

Subject:
Navajo encroachments
on Hopi lands.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
UNITED STATES INDIAN IRRIGATION SERVICE
SUPERINTENDENT OF IRRIGATION

Albuquerque, N. M., May 26, 1914.



REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs,

Washington, D. C.

(Through the office of the Chief Engineer).

Sir:

In connection with the development of underground water for the Hopi Indians, a condition of affairs has been discovered that, unless corrected, is destined to spell disaster for these Indians.

I refer to the continued encroachments of the Navajo Indians upon the limited grazing lands and upon the springs and water holes that belong rightfully to the Hopis.

The Hopi Indians have a reservation about 70 miles long from north to south and 55 miles from east to west, containing 3865 square miles. They live in nine towns in the south central part of this area. They have no agricultural lands, strictly speaking, as this area is very arid and there is no irrigable or irrigated land in the entire reservation other than tiny plats of a few acres in aggregate area under various springs that give a very meagre flow of water. Some corn and a few beans are grown by dry farming, utilizing the sand beds that hold the moisture a little longer than does the other soil.

They have considerable flocks of shbop which they have for years past grazed near the mesas on which their villages are situated and much of the balance of their reservation has not been grazed over because of the scanty water and the fact that their flocks were small.

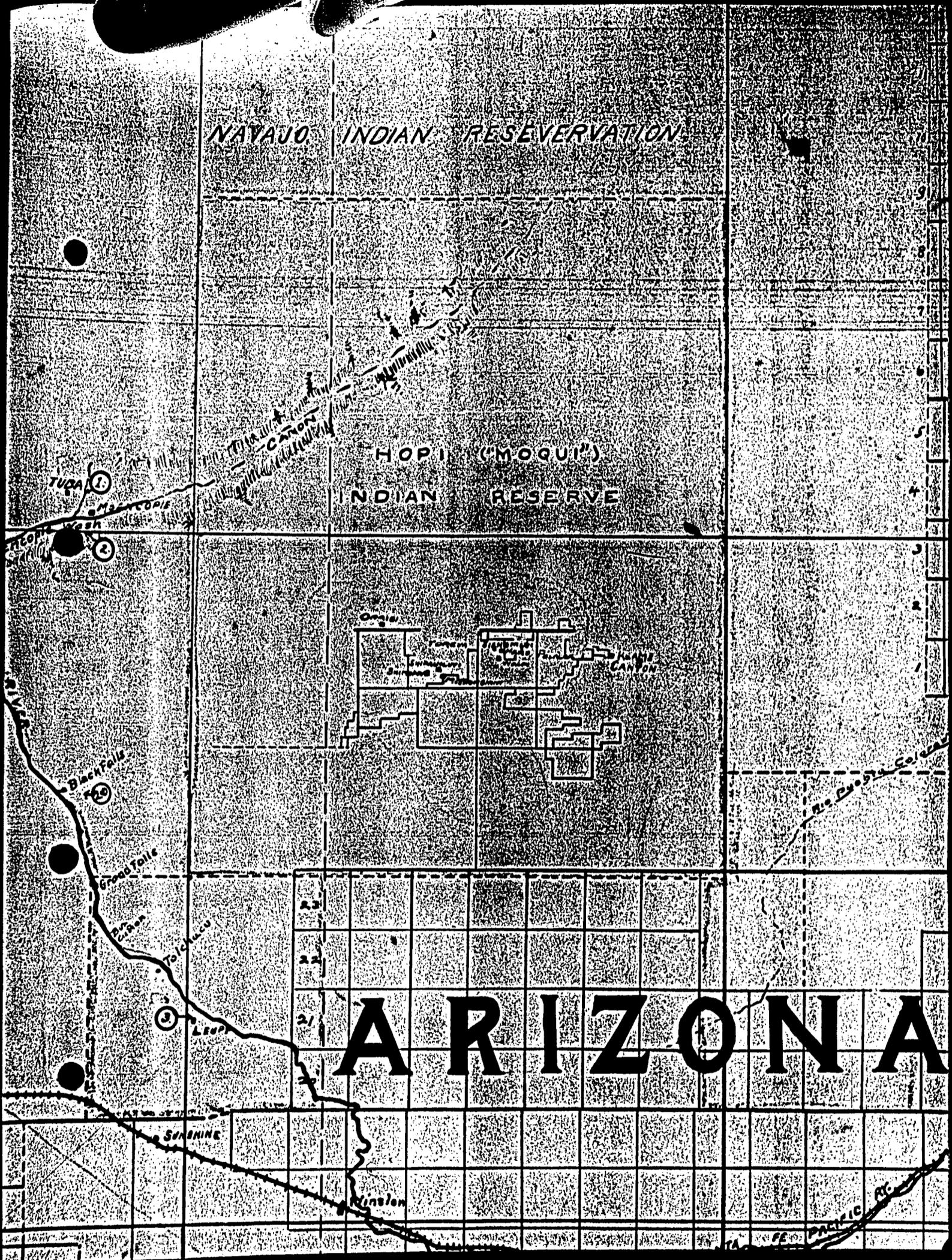
With the development of water by wells and improving the springs, and

008524

NAVAJO INDIAN RESERVATION

HOPI ("MOQUI") INDIAN RESERVE

ARIZONA



- 2 -

the natural increase of their flocks, together with the wornout condition of the grazing near their mesas, they now desire to move out further with their flocks, and find that the thrifty and pushing Navajos have preempted their land and water and by gradual but continued encroachments has hommed them in, and their area is now so restricted that they are only able to work out a very short distance before they encounter the flocks of the Navajos with their aggressive disposition, which drive the Hopis back toward the mesas and prevent them by force, from grazing their flocks on their own lands which have been preempted and are now occupied by their neighbors and enemies.

The accompanying map shows by an irregular line drawn around the mesas and towns, the present limit of the range of the Hopis. Along the edge of this area is a neutral zone which is occupied at times by both people, but beyond this the Hopis are not allowed to go, and unless the Department will step in and force the Navajos back the Hopis will not be able to better their condition in any way, for they cannot hope to increase their cultivation, and their main dependence will of necessity be upon their flocks. Their range is now so restricted and overcrowded that it is already eaten out and a single year of drowth would be fatal to a large proportion of their sheep, and great suffering would ensue. To make the matter worse, it seems as though the government was assisting the Navajos to crowd the poor and peaceful Hopi to the wall, for I am informed that there has been some 300 allotments of Navajos made within the boundaries of the Hopi reservation and many of the se allotments include the good springs, and most of the available water in the reservation, and even should the Navajos not resort to force, as they have done, to prevent the Hopi flocks from using the grazing

land, the fact that they occupy and control the water holes and springs would be sufficient, as the control of the water naturally gives control of all the surrounding country.

They are now restricted to an area of about 550 square miles of the 3,863 square miles that is in their reservation and which one would naturally suppose belonged to them, or about 14%. This analyzed further means that there is about 169 acres to each Hopi, of which, perhaps, one half is bare rock or sand dunes that will not grow grass or anything else that is food for stock. This is in a country where the mean annual rainfall is from three to six inches, and the evaporation from water is perhaps ninety!

It would appear that the situation is one that merits some action and immediate attention from the Office, because the situation is continually growing worse. The characteristics of the Hopi will cause him to suffer in silence, and in his capacity for accepting punishment and oppression quietly and submissively is far in advance of the Quakers. His name indicates his character. Hopi, in their own language, denotes "peaceful". He is afraid of the swaggering, blustering Navajo, and the Navajo despises him, as the word "Moki" is from the Navajo name for them, which being interpreted means "A dead one".

They have come to Foreman Womack of this service and talked the matter over with him, and they have talked with me. When told that they should go to the Superintendent at Keams Canyon, they will drearily and hopelessly say that "it is no use, the Superintendent will not help us, The Government will do nothing, and in the mean time the Navajos take another spring and a little more grass land. If the Government wants to help us why does it allot our land and our springs to the Navajos, and back them up in every quarrel"?

With the exception of a few individuals they are hopeless in the matter, and feel that they are being crowded to the wall, and the only ray of light or hope they have, has been given them by our service in developing additional water for them.

As to the remedy --- I have none to offer, as there are many things in connection with the administration of the affairs of these Indians that I am not acquainted with. I only know that it appears that they are being driven to the wall, and need help.

I would however, offer the following suggestions.

I understand that the allotments made the Navajos have not been approved. If this is the case I would suggest that they be cancelled.

South of the present Navajo and Hopi Reservations is a tract of land on which some Navajos now live. In this tract are a number of springs owned, I believe, by Chas L. Day, which have been offered for sale to the Indian service for the use of the Indians, and regarding which I made a report some time since.

I would suggest that these springs be acquired. I would further suggest that the reservation be extended to cover these springs. I would then endeavor to exchange with the A. T. and S. P. Ry. Co. the alternate sections owned by the government immediately adjoining the track for the ones owned by the railroad in this particular section, that the Indians might have a solid body of land that they could range over without the danger of the railroad leasing their holdings to cattle men or sheep men who would, naturally, overrun the entire country.

The Navajos occupying the land immediately around the Hopi Villages and which is needed by the Hopis, should be moved off and given in lieu this land with its springs and good grazing, - and it is much better grazing

- 5 -

land than that they now occupy - and in this way both the Navajos and Hopis would be benefitted in the long run.

As the Navajos are rapidly increasing in numbers and their flocks are also increasing, it will be but a short time before they would again encroach upon the Hopis, and the Department would have to be vigilant to prevent their return. The Navajos will soon need additional land and water for their increase, as the Hopis do now, and the plan suggested offers the most practicable solution I can see for the present needs of both.

The conditions now existing cannot long continue, and the sooner that fact is recognized and steps taken to settle the matter, the better it will naturally be for all concerned.

Very respectfully,

H. J. Robinson

Superintendent of Irrigation.

*A copy of this
is in Ind Office*