

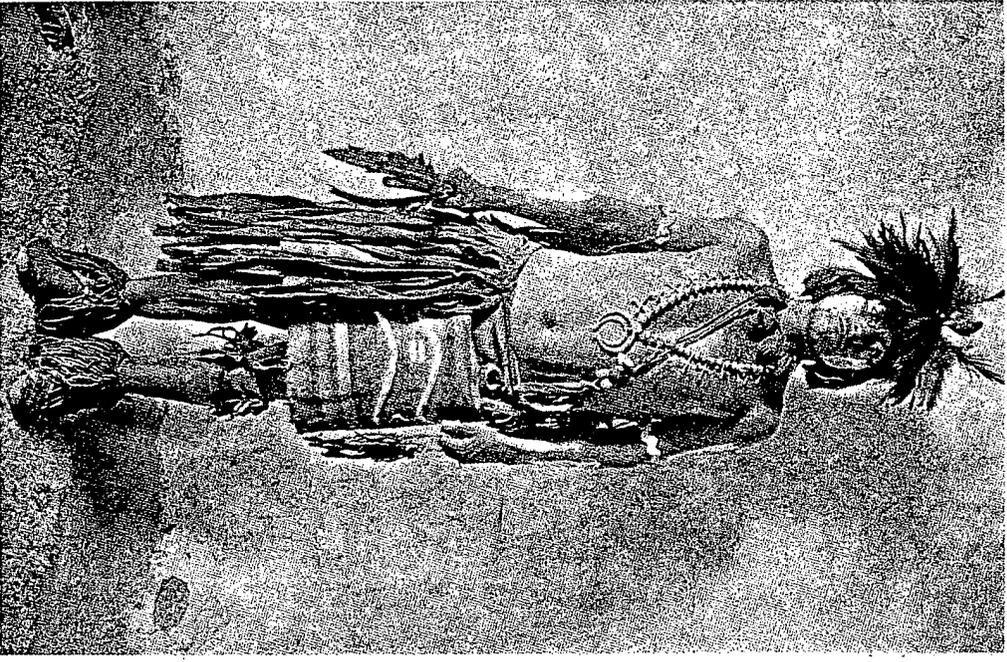
# The Indians of the Terraced Houses

By  
**Charles Francis Saunders**

With numerous illustrations from photographs mainly by  
**C. F. and E. H. Saunders**

"These people, since they are few, and their manners, government, and habits are so different from all the nations that have been seen and discovered in these western regions, must have come from that part of Greater India, the coast of which lies to the west of this country."—*The Narrative of Castañeda, Coronado's Chronicler, 1540-42.*

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1912



A Snake Priest of Walpi in dance attire.  
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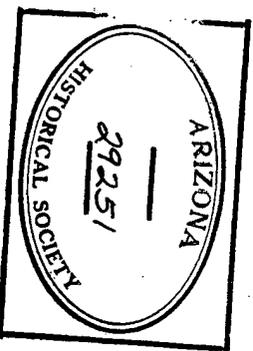
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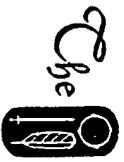
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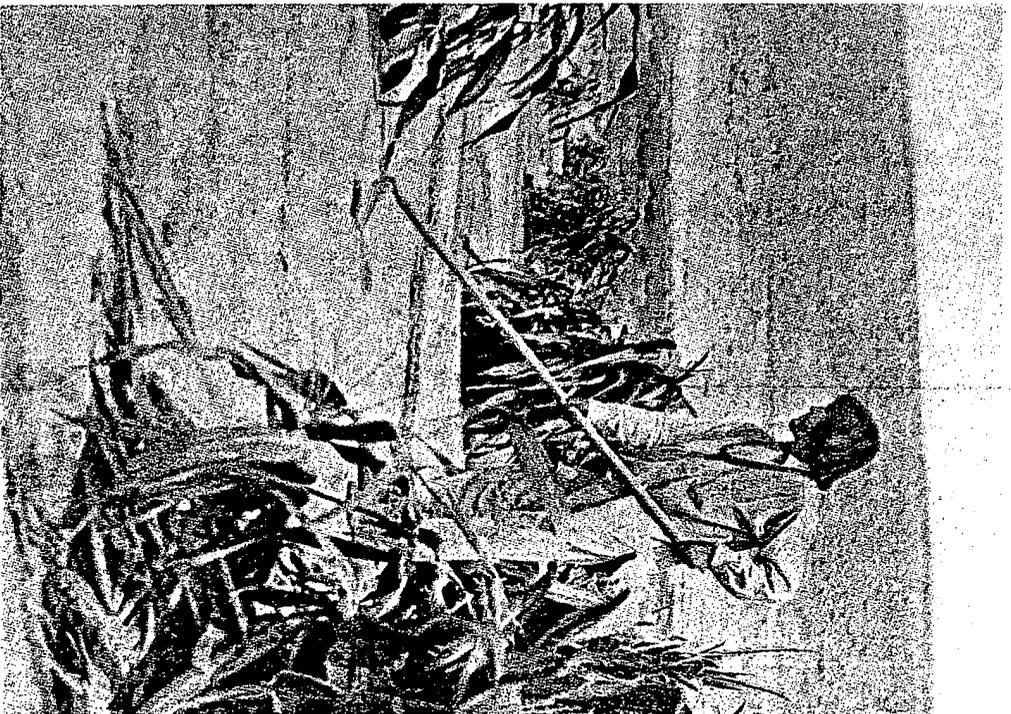
Publisher's Preface

Author Charles Francis Saunders was not a "scholar" by today's usage and definition, but he was a very good reporter and he wrote easily and well. We chose to reprint this book because of the vivid and excellent descriptions of the pueblo people, their ceremonies and their way of life as an "outsider" Anglo observed them in the first decade of the 20th Century. Also, the book contains a whole library of rare and interesting photographs contemporary to the time. Mr. Saunders' visits occurred while New Mexico and Arizona were still Territories, and this account is a splendid word picture of the state of Indian affairs in the waning days of Territorial status.

Mr. Saunders took up vigorous cudgels against the government's so-called "Indian policy", whatever it was. Big Brother ruined the life-style and culture of the American Aborigines wherever he gained control—an ongoing development now directed ruthlessly and relentlessly against all American citizens. It appears some Americans have forgotten (or never knew) what happened to all the Big Brothers of history (Adolph Hitler and Benito Mussolini come to mind readily, and even the most insulated of idealogues should by now have heard of the late, unlamented Salvador Allende of Chile. Readers should read or re-read 1984, by George Orwell). Saunders describes graphically some of Big Brother's

Hither, long centuries ago, came the ancestors of the present dwellers in Moqui, after movings whose course is fairly well marked to this day by ruins of prehistoric towns scattered along the valley of the Little Colorado, in the *cañons* of the White Mountains of Arizona, and among the *Mogollones*. There is every reason to believe that they came seeking in this desert fastness an asylum from war and the depredations of their enemies. For the Lord of Life, it seems, had implanted in the hearts of these red children of His, not a spirit of unrest, rapine, and war—qualities which our superior civilisation invariably associates with the unreconstructed red man,—but the love of peace, of home, and of tilling the ground. Indeed, they called themselves, and still do, Hopi,<sup>1</sup> meaning “the Peaceful”; and because their settled abodes and ordered lives of industry as agriculturists and artisans enabled them to gather to themselves property which excited the cupidity of warlike nomads of the South-West, such as the Utes, the

<sup>1</sup> They are also quite generally called Moquis (or Mokia's); but this is really a term of contempt, as Dago for an Italian or Mick for an Irishman. In this book the word “Moqui” is used in its geographic sense, meaning the locality in which the Hopis live.



Chief Snake Priest of Walpi, hoeing his corn two or three days after the Snake Dance. Note how short the stalks are, yet they are full grown. The man is but five feet high.

Apaches, and the Navajos, their fields and terraced towns would appear to have been the object of attack and spoliation by these enemies. Then, to escape the ceaseless harrying of marauders, came the flight of the Hopis to the desert, taking to themselves the barren waste as an ally and establishing themselves where the hardship of getting at them would minimise the liability to invasion.

So the pueblos of Moqui came to be—no man can say when, but certainly before the coming of the sixteenth-century Spaniards; and to reach them across the long, sun-scorched, waterless leagues was, in old Spanish parlance, literally *una jornada de muerte*—a journey of death. Here in Moqui, the Hopis planted their corn of many colours and set up altars and shrines that stand to this present day; and with invocations and thanksgiving to the red gods that had brought their fathers up from the darkness of the underworld to this world of light, they wrestled unceasingly with the desert for a living—and won.

In a land where the annual rainfall is but a few inches, and that confined principally to two summer months, and where the sandy ground, shifting continually before the wind, is almost as unstable

as the waves of the sea, this untutored race has scored over adverse nature a victory which wins the admiration of every serious-minded person, scientist or layman, who visits Moqui. The Hopis have searched out every spot in the desert within a score of miles, where moisture lingers long enough to mature a crop of corn or beans or melons, and industriously cultivate it and protect it from burial by shifting sands from seed-time to harvest. Of the desert's resources practically nothing escapes them. Of its rocks and stones they have fashioned implements and built stable towns; of the fibres of its plants and the skins of its animals they have made clothing; of its clay they have moulded serviceable and beautiful pottery; of its grasses they have woven baskets of superior weave and design; upon its bitter shrubs they pasture their flocks; certain saponaceous roots provide them with soap, and many herbs contribute to their vegetable dieting. In fact, their knowledge of the desert plant life is little short of marvellous. Out of one hundred and fifty known species of plants growing wild in Moqui—a white farmer would call them all weeds—the Hopis have found use, it is said, for about a hundred and forty. From

the Spaniards, who sought to Christianise them, but whose iron rule only succeeded in driving these Quakerly-disposed Indians to such desperation that they finally threw the priests over the cliffs and demolished the church, taking its beams for roofing their own pagan fanes—from the Spaniards they got enrichment of their lot in the shape of horses, *burros*, sheep, iron implements, and peach trees. The peach orchards are to-day a special feature in the environs of every Hopi town, the deep green of the foliage, billowing the yellow sands, being visible to the traveller as he approaches long before the town itself is distinguishable from the rock upon which it is founded.

The nearest railroad to Moqui is the Santa Fé's transcontinental line, and the pueblos lie seventy-five to a hundred miles north of it. To them are four principal wagon routes, and unless you are used to desert travel, whichever one you take, you will likely wish you had chosen another; for, at the best, the trip is a hard one. You may, first of all, set out for Moqui from Cañon Diablo, a flag-station where a lone trading-post has been established for many years; amply capable, however, of fitting you out in thorough style. This