos at the Provost Marshall's office, waiting to be issued ration tickets. Rations varied both in frequency and amount, often shrinking drastically despite vast amounts of money spent on supplies. In 1864, for example, the food rations alone cost over three quarters of a million dollars, or more than 26¢ per day per person, while the crops grown by the Indians were estimated to have offset only about one-tenth that amount (Thompson 1976:100–101). bottom, Indian building crew constructing quarters for the troops from adobe bricks. The Navajos lived in makeshift hogans and semi-subterranean dwellings. Photographer unknown, all 1863–1868.

Navajos at Fort Sumner decreased. Navajo prisoners, slowly starving to death, homesick and broken hearted, many desperately ill, deserted Fort Sumner in large numbers: some successfully escaped and returned to their native land.

Not all Navajos went on the Long Walk. Estimates vary with respect to how many Navajos avoided the ordeal by being captured and sold into slavery or by hiding out in inaccessible locations like the Grand Canyon and Navajo Mountain. It would appear that at least



after McNitt 1973:146.
Fig. 10. Routes of the Long Walk of the Navajos, 1863–1867. The mountain route was the one most commonly used by the military escorting the Navajos to Bosque Redondo because supplies were more plentiful and it afforded some protection from the elements. The shorter southern route (dotted line) was preferred by the Navajos and was possibly used by them when escaping from or voluntarily returning to Bosque Redondo (see McNitt 1973).

several thousand Navajos did not go on the Long Walk. According to Navajo traditions, 1,000–2,000 or more escaped being sent to Fort Sumner by moving below Navajo Mountain. Other Navajos went north of the San Juan and Colorado rivers to avoid capture (R. Roessel 1973:41). Some Navajos even eluded the troops by going into the territory of the Chiricahua Apache (Goldtooth in R. Roessel 1973:152).

Problems at Fort Sumner

Carleton's remolding of the Navajo was doomed to failure if for no other reason than that inadequate arrangements had been made to feed and care for the thousands of Navajos who had been brought to Fort Sumner.

Life at Fort Sumner was precarious and difficult. Most accounts of the terrible years there have come from official reports made by men who had certain responsibilities and interest in the situation. However, there are some stories that tell the experience from the Navajos' point of view. One person recounted: "According to my great-grandmother, when the journey to Fort Sumner began the *Diné* [Navajo] had hardly anything to comfort them or to keep warm, like blankets. Women carried their babies on their backs and walked all the way hundreds of miles. They didn't know where they were headed" (Florence Charley in R. Roessel 1973:149).

Howard Gorman (in R. Roessel 1973:32–33) related:

> The Navajos had hardly anything at that time; and they ate rations but couldn't get used to them. Most of them got sick and had stomach trouble. The children also had stom-

ach ache, and some of them died of it. Others died of starvation. . . . Some boys would wander off to where the mules and horses were corraled. There they would poke around in the manure to take undigested corn out of it. Then they would roast the corn in hot ashes to be eaten. . . . They said among themselves, "What did we do wrong? We people here didn't do any harm. We were gathered up for no reason. . . . We harmless people are held here, and we want to go back to our lands right away." Also the water was bad and salty, which gave them dysentery.

Rita Wheeler (in R. Roessel 1973:84) stated that: "The people were given small shovels with which they built their shelters, which were just holes dug in the ground with some tree branches for shade over the top part. . . . Different tribes of enemies would sneak upon the camp to attack the Navajos. Wolves also were one of the worst enemies."

According to Akinabh Burbank (in R. Roessel 1973:132–133) "during confinement at Fort Sumner a lot of people perished from diarrhea because of the change in diet and the poor quality of the food. Also, various diseases had spread. . . . Some cows were slaughtered and the hides used for shade and windbreaks. After the bushes and small trees had been cut and burned, the people had to dig . . . (mesquite roots) for firewood. The women wore woven wool dresses. . . . The men's clothing usually was made of deer hides."

General Carleton and His Critics

The problems of food, water, wood, and raids by other tribes combined to make visible the circumstances of the Navajo at Fort Sumner. General Carleton had declared martial law, which remained in effect from 1861 to 1865 and to a great degree prevented public criticism of his policy. Nevertheless, two men and a newspaper were vocal in their denunciation of Carleton and his programs.

The two most vehement critics were Dr. Michael Steck, superintendent of Indian affairs for New Mexico from 1863 until forced to resign in 1865, and Judge Joseph Knapp, a judge of the New Mexico Territorial Supreme Court assigned to the third judicial district from 1861 until forced to resign in 1864. Both men lost their jobs because of their disagreement with the military commander of New Mexico, General Carleton, over the placement and confinement of the Navajos at Fort Sumner as well as other matters.

Judge Knapp publicly attacked Carleton and his policies. In an 1864 letter addressed to President Abraham Lincoln, Knapp criticized Carleton for imprisoning citizens without conviction or trial, taking away property without just compensation, and setting up courts to try citizens for offenses unknown to the law. Even after removal from his office, Judge Knapp continued to challenge Carleton. In a letter directed to General Carleton published in the *Santa Fe New Mexican,* an anti-Carleton newspaper, in February 1865, Knapp suggested that Carleton never wanted peace with the Navajos. Referring to Carleton's deadline to the Navajos of July 20, 1863, to surrender or be killed, Knapp declared:

> You send them word, but do not say whether it ever reached them. In a word, you specify nothing; you appoint no place of rendezvous; offer no means of conveyance or food for the journey, but require "these pagans" with their women and helpless children to "come in and go down to the Bosque,". . . . and that you cannot "discriminate between the innocent and guilty." Do you, on calm reflection, on sober second thought, now believe that your "plan" was not rather calculated to alienate and sour the minds of those peace Indians, than to make them more friendly? (Keleher 1952:449).

In a second open letter, published in the same newspaper on April 7, 1865, Judge Knapp contended that Carleton had no authority to begin a war against the Indians:

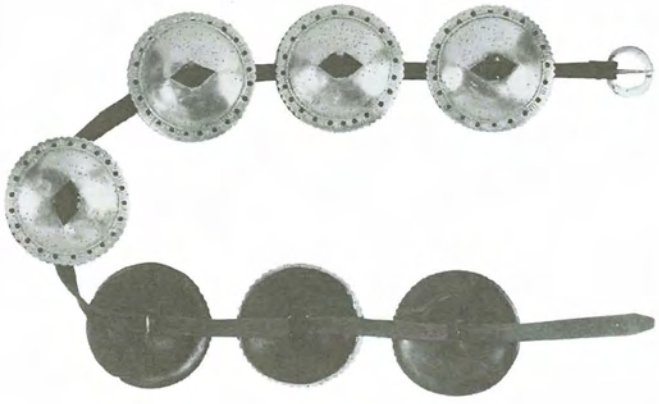
> Soon after the command of the Department of New Mexico came into your possession, you declared war against the Apaches and Navajos. . . . In this, you exceeded your powers and usurped those belonging to others. The constitution has given this authority to Congress. . . . It does not follow . . . that every Brigadier General is vested with it, without regard to any action of Congress. . . . You cannot avoid this position by asserting that individual Indians had committed murders and robberies on the inhabitants, and that your acts, in declaring war against the entire nation or bands of Indians, were necessary for the protection of this Territory. Individuals are liable personally for their own acts, but the nation is not. . . .
>
> The peaceful Navajos, seeing Colonel Carson in their country, and trusting to his word and promises, also surrendered themselves, and you have taken them to the Bosque [Fort Sumner], as prisoners of war. Old men and women too decrepit to walk, little ones equally, yes more helpless, women and children, non combatants, and those not able to take care of themselves much less to fight, are all held as prisoners of war—persons who have voluntarily come in for their protection and food, are treated in the same manner as those taken with arms in their hands, if indeed, you have one such in your possession. Where do you find the rule for such conduct? Certainly not in any code of civilized warfare (Keleher 1952:450–451).

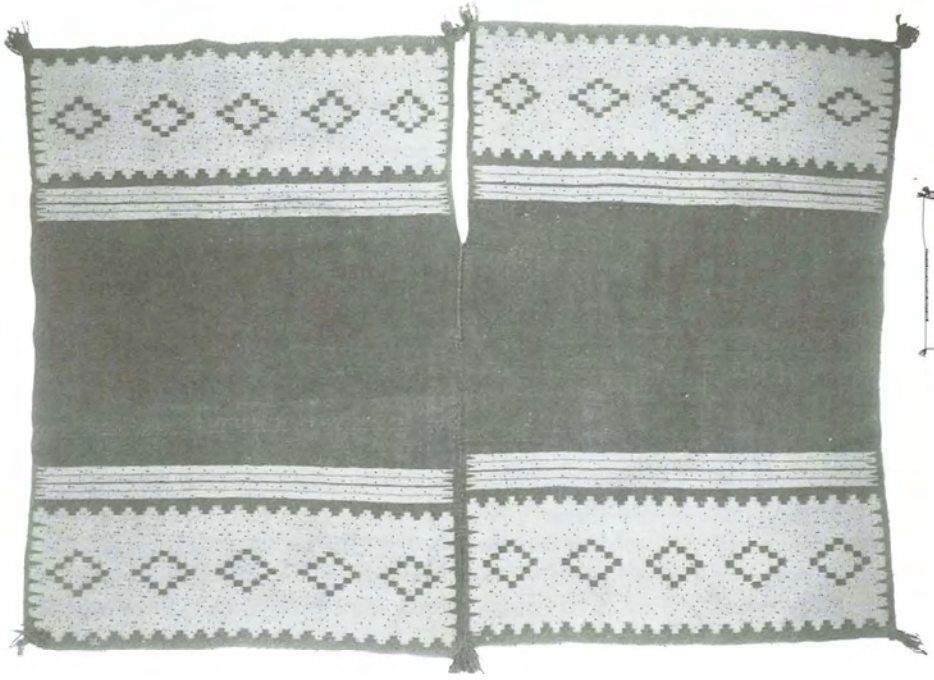
Dr. Steck's opposition was less intense and perhaps was focused differently but was nonetheless powerful. Steck wrote on December 10, 1863, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs William P. Dole explaining his opposition to settling the Navajos at Bosque Redondo: "First, the arable land in the valley is not sufficient for both [Navajo and Mescalero Apache] tribes; and secondary, it would be difficult to manage two powerful tribes upon the same reservation" (Bailey 1964:182).

Steck's lack of respect for Indian culture is shown by his belief that the Navajos and Apaches could only learn such "civilized" traits as respecting "the value of property" if their "wild religious superstitions" could be eradicated (Keleher 1952:412). His opposition to

Mus. of N. Mex., Santa Fe.

Fig. 11. Navajo couple of the 1880s, identified only as Pedro and Anselina. The man wears loose trousers of white muslin with slits up the sides of the legs (a pattern of Spanish-Mexican origin) and a V-necked shirt made of calico in the same pattern as the white muslin shirts worn earlier. The woman's old style native-woven woolen dress (a type modeled after the Pueblo manta) was possibly worn for the occasion of this studio portrait since by this time calico shirts (similar to those worn by men) and calico or denim skirts were commonly worn by women as everyday wear; commercially made clothing and fabrics were distributed by government and sold by traders, while native wool was sold for export (Underhill 1953:195). Both wear commercially manufactured blankets, traditional leggings (probably of tanned, red-dyed buckskin), and moccasins. Photograph by Ben Wittick, Santa Fe, N. Mex.





Bosque Redondo was not entirely for humanitarian reasons. One of his main concerns, expressed in 1864, was the cost to the government of keeping the Navajos at Fort Sumner, which he estimated would be two million dollars in 1865, while he believed they could be fed in their own country at an annual cost of $200,000 until they could again plant and grow their own crops (Keleher 1952:421). Steck pointed out that in 1860 Major Canby had proposed building a military post on the Little Colorado around which the Navajos could plant crops and raise sheep. Steck felt that if Canby's plans had been carried out "the Navajos would this day be at peace, and supporting themselves, instead of being an enormous tax upon the treasury" (Keleher 1952:421).

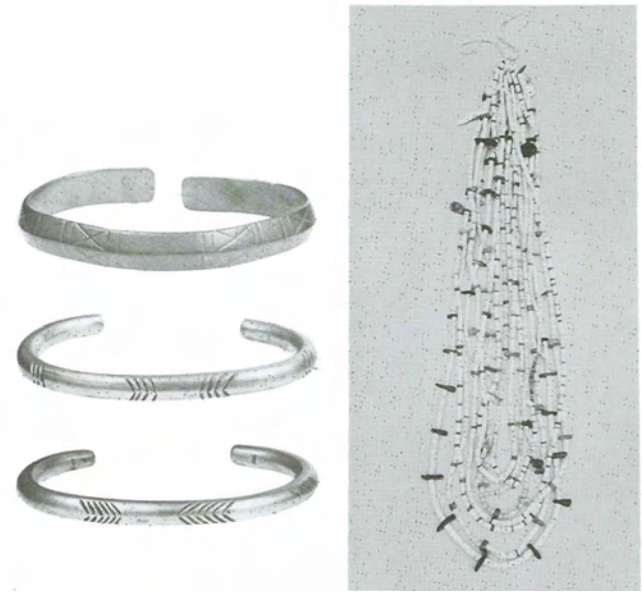
The opposition to General Carleton and his Fort Sumner experiment grew. New Mexicans, who had earlier welcomed and supported him and his policies, became his foes. The land held by the Navajos at Fort Sumner was coveted by livestock interests. The mere presence of such a large group of Indians east of the Rio Grande created concern and opposition. The increasing disfavor to Carleton's Fort Sumner program on the part of his former supporters, combined with natural disasters and health and starvation problems at Fort Sumner, finally took their toll.

Carleton Removed and Navajos Freed

On September 19, 1866, the secretary of war relieved General Carleton as commander of the Department of New Mexico (Keleher 1952:457). Shortly afterward, in January 1867, the control over the Navajo was shifted from the Army to the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Directly related to these actions was the growing repudiation of the Fort Sumner experiment. Ever recurring blight, grasshoppers, disease, drought, and other natural catastrophes had prevented the Navajos at Fort Sumner from raising the crops needed to prevent starvation. The crops failed consistently from 1864 to 1867.

Following the removal of Carleton there was another investigation aimed at evaluating Bosque Redondo. Lt. R. McDonald in a report dated November 12, 1867, recommended that the enterprise be abandoned and the Navajos removed elsewhere (Keleher 1952:460–461). The die was cast and it was only a matter of time before the mounting pressures to move the Navajos from Fort Sumner would prevail. A peace commission was established by Congress in 1867. It assailed the present treatment of Indians and sent its members to meet and to treat with different Indian groups.



right, Wheelwright Mus., Santa Fe, N. Mex.: 74/118; left, Smithsonian, Dept. of Anthr.: 210,962, 131,366.

Fig. 13. Jewelry. right, Necklace made of shell and turquoise, worn especially at ceremonies and gatherings, and often acquired from the Pueblos. Even after silver necklaces became popular the shell type was still worn, often together with the silver. left, Bracelets, one of the most common and varied items of jewelry. The earliest were probably of brass or copper (top left) with engraved designs. Copper may still be used by the apprentice smith. center and bottom left, Early silver bracelets, C-shaped in cross-section, with engraved chevron designs. For later more elaborate jewelry styles see "Navajo Arts and Crafts," this vol. Width of top left 7.0 cm, collected before 1910; bottom and center left, collected 1890. right, Formerly owned by medicine man Hosteen Klah, acquired after his death in 1937.

On May 28, 1868, Gen. William T. Sherman and Col. Samuel F. Tappan were sent to Fort Sumner as peace commissioners to make a treaty with the Navajos. There was discussion about moving the Navajos to Texas or to Indian territory. The proceedings of the treaty session revealed the desperate desire of the Navajo to return to their native land. Barboncito appeared as the principal spokesman for the Navajo. He declared: "I hope to God you will not ask me to go to any other country except my own. . . . We do not want to go to the right or left, but straight back to our own country"

Smithsonian, Dept. of Anthr.: bottom left, 207,780; top, 210,963; bottom right, Mus. of the Amer. Ind., Heye Foundation, New York: 2622.

Fig. 12. Clothing and accessories. bottom left, Woman's dress of 2 identical wool pieces, black body with red and dark blue borders, which would be sewn together at the sides and shoulders (as shown in drawing). Women also wore shoulder blankets. The dress was belted with a woven sash or later a concha belt. top, Belt with 7 conchas probably made from silver dollars. The outer edge is slightly scalloped with punched holes. The belt leather is strung through the conchas and there is a simple silver buckle. Each concha is backed with leather, saving wear on cloth, and a stamped design is visible on several of the leather backing pieces. Such belts were worn by both sexes. bottom right, Leather pouch, a type used by men, with plain silver buttons on the shoulder strap and a single silver ornament on the flap. Tobacco, firemaking equipment, and other small items were carried in the pouch. bottom left, 127 by 172 cm, collected before 1900; top, length 98 cm, collected before 1901; bottom right, length about 76.2 cm, collected before 1905.

Smithsonian, NAA:2410–C.

Fig. 14. Delegation of Navajo dignitaries, who met with Pres. U.S. Grant in Dec. 1874, to discuss provisions of the treaty of 1868, conflicts with the Mormons and miners who were entering their lands, and a possible land exchange. seated, left to right, Carnero Mucho, Mariano, Juanita Pal ti-to (wife of Manuelito), Manuelito, Manuelito Segundo (son of Manuelito and Juanita), Tiene-su-se; standing, left to right, "Wild Hank" Sharp or Easton (an Anglo acting as interpreter), Ganado Mucho, Barbas Güeras, William F.M. Arny (Indian agent for the Navajos at Ft. Defiance since 1873), "Rocky Mountain Bill" Taylor (Anglo interpreter), Cabra Negra, Cayetanito, Narbona Primero, and Jesus Arviso or Alviso (a Mexican by birth who lived among the Navajo, acting as interpreter). According to McNitt (1962:144–159) and Link (1968:20–21), the visit to Washington was engineered by Arny as part of a scheme to defraud the Navajos of mineral-rich lands. The scheme was foiled, largely through the efforts of Thomas V. Keam (later a trading post owner); Arny resigned following a Navajo petition for his removal. Photograph possibly by studio photographer C.M. Bell, Washington, 1874.

(R. Roessel 1971:32). The treaty was concluded on June 1, 1868, and ratified by Congress July 25, 1868 (fig. 14). On June 18, a column of Navajos 10 miles long left Fort Sumner under escort of four cavalry companies. They reached their destination by the end of July (Bailey 1966:234–235).

Navajos relate stories of certain ceremonies that were held to assist them in being able to return home (R. Roessel 1973:85, 136, 167, 178–179, 212, 215, 222, 227, 238, 244, 261, 265). The ceremony mentioned most frequently was called *Mą'ii Bizéé' naast'ą* (Put a Bead in Coyote's Mouth) ceremony. People formed a big circle and started closing in. There was a coyote within the circle. Barboncito approached the coyote, a female, who was facing east. "Barboncito caught the animal and put a piece of white shell, tapered at both ends, with a hole in the center, into its mouth. As he let the coyote go free, she turned clockwise and walked . . . toward the west, Barboncito remarked: 'There it is, we will be set free' " (Mose Denejolie in R. Roessel 1973:244). And they were! Many Navajos continue to believe that this ceremony resulted in their release from bondage.

Nothing in heaven or earth could have been more terrifying and traumatic to the Navajo than the experience of the Long Walk. They were a free people who lived in their own country with its sacred mountains and familiar landmarks. They were people who were independent and self-sufficient: a people who had a way of life that was satisfying and meaningful. They were people who related to Navajoland in a spiritual manner since it was given and made safe for them by the Holy People. To be forced to leave their beloved land with its sacred mountains and shrines, and to cross three rivers, all of which their traditions warned them never to do, was to subject the Navajo to unparalleled anguish and heartache. When this anguish and heartache is combined with the unequaled physical suffering experienced at Fort Sumner, a faint glimpse of the impact this tragedy had, and continues to have, for the Navajo may be

Smithsonian, NAA: left, 55766; right, 2390.

Fig. 15. Navajo leaders of the Bosque Redondo period and afterward. left, Barboncito (Spanish for 'little bearded one'), known in Navajo as *Dághaa'í* 'the one with the mustache' (or *Hastiin Bidághaa'í* 'the man with the mustache') and by his war name *Hashké yich'į' Dahilwo'* 'he is anxious to run at warriors' (or *Yich'į' Dahilwo'* 'he is anxious to run at them') (Sapir and Hoijer 1942:360, 366; Underhill 1953:151, 157, 1956:133). Possibly wielding more authority than would have been accorded him by strictly tribal custom because of the status granted to him by Whites (Underhill 1956:133, based on conversations with Navajo leader Henry Chee Dodge), Barboncito played a leading role in the treaty negotations of 1868 (see U.S. Treaties, etc. 1865–1869) and was subsequently appointed head chief of the Navajo by the Indian agent, with Ganado Mucho (*Tótsohnii Hastiin* 'Big Water Clan man') and Manuelito (*Daháana Baadaaní* 'Texan's son-in-law') appointed as subchiefs (Franciscan Fathers 1910:125; Sapir and Hoijer 1942:371). Photograph probably by studio photographers Nicholas Brown and Son, Santa Fe, N.Mex., sometime before Barboncito's death in 1870. right, Manuelito, noted Navajo war chief and ranking chief in the 1874 delegation to Washington. Photograph, probably by C.M. Bell, Washington, 1874.

realized. The experience at Fort Sumner could well have totally destroyed the heart and mind of a less determined people. The Army's efforts to remold the Navajo into Pueblo dwellers, the constant presence of starvation, the continued raids by other Indians, the anguish of sickness and death—all could have resulted in the destruction of Navajo culture. But by using their ceremonies and relying on their fortitude, the Navajo held on until they were allowed to return home.

After the Long Walk

Return from Fort Sumner

The return from Fort Sumner must have been a joyous occasion for many Navajos, even though the trip back was long and hard. A Navajo story of the event related:

> Children and food were put on the wagons. A great multitude journeyed over hill after hill, some on foot, some on horses, others in the wagons. When they reached Fort Wingate many were in a hurry and started taking off, saying, "We're lonely for our beloved country. . . ." At Fort Defiance, besides the other things, the men received hoes and axes and were told to work with them. They were told to go back to your lands but to return within 14 days . . . [when] two sheep were given to each person, from babies born the night before to old people. . . . So *Diné* [Navajo] gathered together and put on a ceremonial chant to sacrifice . . . (precious stones). The ceremony was held for about four days, and that is the reason why our population has increased rapidly up to these days. If it had not been for the ceremony it wouldn't have been like this (Francis Toledo in R. Roessel 1973:147).

The Reservation

The original reservation set up under provisions of article 2 of the treaty of June 1, 1868, contained 3,414,528 acres (fig. 16). Confusion surely existed as to its extent or boundaries: the Navajos felt they were returning to

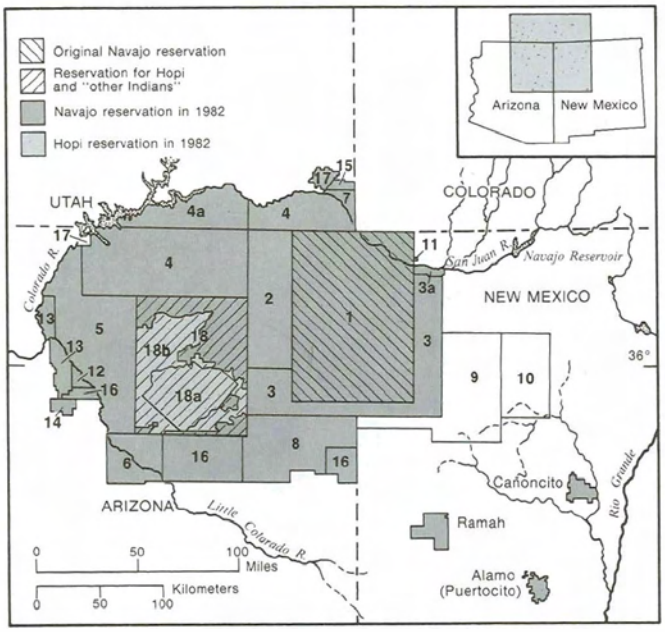


Fig. 16. Navajo lands, 1868–1977. Original treaty reservation with executive order additions and withdrawals: 1, reservation, June 1, 1868; 2, addition Oct. 29, 1878; 3, addition Jan. 6, 1880; 3a, originally part of 3, withdrawn from reservation May 17, 1884, restored to reservation April 24, 1886; 4, additions May 17, 1884; 4a, "Paiute Strip," originally a part of 4, restored to public domain 1892, withdrawn for use of various Indians 1908, restored to public domain 1922, withdrawn again in 1929, permanently transferred to Navajo reservation March 1, 1933; 5, addition Jan. 8, 1900; 6, addition Nov. 14, 1901; 7, addition May 15, 1905; 8, addition Nov. 9, 1907; 9, addition Nov. 9, 1907, restored to public domain Jan. 16, 1911; 10, addition Nov. 9, 1907, restored to public domain Dec. 30, 1908; 11, addition Dec. 1, 1913; 12, addition May 7, 1917, and Jan. 19, 1918. Additions to the Navajo reservation by acts of Congress: 13, act of May 23, 1930; 14, act of Feb. 21, 1931; 15, act of March 1, 1933; 16, act of June 14, 1934; 17, act of Sept. 2, 1958 authorizing exchange of lands at Glen Canyon Dam and Page, Ariz., for lands in Utah (see also Correll and Dehiya 1972). Hopi reservation lands: 18, original executive order reservation created "for the use and occupancy of the Moqui, and such other Indians as the Secretary of the Interior may see fit to settle thereon," Dec. 16, 1882; 18a, Hopi reservation outlined in a decision by the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona Sept. 28, 1962, with remaining part of 18 designated Hopi-Navajo Joint Use Area; 18b, Hopi reservation outlined along "Mediator's Line" according to an Order of Partition issued by the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona Feb. 10, 1977. Remaining area within 18 was ordered to become Navajo land. The satellite reservations of Alamo, Cañoncito, and Ramah were created from individual Navajo allotments and purchases and exchanges by the federal government and the Navajo Tribe.

the land they lived on prior to Fort Sumner but in reality the 1868 reservation contained no more than 10 percent of the land they earlier owned and used. Following Fort Sumner, as non-Navajo ranchers and sheepmen began to move with livestock into the area in which Navajos lived but that was not a part of the treaty reservation, trouble and conflict took place. The original reservation was first expanded in 1878 as a result of an executive order that added to the west side a reported 957,817 acres. Executive orders in 1880 added a reported 996,403 acres on the east and south sides, and in 1882 and 1884, 2,373,870 acres to the west and north sides. The next addition was by executive order issued in 1900, which increased the area by 1,575,369 acres. In 1901, another executive order added 425,171 acres to the southwest portion of the reservation, and one in 1905 incorporated 67,000 acres in southeastern Utah. In 1907 and 1908 executive orders increased the size of the reservation by adding 1,208,486 acres. But in 1911 lands in New Mexico were restored to the public domain. Minor revisions were made in 1912, 1913, 1914, 1915, and 1917. In 1917 and 1918 executive orders added 94,000 acres of land in Coconino County, Arizona. In 1930 and 1931 a total of 179,110 acres were added by congressional acts. In 1933 Congress permanently set aside 552,000 acres in Utah as an addition to the Navajo reservation. Another act of Congress in 1934 provided some smaller additions, and minor changes were made in 1948, 1949, and 1958. Court decisions in 1962, 1963, and 1977 reallocated some areas to the Hopi.

In addition to the land listed above as belonging to the Navajo reservation there are three noncontiguous areas of Navajo reservation land. The Cañoncito Navajo reservation in New Mexico consists of 57,863 acres of trust land surveyed in 1910, 1915, and 1954 with the present boundaries established in 1960. The Alamo (or Puertocito) Navajo reservation established in 1964 consists of 62,000 acres, and the Ramah Reservation, established in 1931, contains 91,456 acres (Littell 1967; Correll and Dehiya 1972).

Trading Posts

Trading posts played a major role in the growth and change of the Navajo people, particularly after 1867. In this period, traders lived with and were members of the Navajo community in which their post was located (fig. 17). Obviously, not all traders were loved but all played a most important part in exposing the Navajo to the world around them and to its contents. McNitt (1962) tells of the impact the traders had on Navajo life: in mediating problems, both family and tribal; selling goods; buying rugs and silver and improving markets for Navajo crafts; burying Navajo dead; filling out forms and writing letters.

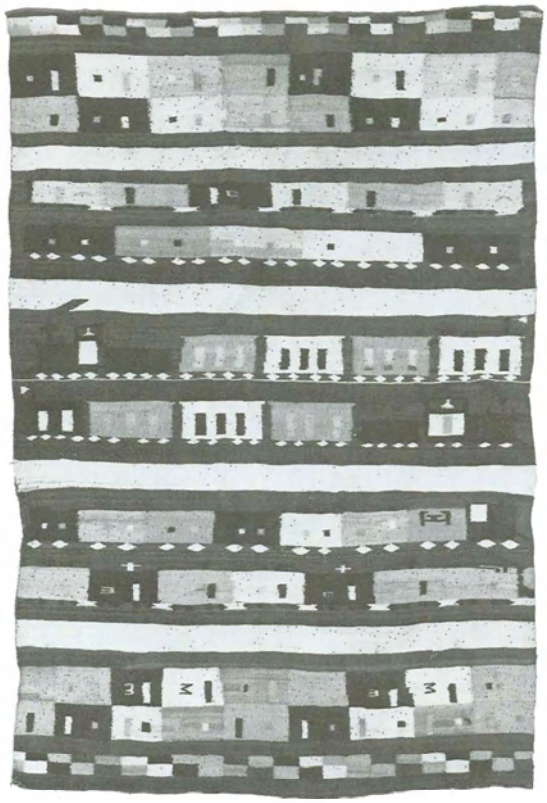
Round Rock was one of the first trading posts operated within the reservation. It was established in 1885. It stands as a thick walled rock structure with living quarters attached.

Education

The treaty of 1868 stipulated that Navajo children would be compelled to attend school and that for every 30 children between the ages of 6 and 16, a school and a teacher would be provided. In 1869 a school was

top and bottom left, Mus. of N. Mex., Santa Fe; bottom right, Natl. Park Service, Ganado, Ariz.

Fig. 17. Hubbell's Trading Post at Ganado, Ariz., owned by Lorenzo Hubbell, one of the best known and best liked traders (Anonymous 1979). top, Hubbell (seated) examining a late-style Chief's blanket, possibly woven by the Navajo woman with him. The post, one of several owned by Hubbell, was purchased by him in 1878 and named after his friend Ganado Mucho, who lived in the area. Hubbell was instrumental in promoting Navajo rugs by encouraging good quality yarns, and certain patterns. He also encouraged the weaving of blankets so large they could only be used as rugs; the double-faced rug on the fence at extreme right (now in the collection of the Mus. of Northern Ariz.), is 12 feet wide and more than 18 feet long (McNitt 1962:200–212, Amsden 1934:186–204). bottom left, Hubbell's warehouse at Ganado, containing crates of staple foodstuffs and tobacco, goatskins (probably obtained from the Navajo), and harnesses. The large scale was used for weighing wool and possibly woven blankets (which were sometimes sold by the pound). Photographs by Ben Wittick, 1890s. bottom right, View of the rug room at Hubbell's Trading Post (designated a National Historic Site in 1967), hung with framed oil paintings of rug patterns. These copies of actual rugs, principally painted by artist E.A. Burbank in the early 1900s, were used as patterns for Navajo weavers to follow. Photograph by Elizabeth Bauer, 1981.



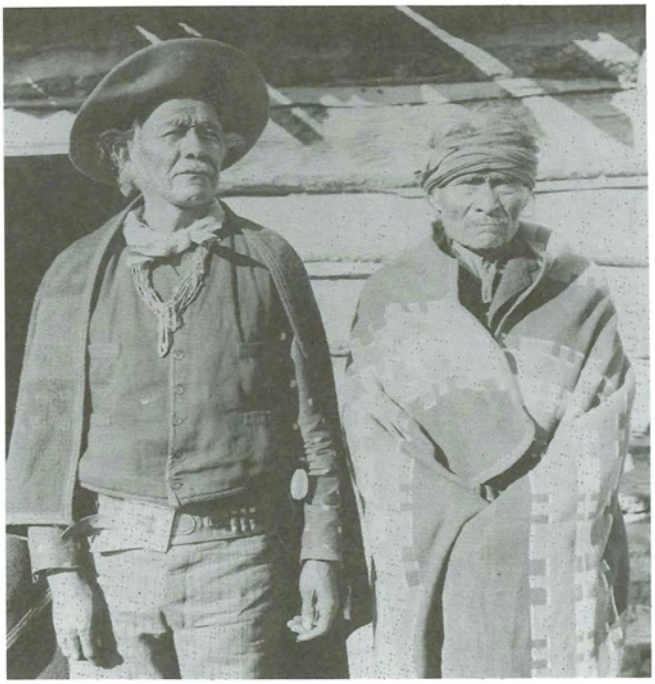
Los Angeles Co. Mus. of Nat. Hist.: A.5141.42–192.
Fig. 18. Pictorial rug showing trains and buildings. The arrival of the railroad in 1882 changed reservation life in many ways including influencing the style of jewelry and rugs through sale in Fred Harvey Company curio shops, which were run in conjunction with the Santa Fe Railroad. With a commercial market, Navajo weavers changed during 1880 to 1900 from making blankets to producing rugs for the tourist trade (Kent 1981). Although not a common style in this period, pictorials frequently show objects new to Navajo experience (Cerny 1975). Size 185.4 by 132.0 cm.

opened at Fort Defiance under the supervision of the Presbyterian church, with the first teacher Charity Gaston. The school was a failure due to poor attendance and was closed.

At Round Rock in 1893 Agent Dana L. Shipley attempted literally to capture Navajo children and haul them off to Fort Defiance Boarding School. He was rebuffed and almost killed by Black Horse (fig. 19) and his group of Navajos while at Round Rock. This incident reflected the attitude many Navajos had toward education at that time.

In the early 1900s additional boarding schools were built in various parts of the reservation. Here again there was considerable opposition on the part of the Navajo who resented and often resisted sending their children to distant schools, some located off the reservation, where they might not come home even in the summer.

Education was looked upon as a threat and a foe to the Navajo way of life as well as a threat to the Navajo family.



Smithsonian. NAA.
Fig. 19. Black Horse (*Bił́ł́' Łizhinii*), left, a headman of Round Rock area, with *Tayoonih* (Squeezer), a headman of the Ganado region. Photograph by Simeon Schwemberger, 1905 or before.

Culture Change after 1867

The Navajo people were both increasing in population and expanding in territory during the years following the Long Walk. They came back as beaten people and hardly had more than the clothes on their backs. Yet, in spite of all adversity the strength of their culture carried them through this period of rebuilding. Navajo culture was changing very rapidly. Trading posts were established. Blanket weaving for Navajo consumption changed into rug weaving for sale to tourists; silverwork became yet another expression of Navajo harmony and beauty. Children were sent to boarding schools, learning in an alien environment. Railroads were constructed, which created jobs as well as new markets for Navajo arts and crafts. Labor-saving devices entered Navajoland such as wagons, metal plows, roads, automobiles, and trucks. The presence of the federal government expanded on the reservation; health facilities and medical doctors became available for the first time. Missionaries and missions scattered themselves throughout the land. Navajo population increased, as did Navajo livestock holdings.

Perhaps no other period in Navajo history reveals as clearly the capacity for Navajo culture to adjust, to change, and to bend yet never to break, as does the period immediately following the return of the Navajo from the Long Walk.

The First Tribal Council

After their return from Fort Sumner the Navajo were governed by a head chief, who was appointed by the agent and approved by the secretary of the interior. In addition, there were regional leaders (*naat'áanii*), of which there were 30 in 1900. Should a problem arise, the Indian agent would contact the head chief, who in turn would call the *naat'áanii* of that region and summon him to Fort Defiance. "When the *naat'áanii* arrived, the problem of his region would be discussed with the 'Head Chief" and any leaders who might be involved. Since the Agent was supported by the military at Fort Wingate, there was little dickering or disobedience. The *naat'áanii* [were] directly responsible to the "Head Chief" who was responsible to the Agent. . . . About once a year all *naat'áanii* were 'called in,' and then only problems of tribal importance were discussed" (Van Valkenburgh 1945:72, with Navajo spelling corrected).

The discovery of oil in 1921 within the boundaries of the Navajo reservation forced a revision in the system of tribal government placed upon the Navajo by the federal government. The Midwest Refinery Company was authorized to negotiate with the Navajos in the discovery area, San Juan Jurisdiction (Northern Navajo), for an oil and gas development lease. A "general council" of the Indian residents in that jurisdiction was called, and a lease was approved on 4,800 acres of land. However legal the "general council" system might have been, it was at best clumsy and limited in terms of its application on a reservation-wide basis. Originally, the thinking of the Department of the Interior was to the effect that the oil and gas resources belonged exclusively to the Indians of that jurisdiction.

As additional leases were sought, the Department's policy changed to the concept that any resources discovered within the Navajo reservation belonged to the Navajo tribe as a whole. The implementation of this new philosophy made the "general council" concept unfeasible and focused the Department of the Interior's attention on the necessity to develop a representative tribal government, which would include membership from all jurisdictions (Kelly 1968:61–65).

On January 27, 1923, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles H. Burke issued a document entitled "Regulations Relating to the Navajo Tribe of Indians." These regulations were revised and amended later in 1923. One of the provisions of the regulations provided for a Commissioner of the Navajo Tribe to be appointed by the secretary of the interior. The revised regulations installed a tribal council council composed of 12 delegates (earlier regulations allowed only 6 delegates) and 12 alternates, with each jurisdiction having two delegates. The six jurisdictions were San Juan, Western Navajo, Southern Navajo, Pueblo Bonito, Leupp, and Moqui. The chairman was to be chosen from candidates outside the council membership (earlier regulations had the chairman elected by the Council delegates), while the vice chairman was chosen by vote of the delegates (Young 1961:374–376).

The first session of the newly appointed Council occurred July 7, 1923, at Toadlena, New Mexico. The purpose of the meeting was to obtain approval from the delegates to lease their oil and gas properties. The Council approved a resolution, drawn up by Bureau of Indian Affairs officials, granting the Commissioner of the Navajo Tribe the authority to sign on behalf of the Navajo Indians all oil and gas mining leases granted within the Navajo reservation (Kelly 1968:68–69).

This early tribal council was completely the creation of the Department of the Interior; in fact, one provision of the 1923 regulations required the tribal commissioner to be present at all tribal council meetings. In addition, the secretary of the interior reserved the right to remove any member of the tribal council, for cause, and to require the election or appointment of another to take his place (Young 1961:395).