

Culture and Tourism in the Navajo Country

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ABSTRACT. *The Navajo Country of the American Southwest has long attracted tourists, not only for its spectacular landscapes but also because of its cultural attractions. These include prehistoric Anasazi ruins, historic trading posts, and other buildings, as well as visible manifestations of Navajo culture, including traditional dwellings and costumes. In addition, Navajo handicrafts are a long-standing attraction. Tourism to the Navajo Country has been encouraged over the years by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, the National Park Service, the states, certain Indian traders, and the Navajo Tribe. The latter has established a Recreational Resources Department, nine Tribal Parks and Recreation areas, a Tribal Museum, and an Arts & Crafts Guild. This study gives historical background on the creation of the Southwest-Indian image and on Navajo Country tourism, discusses the role of cultural attractions and their "packaging" in drawing tourists, and briefly assesses the physical, economic, and cultural effects of tourism.*

The destruction of local traditions and the assault upon "the past" perpetuated by industrialization and world-wide modernization seem to make large numbers of people susceptible to an appetite for relics of pre-industrial life. This appetite is so intense that it accounts in part for one of the major and most characteristically modern industries: tourism.¹

The Four Corners Country of the American Southwest is unique in its combination of spectacular canyon and mesa scenery and a variety of cultures: Puebloan, Ute/Paiute, Pai, Apachean (including Navajo), Hispano, and Anglo-American.² Cultural attractions include both living peoples and impressive archaeological and historical manifestations. Thus, it is not surprising that the region has long drawn scholars, writers, artists, collectors, and tourists.

Early public interest in the region was fired by the reports of government surveys between the Mexican War and the end of the 19th century—for railway development and for military, geographical, geological, archaeological, and ethnographic study. Figures like George M. Wheeler, F.V. Hayden, and John Wesley Powell painted vivid word

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pictures accompanied by often sumptuous illustrations. Later, a variety of scholars and amateur explorers added to this tradition during the earlier 20th century.

Also, "a series of fairs, beginning with the Philadelphia Centennial of 1876 and continuing through the Saint Louis exposition of 1904...helped bring the indigenous population of the Southwest to national attention."³ Of these expositions, the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 was the most influential, especially regarding images of the Navajo.

The AT&SF and Image-Making

The era of the fairs was also that of the development of the rail network in the Southwest. When the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company (AT&SF), reached Albuquerque from the east in 1880, the stage was set for significant "ethnic tourism"—that is, visitation attracted by indigenous cultures and their visible manifestations, which initially occurred mainly in connection with Puebloan peoples but increasingly involved the Navajo as well.

British-born restaurateur Frederick H. Harvey introduced fine dining to railroad routes by opening the first of his Harvey Houses in a depot in the 1870s. When Harvey died in 1901, he and the system owned 15 hotels and 47 restaurants.⁴

After things got rolling, most of the Harvey Houses, especially those in the Southwest, were designed by architect Mary Colter [active between 1910 and 1944]. Colter had a keen sense of the Indian and Spanish heritage of the region, and planned the buildings with this in mind. At her suggestion, Native American motifs were used on walls, menus and even specially created china.⁵

In fact, the term "Santa Fe style"—currently used mainly in reference to the interior decoration characteristic of New Mexico's capital—was originally coined to refer to the railway/Harvey style, including in advertising. Ultimately, scores of Harvey-operated dining, lounge, and club cars were added to the trains. The company also became heavily involved in sales of Southwest Indian craft arts, including, importantly, Navajo rugs and jewelry.⁶

According to T.C. McLuhan,

The increased mechanization [in American life] at the turn of the century led to a conspicuous absence of the traditional and spiritual—a lack of completeness. A growing interest in patterns of life other than our own took root and came to have validity and significance. The American Indian emerged from a position of banishment to a fanciful, factual, and appealing place in the pantheon of the American imagination. . . .

The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Corporation would "discover" the powerful and poetic uses of the wilderness and Indian life and market them to establish for the railroad a rich national identity. The growth of business for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe became as important to it as the development of a strategy to link the desert

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Southwest and its veiled kingdoms of unknown cultures to the railroad's extensive transportation system and the unique services along its routes.

New and persuasive images of the Southwest territory and the life that inhabited the region were needed to dispel the public's apprehension of traveling through a seemingly forbidding terrain of desert and mountain This state of affairs provided the advertising department of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe with a unique opportunity to create a fascinating new world of image-making freighted with the scent of the earth and with evocative aspects of Native American life.⁷

Beginning in 1895, under the direction of company advertising agent William H. Simpson, the AT&SF began commissioning paintings of the Southwest by prominent artists, particularly E. Irving Couse. Some were displayed in its offices, hotels, and railway stations. From 1907, the railway published and distributed an annual free calendar in editions up to more than 300,000, each reproducing a painting with an Indian theme.⁸ The public was alerted "to the existence of the railroad and of Indian culture in the Southwest the Santa Fe appropriated the Indian and his culture to establish for itself a meaningful emblem that would galvanize the American imagination . . . [and] transformed the Indians into symbolic reductions of the American heritage."⁹ The railway also promoted the picturesqueness of Southwestern Indians through billboards and other signs, murals, posters, counter displays, books, brochures, timetables, maps, magazine and newspaper ads, tinted lantern slides, and playing cards; even the trains themselves carried names like "Navajo," "Chief," "Super Chief," and "Scout."¹⁰ "The Santa Fe's publicity policy was tremendously successful The thrill of new places and exotic but native cultures were central themes of the Santa Fe's promotion of the Southwest."¹¹

Beginning in 1926, the Santa Fe Railway and Harvey cooperated on a novel touristic concept: the "Indian Detour," which was promoted by more than 12,000 travel agents throughout the country. It involved motor-transport tours led by "western"-attired couriers and drivers from Santa Fe Railway stations in New Mexico and Arizona and which promised otherwise unobtainable entrée into Indian life. One could select from package tours to the Rio Grande pueblos and ruins, Hopi villages (usually, for the Snake Dance), or the scenic Canyon de Chelly with its many ancient cliff dwellings, on the Navajo Reservation.¹² Detours founder R. Hunter Clarkson declared that "there is more of historic, prehistoric, human and scenic interest in New Mexico than in any other similar area in the world, not excepting India, Egypt, Europe or Asia."¹³ Moreover, McLuhan contends that

The railroad's highly polished and compelling images of Indian "reality" came to supersede reality itself, and the Indian was called into synthetic being. This was accomplished by isolating him from his own environment and putting him on display

as a social object. Nevertheless, the entire advertising enterprise galvanized a public into a new awareness of the diversity and richness within their own country.

...tourism in the American Southwest—under the aegis of the Santa Fe Railway—became the new religion.¹⁴

Writers and Artists

From the 1890s on, the artists of the Santa Fe and Taos colonies, upon whom the AT&SF drew, added to the region's mystique in their own right, as did photographers such as William Henry Jackson, Ben Wittick, Edward S. Curtis, and Adam Clark Vroman. Even more so did writers of regional fiction and nonfiction such as Adolf Bandelier, Dale and Mary Roberts Coolidge, Mabel Dodge Luhan, Willa Cather, Laura Adams Armer, Mary Austin, and Harvey and Erna Fergusson, to name but a few. Many of these writers of the period 1890 to 1940—whose work ranged from the realistic to the romanticized—emphasized Pueblo Indians rather than Navajos. However, among novelists one may mention four notable exceptions, Zane Grey, Oliver La Farge, Frances Gilmore, and Edwin Corle. Grey's *Riders of the Purple Sage*, *The Rainbow Trail*, *Captives of the Desert*, *Lost Pueblo*, and, especially, *The Vanishing American*, were set, at least in part, in the Navajo Country, and were replete with vivid landscape description; the last included strong portraits of Navajos.¹⁵ The less-prolific La Farge's popular and prize-winning *Laughing Boy* (and his better but not-as-well-known *The Enemy Gods*) also humanized the Navajo for the reading public, as did Gilmore's *Windsinger* and Corle's *People on the Earth*. Certain Indian traders and traders' wives added their reminiscences to the literature of the Reservation, and a myriad of mostly light-weight travel books involving the Navajo Country was published.

These books, plus a multitude of articles in magazines such as *Overland Monthly*, *Land of Sunshine*, *Sunset*, *The National Geographic Magazine*, *Natural History*, and, later, *Arizona Highways*, *New Mexico Magazine*, and *The Desert Magazine*, explicitly or implicitly encouraged tourism to the area. For instance, Charles F. Lummis, author of *Mesa, Cañon, and Pueblo*, among other overblown but evocative volumes, and editor of *Land of Sunshine*, not only coined the expression "See America First" but is also said to have been the earliest to apply the sobriquet "the Southwest" to this part of the country.¹⁶ England-born George Wharton James' massive popular books on the southwestern states and on Indians also helped particularly to crystallize the image of the Southwest in people's perceptions. And by the time of World War II, several movies—including "Laughing Boy," had been filmed in Monument Valley.¹⁷

The Motor Age

Although railroad travel dominated Southwestern tourism before World War II, and tourism (as opposed to war-related travel) in general and motoring in particular were minimal during the war, improved highways, cars, and wayside facilities led to the ascendancy of the automobile in the post-War period, contributing decisively to the twilight of rail-passenger travel.¹⁸ During the railroad era, Indian Detours and other ethnic tourism focused more easily on the Pueblo Indians than on the Navajos. Whereas the former were concentrated in villages and had ritual calendars or could be hired to put on "authentic" dances in their villages or at AT&SF/Harvey facilities, and whereas most of the Rio Grande pueblos were now near New Mexico's main north-south railroad and highway and had a tradition of village hospitality, the more aloof Navajo lived in isolated homesteads scattered over 25,000 square miles of more-or-less trackless desert and scrub country and had no fixed ritual schedule or locations. True, the Indian Detours included an excursion to Canyon de Chelly on the Navajo Reservation; but although the many Navajos there were an aspect of the attraction, the main draws were the spectacular sheer walls of the gorge and the abundant prehistoric Anasazi cliff dwellings and rock paintings. Navajo Country, then, was less easy to "package" than was the Puebloan Southwest.

This situation began to change significantly with the ascendancy of the automobile following World War II, despite the fact that as late as the 1960s only two paved highways of substantial length (U.S. 89 and U.S. 666) supplemented the peripheral U.S. 66 (present Interstate 40) in the vast Navajo Country. This change in transportation emphasis is attested to, for example, by the appearance of a 1946 guidebook to highway 66 (established in the 1930s) and of the Automobile Club of Southern California's repeatedly updated map *Indian Country*, which covered the territory between the Hualapai Reservation in the Grand Canyon area and the Jicarilla Apache Reservation west of the Rio Grande Valley. The Navajo Tribe also published its own tourist map in 1960.¹⁹ U.S. 66 acquired considerable fame, partially because it traversed part of the "Indian Country" between Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Kingman, Arizona.²⁰ In addition to scenic attractions such as the Painted Desert and Petrified Forest and Meteor Crater, coupled with its being the preferred route toward Grand Canyon National Park, the highway became an avenue for the promotion of "Indianness" (Fig. 1). Indian-curio shops (mostly inauthentic) proliferated, not only in "border towns" such as Gallup, Flagstaff, Holbrook, and Winslow, but also at lesser locations such as Continental Divide, Two Guns, Twin Arrows, Geronimo, Jack Rabbit, and Rimmy Jims. It is true that genuine (but commercial) Hopi pottery, baskets, and kachina dolls, Navajo rugs, and Indian-made jewelry were sold, but so were a multitude of Asian-made

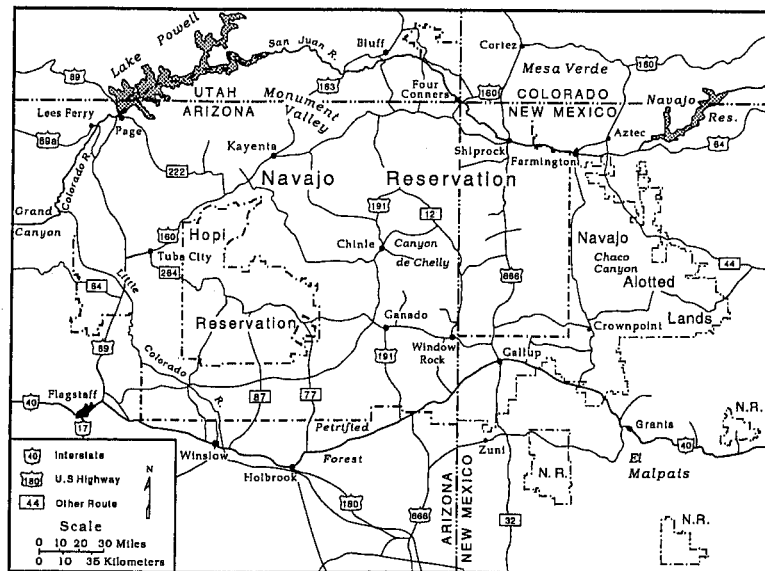


Fig. 1. Navajo Country, showing paved roads. Source: Douglas Van Lare and author, 1991.

"Indian" dolls, Mexican textile, leather, and "onyx" manufactures, machine-made moccasins, jewelry, and ceramics, petrified wood, cholla lamps, "longhorn" horns (from African cattle), colorful placemats, cactus candy, and so on. Many motels on the route carried Indian names, and a few had "cabins" or offices in the form of teepees or hogans (Fig. 2). Regional commercial publishers recruited these and other merchants to buy advertising space in booklets describing local attractions.²¹

In 1948, the federal Krug Report recommended extensive road-building on the Navajo Reservation for economic and cultural progress, and such construction was provided for by the Navajo-Hopi Long Range Rehabilitation Act of 1950. During the next decade, over 100 miles of paved roads were completed, and construction accelerated over the next few years. By the mid-1960s, many of the major routes on the Reservation were hard-surfaced, and these were supplemented by graded school-bus and other routes. The paved road network has expanded steadily in the decades since, contributing to burgeoning tourism but at the same time detracting from the sense of dreamlike isolation and the atmosphere of yesteryear that has traditionally attracted the more romantically adventurous sightseer.²² For instance, besides the highways' and right-of-way fences' altering the landscape, Navajo-owned canvas-covered buckboards—once the common family conveyance—virtually disappeared during the 1960s in favor of pickup trucks (partly due to increased prosperity, not to mention considerations of road safety). By 1988, a reported 2,250 miles of paved roads existed in the Navajo Nation road

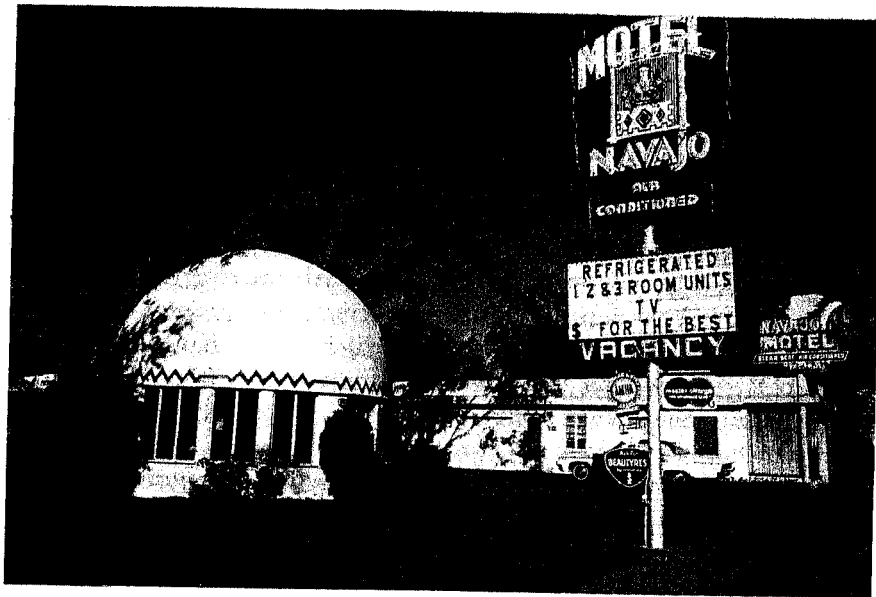


Fig. 2. Hogan-form office of the Navajo Motel on U.S. 66 in Holbrook, Arizona (since demolished). Source: Author, 1971.

system, plus some 6,000 miles of officially recognized unpaved roads. In addition, there were 24,299 registered motor vehicles on the Arizona portion of the Navajo Reservation alone.²³ During the 1980s, improved mobility led to routine off-reservation shopping plus the establishment of on-reservation shopping centers at Crownpoint, Window Rock, Shiprock, Chinle, Tuba City, and Kayenta—all of which have resulted in the rapid disappearance of traditional trading posts—once very much part of the “atmosphere.”

Tourist visitation leaped in rapid response to better roads; for example, between 1963 and 1964, during which time a paved route from U.S. 66 to Canyon de Chelly National Monument was completed, the number of visitors recorded at that National Park Service (NPS) unit rose by 550%, reaching an estimated total of 167,500! By 1987, visitation had climbed to 617,193. During the period 1964 to 1987, recorded visitors at Monument Valley Tribal Park rose from some 39,000 to 139,171 annually.²⁴

Tourism to the Southwest was encouraged by elementary-school “units” on Indians, which inspired children to urge vacations to Indian Country, as well as by parents wishing to educate their offspring.²⁵ Adults encountered the growing host of photographic and textual books and articles on the region, many encouraging motor tourism and backcountry hiking (following motorized access) which have appeared during the last quarter century as interest in the region and in indigenous peoples has exploded; at least three author-published guidebooks devoted

exclusively to highway-accessible attractions of the Navajo and Hopi reservations have been published. (One of these books was declared an "official guidebook" by the Navajo Tribe in 1986.)²⁶

Tourist Development

There are 10 scenic, archaeological, and historical National Park Service units, as well as three state parks, partially or wholly within, or bordering upon, presently or recently Navajo-occupied areas, and some of these currently include Navajo culture in their interpretive programs.²⁷ There were efforts during the 1930s to create an enormous Escalante National Monument in Utah, part of which would have bordered the Navajo Reservation on the north. Also during the '30s, the Rainbow Bridge-Monument Valley Expedition was mounted to assess the northwestern Navajo Country for the possible creation of new National Park Service units.²⁸ The Escalante National Monument proved politically infeasible, and the proposals emanating from the Rainbow Bridge-Monument Valley Expedition were opposed by a July 12, 1934, resolution of the Navajo Tribal Council—probably under the influence of the Indian Service—which stressed the Navajo's superior knowledge of, and motivation to protect, its scenic resources, plus the wish to profit from their direct management. The Council authorized the creation of "Navajo Parks, Monuments, or Ruins, to be managed by themselves with the cooperation of the Indian Service, and all other helpful agencies," and petitioned the "Secretary of the Interior and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to take immediate steps to have the National Park Service relinquish any rights that they may have acquired to any of our areas."²⁹ This attitude was engendered, in part, by the 1931 establishment of Canyon de Chelly National Monument, in a religiously and historically important and heavily populated area in the heart of the Reservation.³⁰

Although the Council thus acted in 1934 to authorize the establishment of Tribal Parks, this authorization was not implemented. However, on February 16, 1957, the Council established, within the Resources Division, a Parks and Recreation Department to operate a proposed system of tribal parks, monuments, recreation sites, and a Navajo Tribal Museum, and also established a policy-setting Navajo Parks Commission (recently abolished). On July 11, 1958, the Council established Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park.³¹ Picnic areas and campgrounds were designated at various points on the Reservation and some facilities developed, but only about half of the latter have been maintained.

A 1959 proposal to establish tribal Parks to protect important cliff dwellings in Three Turkey Canyon and Little White House Canyon south of Canyon de Chelly never came to full fruition.³² And although eight more Tribal Parks and Recreation Areas have been established over

the years and potential additional ones talked about, (e.g., Wheatfields Lake and Manuelito Canyon), only Monument Valley Tribal Park has been developed and maintained as a major tourist attraction.³³ Monument Valley Park was fenced, 14 miles of roads were graded, and an attractive 2000-square-foot visitor center and a 15-site campground were completed in 1960 and staffed by Tribal Rangers; a new, 100-place campground was added in 1979. An archaeological survey of the Park, with tourism in mind, was commissioned by the Tribe in 1962.³⁴ Notable mainly for its spectacular scenery, the Park has since become a major destination for tourists, who see this area in private cars, on organized four-wheel-drive tours, and on tour buses. Local Navajo residents capitalize on tourism by acting as guides/drivers, posing for photographs, and selling hand-made jewelry and rugs, and a number are employed at a lodge (Fig. 3). Many television and magazine advertisements are filmed in Monument Valley, as is the occasional movie (regulated by the tribal Film and Media Commission), and books and magazine articles highlighting the Valley appear without end—all of which publicity contributes to the area's increasing magnetism. A master plan for the Park was issued in 1983, proposing expanded facilities and boundary changes, and the Navajo Tribe is considering ultimate construction of a "world-class resort" there.³⁵

From the beginning of its parks program, the Tribe has seen the possibilities of developing a major marina on the Colorado River's Lake Powell, and a number of studies have been done over the years, the first in 1958. With the private, non-profit Indian Corporation known as Utah Navajo Industries, a temporary marina was established at Paiute Farms in 1986, but about two years later it was destroyed by flooding. The Tribe is now negotiating with a private corporation for development of a permanent marina on Antelope Point, near Page, Arizona.³⁶

In addition to lack of funds and constraints of utilities availability, a major impediment to the establishment of new tourist facilities and to the creation of additional parks and the meaningful management of existing parks, has been the opposition of the Navajo chapters (local-community land-management bodies) to any restrictions on traditional land use through withdrawal either for protection or development. The situation becomes even more complicated when more than one chapter is involved.³⁷

On the federal front, development of the Colorado River system had been of major interest since the early 1920s. Reclamation projects were interrupted by World War II, but plans for further dam-building after the War engendered a 1948 National Park Service survey of the scenic resources of the Upper Basin (above Lees Ferry, Arizona), which included much of the Navajo Country. However, the report's recommendations were very general.³⁸ In 1957, however, the National Park Service initiated

its "Mission 66," a massive, decade-long park-improvement program that led to the construction of some new visitor centers and to the paving of certain NPS-unit-related roads in the Navajo Country and elsewhere.

Hoping that the Navajo Tribe could capitalize on growing tourism, in 1955 the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) commissioned Stanford Research Institute to make a survey of potential sites for construction of motel and other service facilities on the Reservation.³⁹ The Tribe did, in fact, build and manage two commercial facilities, at Window Rock, the Tribal capital, and at Shiprock, New Mexico.⁴⁰ These enterprises were abandoned after about a decade, although the Window Rock Lodge was followed by the larger and quite successful Navajo Nation Inn, for which there are expansion plans.⁴¹ In 1959, the Council rejected a recommendation to establish a larger system of Tribal motels in favor of encouraging private enterprise to build facilities on the Reservation, resulting in private and chain motels being located at and near Kayenta and Chinle, Arizona, serving visitors to Monument Valley and Canyon de Chelly, respectively.⁴² Navajo entrepreneurship has been inhibited by lack of capital and business experience, and even more so by the extreme difficulty of obtaining requisite land-use and business permits.⁴³ After road-paving accelerated, a limited number of Navajo individuals built small gas stations and markets. With few exceptions, these first enterprises failed in relatively short order due to inexperience, undercapitalization, and locations chosen with respect to family land-use rights rather than customer access; however, a number of recent individual Navajo enterprises have been more successful.⁴⁴

In 1961, the proposal to create a National Park in the Rainbow Plateau/Navajo Mountain area was revived, as a sop to conservationists protesting imminent inundation of part of Rainbow Bridge National Monument by the reservoir being created behind Glen Canyon Dam, then under construction.⁴⁵ However, nothing came of this proposal.

At Window Rock, in 1961, the Navajo Tribal Museum was established, and in 1973 a separate Museum and Research Department was created (recently merged with the Department of Historic Preservation). The Museum installed natural-history, cultural, and historical displays and a native-fauna zoo, and became the center for Tribal cultural-research and publication activities. A number of pamphlets and leaflets for tourists and others were issued. The Tribe also opened the Navajo Arts & Crafts Guild at Window Rock, although attempts to establish branches elsewhere during the 1960s were aborted.⁴⁶

The tourist potential of the Navajo and Hopi reservations in light of the developing paved-road network was occupying a number of people's minds in the early 1960s. The BIA commissioned a tourist-potential study for the Hopi Reservation.⁴⁷ Ultimately, a cultural center and appurtenant motel and dining room were built on Second Mesa. Navajo Highway

1 (U.S. 160) was similarly studied by a consulting firm, and a report was published, dealing primarily with the location of potential highway-business sites.⁴⁸ My 1964 dissertation put tourism issues in the Navajo Country into historical, sociocultural, and economic contexts, and inventoried scenic, archaeological, and historic resources, making proposals for protection and development. In 1965, the "first annual" Navajoland Council, Recreation and Tourism—unaware of my work—recommended that a similar study be made. Another commissioned study was undertaken along BIA Route 3 (present route 12, west of the Chuska Mountains) and a draft report was submitted in 1965, followed by discussions seeking federal assistance.⁴⁹

In 1970, the Tribe, the NPS, and the BIA co-sponsored a study of potential tourist facilities at the Four Corners Monument, and the year 1972 saw the adoption, by the Navajo Nation, of a Ten-Year Plan. Tourism-related developments were called for, including motels, campgrounds, and other facilities, plus training of Navajo personnel, to be financed by the Tribe and the federal government.⁵⁰ The next two years saw the contracting for additional consultant's reports.⁵¹ "Tourism," said the 1974 Overall Economic Development Plan, "while not a major section of the Navajo economy deserves mention because of its significant potential."⁵² In connection with the National Bicentennial in 1976, The Navajo Nation published a full-color pamphlet describing the tourist attractions and facilities in and around Window Rock, the tribal capital, under an American Indian Travel Commission grant.⁵³ At the urging of Navajo Tribal Museum Director Martin Link, the Tribe also proposed a Navajo Heritage Center, to house a visitor center, museum, library, and auditorium in Tse Bonito Navajo Tribal Park at Window Rock.⁵⁴ However, unlike the successful Hopi Cultural Center, construction of this facility was delayed for decades (because of graft, according to rumor), with funds finally being appropriated in April, 1991.

For decades, the National Park Service has helped train Navajo Rangers and has cooperated in other ways. Regarding Canyon de Chelly, recent proposals for this unique dual-status NPS/Navajo Reservation unit have included a cooperative-management agreement between the NPS, the BIA, and the Tribe—or Navajo Nation, as it is now often referred to.⁵⁵

During the 1980s, many of the functions of the Department of Parks and Recreation other than facility operations and some visitor services, were reassigned to other Tribal agencies, greatly reducing coordination in tourist-related efforts.⁵⁶

Although a Navajo Nation Cultural Resources Management (CRM) Program—originally in the Department of Parks and Recreation but since made a separate department—plus the BIA Cultural Resources Compliance Services were also established, mainly to do archaeological

surveys and clearances under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and although some private facilities have been expanded and a few added, other than the marina project, relatively little of a concrete nature seems to have transpired in connection with enhancing the tourist and recreational industry since the official flurry of interest from the 1950s to the mid-1970s.⁵⁷ Tribal reports still speak mainly about "an immense potential for a vast tourist industry," rather than recording any substantial progress toward that end.⁵⁸

Cultural Attractions

The cultural attractions of the Navajo Country fall into several categories. The "Colorado River Basin possesses scenic archaeology unsurpassed by other areas of the United States," which constitute a major cultural resource.⁵⁹ These remains are mainly Anasazi (prehistoric Puebloan) ruins—both romantically sited cliff dwellings and open sites such as the spectacular big houses of Chaco Canyon. There has been an enormous recent surge of interest in the Anasazi, sparked in part by the NPS's Chaco Project and archaeological efforts at Canyon de Chelly and other units and on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Forest Service lands, and in part by a growing general public fascination with this mysterious culture, with individual orientations ranging from burgeoning amateur involvement in scientific archaeology to "New Age" attraction to shamanism, ancient astronomy/astrology, and the like. As a result of these varied interests, more than one guidebook to the Southwest's ruins have appeared, and San Juan County, Utah, has developed a touristic "Trail of the Ancients."⁶⁰ Farmington, New Mexico, puts on a pageant called "Anasazi, the Ancient Ones." Recognition of the marketability of regional archaeological resources sparked a Four Corners Governors' Conference in 1990.⁶¹

The expression of Navajo culture in the landscape also has its appeal for many people. These material manifestations include simple but distinctive native architecture, especially the round or polygonal log-and-earth hogans, and Navajo costume, especially women's, involving colorful velveteen blouses; full, pleated sateen skirts; string-wound hair knots; and quantities of silver-and-turquoise Indian jewelry.⁶² Livestock—especially closely herded sheep and goats, and horses—also characterize the Navajo landscape (Fig. 3).

Although present, Navajo Country historic buildings and other sites, including government and mission structures, are generally of limited tourist appeal (unlike those of Puebloan areas). An inventory of older government structures on the Reservation was completed by a consulting firm for the BIA in 1981, and the College of Ganado, Arizona, has published a guidebook to the old Presbyterian mission buildings there.⁶³ The CRM and Cultural Resources Compliances Services had been

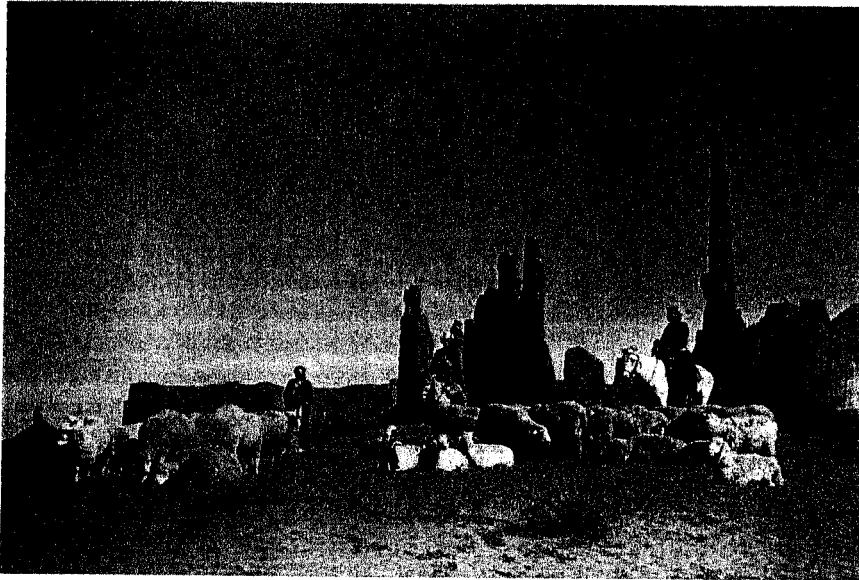


Fig. 3. Navajo family posing with their sheep for tourist photographers, Monument Valley. Source: Author, 1957.

operating out of Window Rock for some years when, in 1986, the Tribal Council passed the Cultural Resources Protection Act and established, under the Division of Natural Resources, an Archaeology Department (AD) and a Historical Preservation Department (HPD) to assume the CRM and compliance functions. Although the AD and HPD do deal with notable prehistoric ruins and with conventional historic structures, so far they have concentrated on mitigation involving archaeological remains of limited touristic value and on sacred and other traditionally significant places, plus some educational and advisory work.⁶⁴ The major exception to a general lack of touristic attention to historic buildings in the Navajo Country is the Hubbell Trading Post National Historical Site (authorized 1965) at Ganado, which includes a traditional working trading post dating to 1880, with a Navajo crafts store; the trader's house (1900), richly furnished with regional art and native craft items; and miscellaneous structures. There is also a museum trading post and residence at Goulding's Lodge, in Monument Valley.

Navajo ceremonials are not, in their usual form, tourist attractions, because they are given at unpredictable times and places and late at night. However, "packaged" versions of certain Indian ceremonial songs and dances, along with rodeo events and displays, have become major tourist draws, as well as attracting large numbers of natives. These events include the Intertribal Indian Ceremonial (established 1922), at Red Rock State Park east of Gallup; the Flagstaff All-Indian Pow Wow; the Navajo Tribal Fair (initiated in 1937) and the July Fourth Celebration at Window

Rock; the Northern Navajo Fair (begun in 1909) at Shiprock; the Western Navajo Fair at Tuba City; and—on a smaller scale—Bluff, Utah's All Tribes Indian Day. Civic centers have been built at Window Rock, Tuba City, and Shiprock and house agricultural and craft exhibits during fairs.⁶⁵

Finally, one may mention Navajo craft arts. The AT&SF and Harvey company

began systematically to promote mass production of crafts. . . . Indian culture was turned into a highly salable commodity that was marketed as pottery, woven blankets, paintings, and baskets. For a fee, songs and dances were also performed for the tourists. . . . The promotion of Indian "artifacts" by Fred Harvey and the Santa Fe Railway enhanced their prestige and business flourished. . . . The railroad manipulated the market through their advertising in order to give Indian artifacts an unprecedented "art" status and thus enhance their price. . . . In some instances, artificial "artifacts" were mass produced. . . .⁶⁶

In addition, individual Indians sold "curios" from the platforms at AT&SF railroad stations.⁶⁷

Non-Indian individuals and institutions, unconnected with the railroad, also played important roles in promoting Indian crafts. Through Hopi-Tewa potter Nampeyo, trader Thomas Keam initiated the Sikyatki Revival style in the 1880s, which quickly developed into the modern Hopi commercial pottery. Traders, particularly Lorenzo Hubbell, C.N. Cotton, and J.B. Moore, also caused the obsolescent Navajo blanket to be transformed into the commercial Navajo rug as a way of adding value to wool during the collapse of prices in the 1890s. In the process, design styles entirely new to the Navajo were introduced, a number inspired by then-popular oriental tribal carpets.⁶⁸ Rugs were sold by mail-order and through Harvey and other shops, and became a major item of tourist interest in the region, both on and off the Reservation, conforming to Mary McCarthy's observation that "the idea of loot is pretty fundamental to the tourist experience."⁶⁹ On the other hand, the Department of the Interior's Indian Arts and Crafts Board, the School of American Research (SAR), the Museum of New Mexico (MNM), and the Museum of Northern Arizona (MNA) promoted excellence in crafts as well, the MNM more with respect to "traditional" designs, while the MNA also sponsored innovation. In the post-1960s period, expanded ethnic awareness, nostalgia, a skyrocketing art and antiques market, regional population and taste shifts, and other factors have brought Indian crafts much more to the fore, with corresponding elevations in price and production. Even Zapotec weavers in Oaxaca, Mexico, began weaving less expensive copies of Navajo rugs, to be sold in the Southwest, and some Zapotec design influences can be detected in recent Navajo rugs.⁷⁰ Rugs have returned to mail-order catalogues—notably, Land's End.

All of these kinds of cultural attractions have generated burgeoning interest, among both low-budget backpackers and the more affluent and educated public. Their appetite has spawned a number of adventure-travel and education/recreation programs that provide outings as well as minicourses in natural history, archaeology, native crafts and cultures, and the like, often promising intimate contact with "real natives." Among the organizations involved with giving courses on the Navajo area and its cultural resources (and sometimes employing Navajo personnel) are Canyonlands Field Institute, White Mesa Institute, Four Corners School of Outdoor Education, Crow Canyon Archaeological Center, the Museum of Northern Arizona Ventures program, the Archaeological Conservancy, the National Audubon Society Expedition Institute, and the Sierra Club.⁷¹

Effects of Tourism

Tourism has impacted the Navajo and their country in a number of ways, although this has received little study per se.⁷² The rise of tourism has provided Navajos increasing employment opportunities, as motel, restaurant, craft-shop, and gas-station service personnel; guides and drivers; riding-horse purveyors; Recreation Resources Department and NPS staff; independent craftspersons and salespeople; and in a number of other roles. Unfortunately, "car-clouting"—theft from tourist vehicles—has also become an income source for a few Navajos, and some of the increased income is converted into illicit alcohol. Contact with tourists as well as increased income have given added momentum to an already accelerated acculturation of Navajos to Anglo-American ways on the one hand, but on the other hand such contact has also heightened Navajos' interest and pride in hand crafts—prolonging, expanding, and modifying their production. Anonymous tribal craft arts have evolved increasingly in the direction of individual, innovative, "name"-artist creations as well, although many weavers are copying "traditional" rug designs from the many books on Navajo weaving published since 1960. Versions of ephemeral ceremonial sandpaintings are now applied to plywood with glue, and sold.⁷³ The question of what constitutes "authenticity" becomes increasingly problematic.

Tourism has altered the landscape by stimulating the construction of new buildings—motels, restaurants, service stations, craft shops, visitor centers—in and adjacent to the Navajo Country. Although roadbuilding and paving have resulted in greatly increased visitation, tourism itself has also stimulated a significant amount of new road construction and improvement. Off the Reservation, garish billboards "add" to the scene; and in the bordertowns, motels have signs, sometimes with huge figures illustrating names like "Navajo," "Hopi," "Chief," "Pow Wow," "Kachina," and "Thunderbird"—forms of sufficient age, now, that some have been demolished and remaining ones are getting some attention



Fig. 4. Roadside Navajo jewelry stand, Arizona Highway 64, Little Colorado River Gorge Navajo Tribal Park. Source: Author, 1982.

as nostalgia-invoking popular culture-artifacts (Fig. 2). Along certain Reservation roads, especially U.S. 89 and Arizona 64 near the Grand Canyon, ramshackle roadside jewelry and curio stands mar the landscape (Fig. 4). The Navajo Division of Economic Development's Department of Industrial and Tourism Development is starting to address this blight by constructing "vendor villages" which will include a visitor center, a cafe, and craftpersons' booths; the first is being built in Shiprock in 1991. Regarding another visible manifestation of culture, the Parks Department sponsors an annual pre-event cleanup of wine bottles and beer cans to spruce up the Navajo image for tourists traveling the highway to Window Rock, home of the Navajo Tribal Fair.⁷⁴

Some Navajos complain of unauthorized photographing of individuals and other losses of privacy; range damage by off-road vehicles; and other inappropriate behavior by tourists, including occasional theft.⁷⁵ Although National Park Service units have served to protect certain Navajo holy and special-use sites, negative effects at least partly attributable to the growth of tourism are evident at Navajo sacred places within and outside of its units.⁷⁶ Ignorant and insensitive visitors (as at Rainbow Natural Bridge), construction activities (e.g., the use of the Outlet Neck, Twin Buttes, and Church Rock diatremes for roadmetal), and "pot-hunting" (illegal digging for artifacts in prehistoric sites) have taken their toll.

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A recent survey of officials on western Indian reservations (including the Navajo) revealed that tourism is viewed not only as an avenue toward self-sufficiency and self-determination but also

as a force for cultural revitalization and maintenance of cultural identity. . . and an important means for obtaining a greater respect for and understanding of Indian cultures within the context of the larger society. Several respondents viewed feedback from appreciative visitors as a way to develop internal reaffirmation of ethnicity for present and future generations.⁷⁷

Studies of how Navajos view tourists, to what extent they adjust their behavior to conform to (or to conflict with) outsiders' preconceptions, and how all of this tourism affects their self-esteem remain to be done. "Finding positive ways to cope with tourists' desire for contact will be one more critical challenge for Southwest Indians in their long and difficult struggle for survival within the contemporary, Anglo-dominated American society."⁷⁸ What is clear is that tourism and the Indian Country have long been, and will long continue to be, inextricably intertwined, with image and reality always co-mingled in the minds of both tourist and Indian.

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