



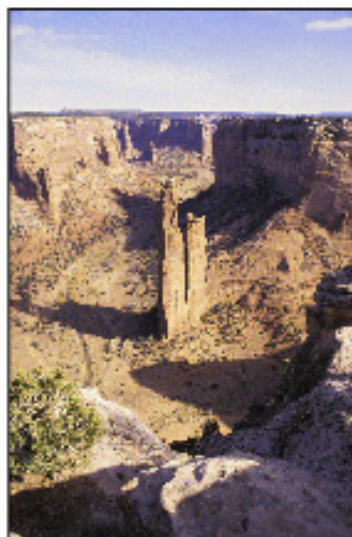
THE NAVAJO NATION

Archaeological and anthropological scientific research says that the Navajo tribe came to the Four Corners by early migrations of Athabaskan people from Asia, who crossed the Bering Strait to the North American Continent. The Navajo people have their own oral history and legends about the beginnings of life in this world. They are known as the Emergence Stories, “Hajiiiní.” The people of the Navajo Nation call themselves the “Diné,” the people. They are a nation whose origins stem from small bands of nomadic people who emerged into

and adapted to their environment in the Southwest. Today the Navajo Nation covers over 27,000 square miles, extending into the states of Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico. Navajoland, “Diné Bikéyah,” is larger than ten of the fifty states in America.

History

By the early 1600s, the Navajo people had spread throughout the Southwest and had become a powerful and aggressive tribe. They adapted to their environment and adopted other cultural lifestyles to form their own “Beauty Way of Life” that would sustain them and help them prosper as a formidable nation within a nation. They survived the Spanish and Mexican occupation from 1598 to 1846, and they prospered throughout the first seventeen years after the territory was ceded to the United States. In the winter of 1846, local Navajo headmen and their clansmen confronted the first U.S. military expedition. The first peace treaty between the Navajos and the United States was signed on November 22, 1846. During the next 15 years, six other treaties were signed, but they never established a permanent peace between the two nations. In the spring of 1863, the United States declared war to subdue or annihilate the Diné from their homeland.



History tells of the military campaign of Colonel Christopher “Kit” Carson and his troops. They destroyed livestock and burned hogans, fields, and orchards, turning the country into a wasteland. Their aim was to starve the people into submission. A few strong and rebellious Navajos eluded the military by retreating into the vast, high mountains and deep canyons of their country. About half the tribe, more than 8,000 people, too weak from starvation, were forced to surrender and make the “Long Walk” to Fort Sumner, which is located on the Pecos River in eastern New Mexico.

During the four years of captivity at Fort Sumner, the Navajos lived under deplorable conditions, and many died from starvation and disease. Disillusioned by broken promises, the people yearned to return to their homeland and petitioned the U.S. government. On June 1, 1868, the Navajos signed a treaty to return to a portion of their expansive homeland. The Treaty of 1868 authorized



the U.S. government to seize the most fertile lands belonging to the Navajos in exchange for services to be provided by the government, such as health, education, and other essentials.

Fort Defiance was the first designated Agency Headquarters for the new Navajo Reservation. The first issue of sheep in October 1869 brought renewed hope and will for the people to rebuild and reestablish their economy and way of life.

Navajo Government

Before the treaty of 1868, the Navajo people had a form of self-government based on Navajo clans and appointed headmen, or "Naat'áanii," from each clan. Each Naat'áanii was responsible for protecting his clan, ensuring their survival, and resolving any conflicts that arose within the clan.

After the peace treaty of 1868, the U.S. government established the Bureau of Indian Affairs and assigned Indian agents to rule tribal affairs. During 1901-1911, the BIA established five Navajo agencies: Fort Defiance Agency in Fort Defiance, Arizona; Chinle Agency in Chinle, Arizona; Eastern Agency in Crownpoint, New Mexico; Western Agency in Tuba City, Arizona; and Shiprock Agency in Shiprock, New Mexico. During the



Window Rock, AZ: site of the Navajo Nation Capital.

early 1920s, oil was discovered on the Navajo Reservation, and the Navajo Business Council was established to handle the leases for oil exploration on Navajo land. In 1923, the Navajo Tribal Council replaced the Business Council. Chee Dodge was the first elected Navajo Tribal Council Chairman. The first Navajo chapter was founded in Leupp, Arizona, in 1927. Since then, the Navajo Nation Council has 88 council delegates representing 110 Navajo Nation chapters. In 1991 the Navajo Nation's government was reorganized and modeled after the United States Federal Government, based on the three-branch government: (1) Legislative Branch, (2) Executive Branch, and (3) Judicial Branch. The Navajo Tribal Council was changed to the Navajo Nation Council, and the title of Chairman and Vice Chairman was changed to the President of the Navajo Nation and the Vice President of the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Nation is considered to have the most advanced and sophisticated form of government of all the tribes in the United States. When the Navajo Nation Council is not in session, twelve standing committees of council delegates carry out legislative responsibilities in meeting the needs of the Navajo people.

Demographics

During the Fort Sumner captivity, the population of the Navajos decreased to half its former size. In 1995, the estimated Navajo population in the United States totalled 259,556. The median age of the people was 22 years old. The median family income for the Navajo Nation was \$11,835. The percentage of families below poverty level was 57.4%. The 2000 census reported 298,215



Navajos living throughout the United States, 173,987 of whom were living within Navajo Nation boundaries.

Federally recognized Indian Tribes in the United States have their own requirements for being an enrolled tribal member, which are usually based on “blood quantum.” Some tribes require a one-thirty-second blood quantum for issuing a Certificate of Indian Blood. The Navajo Nation requires a blood quantum of one-fourth for a person to be an enrolled tribal member and receive a Certificate of Indian Blood (CIB). Recently, the Navajo Nation Council voted down a proposal to reduce the blood quantum to one-eighth, which would have effectively doubled the number of individuals qualified to be enrolled Navajo tribal members.

Today the Navajo Nation is continuing to sustain and govern an ever-increasing population through self-determination and self-government. The Navajo Nation has built a modern economy on traditional endeavors such as sheep and cattle herding, fiber production, weaving, jewelry making, and art trading. Newer industries employ members in natural and mineral resource development, small business ownership, education, and health organizations. The Navajo Nation’s extensive mineral resources are among the most valuable held by Native American nations within the United States.

Navajo Nation Seal

The Navajo Tribal Council officially adopted the Great Seal of the Navajo Nation in 1952. The first seal had 48 arrowheads; it was later modified to 50 arrowheads. The arrowheads symbolize the tribe’s protection within the 50 states. The opening at the top of the three colored lines of the rainbow represents the east. The red, yellow, and blue lines of the rainbow represent the sovereignty of the Navajo Nation. The sun shines over Navajo land and the four sacred directions represented by four sacred mountains. Each direction is represented by ceremonial colors: white in the east is for White Shell Woman, blue in the south is for Turquoise Woman, yellow to the west is for Abalone Woman, and black to the north is for Jet Woman. The two green corn stalks with yellow pollen tips symbolize the corn’s important role in the Navajo way of life and Navajo ceremonies. The sheep, horse, and cow symbolize the economic possessions Navajos had in livestock.



Navajo Nation Flag

The Navajo Nation Council officially adopted the Navajo Nation flag in 1968. On a tan background the outline of the present reservation is shown in a copper color with the original 1868 Treaty Reservation in dark brown. At the cardinal points in the tan field are the four sacred mountains, as described above for the Great Seal. A rainbow symbolizing Navajo sovereignty arches over the reservation and the sacred mountains.



In the center of the reservation a circular symbol depicts the sun above two green stalks of corn, between which are three animals representing the Navajo livestock economy, a traditional hogan and a more modern house. Between the hogan and house is an oil derrick symbolizing the resource potential of the tribe, and above this are represented the wild fauna of the reservation. At the top



near the sun, the modern sawmill symbolizes the progress and industry currently characteristic of the Tribe's development.

Culture and Traditions

According to the Navajo oral traditions, the people came through three different worlds before emerging into the present fourth world. The story begins with the first world, or the Black world, where the Spirit and the Holy People created the First Man and First Woman.

The second world, or the Blue world, was where First Man and First Woman lived with the birds, large insects and animals, also referred to as "the Beings." First Man performed a ceremony because the Beings quarreled. He led them to the third world.

The third world, or the Yellow world, had mountains and rivers. The Holy People placed four sacred mountains there in the four directions.

The fourth world, also known as the Glittering world, is the present world. In this world First Man and First Woman were taught by the Holy People, and the first four clans of the Diné were created. The Holy People told the Navajos to settle within the four sacred mountains, where they would always be protected and provided for.

Throughout the origin and emergence stories, the Holy People and the Earth People must co-exist in harmony and maintain balance on Mother Earth. The Holy People taught the Earth People to live in harmony with Mother Earth, Father Sky, and many other beings that exist in their universe. The number four is a constant factor in traditional Navajo philosophy, culture, religion, and way of life. The Beauty Way of Life is taught and represented in traditional stories, ceremonies, artifacts, and daily routine to remind the Navajo people to live in harmony with themselves and the universe.