

Nihikék' eh Nahaz' á
Our Place In This Land

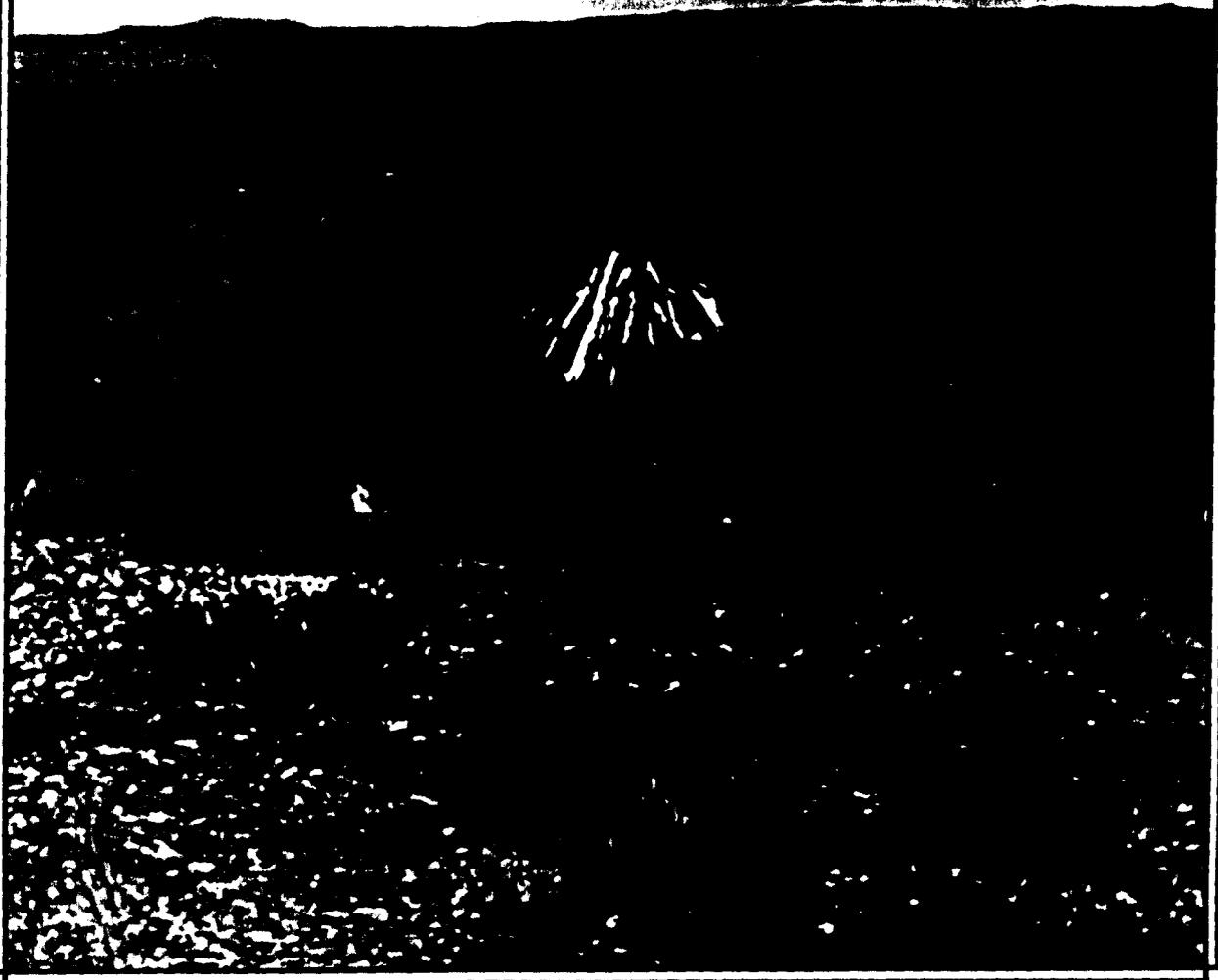
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ETHNOGRAPHIC RESULTS



Each of the consultants we interviewed for this project was encouraged to discuss whatever he or she wished; we imposed no restrictions on our discussions. In this way, the consultants were able to control the amount of information they shared with us and to provide that information in an appropriate context. This type of information collection has been used by other researchers (e.g., Kelley and Francis 1994; Roberts, Begay, and Kelley 1995). The information gathered during our discussions provided a foundation for understanding the unique relationship of Navajo people to the local landscape. It became readily apparent that resource use and access to resources are deeply rooted in the past. Although two of the consultants no longer live in the Wupatki Basin, they clearly remember the locations of their previous homes, and just as important, they were able to share with us the significance of plants found within the monuments and were able to identify cultural resources they had used while living at Wupatki.

Many of the resources identified by the consultants are still in use and were identified by all four interviewees. The consistency of the identification indicates that knowledge of these resources is spread over a wide geographic area and through a wide range of social segments of the western Navajo population. Although the resources have many different uses, depending on the ceremony, season, and location, each resource (plants and places) is equally important and plays an integral role in the ceremonial and traditional life of Navajo people. Important also is the fact that Navajos from across Navajoland (whether from Arizona, Utah, or New Mexico) can readily tap into these resources—and they often do. NN, a *hataa'ii*, explained that he often conducts rituals or ceremonies for people throughout the Navajo Nation and that he relies on the resources found on the three monuments to conduct his ceremonial work.

Below are summary statements collected during our field visits. They pertain to larger issues that extend beyond the purpose of the project, yet they provide a framework for discussing the importance of the natural and cultural resources identified in each monument.

Clan Origin Stories

While driving to and through Wupatki during the various field visits, the four consultants commented on the widespread presence and prominence of Anaasazi

sites throughout the Southwest, particularly at Wupatki. Wupatki was inhabited by people that archaeologists have labeled Kayenta Anasazi, Sinagua, Cohonina, and Hohokam based on their material culture. We will not attempt to discuss the archaeological traditions for the monuments (for additional information see chapters in Anderson 1990); our focus is the information gathered from our consultants. Every prominent topographic feature has some evidence of past human presence, such as ruins, offering places, or some other human alteration of these places. They also remarked that there has been a culturally distinct Navajo presence on these lands for many generations and that the Navajo presence has been largely ignored. In fact, Wupatki and Walnut Canyon monuments were created solely to protect, promote, and preserve precolumbian archaeological sites. The Navajo presence in or use of the three monuments is not recognized in the enabling legislation of the monuments, the interpretive displays, or even in the literature distributed at the monuments.

Each of the consultants has expressed a desire to have the Navajo history of the three Flagstaff Area National Monuments told to the visitors of the monuments, especially now that many Navajos are beginning to be among those who visit the monument. The consultants, and their preceding generations, were all a part of the development of the historic landscape of the monuments at one time or another, and they believe they have made valuable contributions to the monuments. Accordingly, the Navajo history of these three places cannot be separated from the evolution of the parks. The Navajo presence at these monuments, especially Wupatki, must be recognized, and told from a Navajo perspective. This history must include the culturally distinct Navajo presence in the Wupatki Basin, but also clan origin stories that incorporate precolumbian peoples and places.

The consultants further commented that there is much confusion regarding Navajo origins. Young people are no longer learning the origins of Navajos from their elders; they are learning only the theories of archaeologists and anthropologists. The teachings they receive in schools are reinforced throughout their educational careers and through institutions such as the National Park Service. The elders find it hard to pass on their oral histories in the face of such unbeatable odds. But they hope that through such projects as this one, they may be able to tell a part of the Navajo history and to pass it along to Navajo youth as well as for the benefit of mutual understanding between Navajo people and the non-Navajo public.

All the consultants recognize that the Navajo people have varied origins and that certain clans have direct connections to the Anasazi. NN, ET, and BBH talked at length about the origins of Navajo people and their movements throughout the Wupatki Basin:

Our elders said that the people who built these ruins were Diné (Navajo). We were the ones who came to the rocks and built our homes. The descendants of the people who made these ruins are still here, the clans still live in this general area, but not on the Park [Wupatki] because the National Park Service will not let them.

The clans from here [within and around what is now the monument] were the Tsé njíkiní, the ones who made their houses up on the rocks; this is my clan. My relatives actually used to live inside the Park. We moved around all over the place. The Hask'ąą hadzohí (Yucca Fruit Strung Out In A Line People) lived to the southeast and occasionally moved across the river. The Kin lichí'nii (Red House People) lived east of the river and had claims in the Park as well. The people that live on the reservation just off the border are of these clans; they came from here. But now, the Park is closed to all of us. (ET)

The ruins have different names, and the people who lived there took the names of the place they lived. They have now become clans [within the Navajo Nation]. As I have mentioned before, the towering houses are *kinyaa'á*, they [the people who lived there] are the Kin yaa'áanii clan, they built their houses on mesa tops. We still live with these people today, Anaasazi. Then there are more stories that exist when Navajo people were made again [reference to Asdzáá nadleehé, Changing Woman, the premier Navajo goddess who made new clans at her home in the western ocean] such as the Tótsohnii and the Tó dích'í'nii.

Another clan that is derived from ruins like these [at Wupatki] is the Kin lichí'nii (Red House People). The Táchii'nii (Red Water People) also are said to be people of these ruins. This clan has a sub-named clan known as Anaasazi Táchii'nii. I do not know if these people [members of this sub-clan] still remember this; it is said that they came from this place. We still live with these people. (NN)

Yes, some Navajos came from here, the Táchii'nii clan came from here and a place near the Hopi villages called Táchii' . . . another clan is the Tsé njíkiní, named after the houses they built on cliff faces, especially the Kin yaa'áanii. The Hopis do not have names among them like this, they just steal these ideas from us. They use our stories to tell about their lives. (NN)

NN's declaration that the Anaasazi Táchii'nii are descended from the Anasazi has been previously documented in Begay and Roberts (1996:208), and Roberts, Begay, and Kelley (1995:27).

Expulsion of Navajos from Wupatki National Monument

All eight of the consultants spent a considerable amount of time reminiscing about the presence of Navajo families in and around the Wupatki Basin. The families that occupied the basin were well-respected and enjoyed a high social status, and these families are remembered to this day by the larger Navajo community. The former Wupatki families did not live in isolation; they were part of a larger social network that extended beyond the present monument boundaries. Roberts (1990) details the movements of the Wupatki families for several generations and describes their connections to Black Mesa, Gray Mountain, and other places. The ethnographic information collected during this project verifies much of the information she collected.

All of the consultants expressed either strong or thinly veiled resentments about the removal of Navajo families from the monument. The family histories and their role in the development of the monument were fondly remembered.

My [maternal] uncle Clyde Peshlakai learned all of my grandfather's (Peshlakai Etsitty's) stories, which is why he became the guardian of this monument. Clyde's daughter is the only one who still lives here. However, she was not born here in Wupatki, she was born on top of Gray Mountain. All the people that were born here were chased out. The ones that were born here in Wupatki were Jim Peshlakai and Charlie Peshlakai. They are still young, they were born here. Catherine Peshlakai is their mother, whom you probably know. Clyde married her as a young girl. . . . there were many boys, all of whom were chased out of the monument [by the National Park Service]. They now live across the way. (BBH)

Clyde Peshlakai's knowledge about Wupatki and Navajo ceremonialism was well-known throughout the Navajo Nation (e.g., Brugge 1994:40-42).

We were not chased out. We simply left. Many years ago some type of epidemic came to the area. My siblings and I caught the disease. My youngest brother, who was still in a cradleboard, was the first to