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WIDE REED RUIN

by

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APPENDIX I

TRADITIONAL HISTORY OF WIDE REEDS

Mr. David M. Brugge, Curator, Navajo Lands Group, USNPS, devoted much free time in compiling the following report. It is presented, complete, below.

Oral tradition from various sources gives some hints regarding the site of Wide Reeds. Two native names have been recorded. In Hopi it is called Wukopakabi which has been translated "Great Reed or Arrow Place" (Fewkes 1901, p. 608), an apparent reference to Phragmites communis, the carrizo or common reed that was used for arrow shafts. The common Navajo name, Lok'aa Ntiel, "Wide Reeds", refers to the same species of reed. A more complete descriptive name is sometimes cited, Lok'aataa Kindah Ntiel, "Big Wide House in the Midst of the Reeds" (Interview No. 16, 1972, p. 8). In either case, the suggestion that Phragmites once grew in the marshy spots along the wash near the ruin is worth noting. These areas now support cattails (Typha sp) rather than reeds.

Fewkes speculated that Wide Reeds, for which he used the name Wukopakabi, had been occupied by people of the Pakab (Arrow) Clan and that this was the same as the Awata (Bow) Clan. He believed that they brought the Montcita ceremony to Hopi and noted the great similarity of this ceremony to the rites of the Zuni Bow Priesthood. He therefore surmised that both Pueblo peoples obtained the ceremony from a common source and that Wide Reeds was a place of residence of some of the people who practiced the ceremony, some of whom founded the Arrow and Bow Clans among the Hopi. He believed that the Awatobi was settled by these same people. (Fewkes, 1901, pp. 608-609).

Supplee, writing in 1966, states unequivocally that the site was occupied by the Hopi Reed Clan (same as Arrow Clan?) just prior to the founding of Awatobi and

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Reed*

translates Wukopakabi as "Big Reed or Arrow House". (Supplee, 1966, p. 1). He suggests that excavation of the site might be significant should it produce evidence connecting the site with Awatobi. (Ibid., p. 4). Supplee's data are from Hopi sources.

Navajo tradition often lumps the ruin with other Anasazi ruins of the region and attributes its abandonment to destruction by wind and fire. (Interview No. 45, 1972, p. 2; Interview No. 31, 1972, p. 1), these being due to supernatural causes. One story tells of people of Wide Reeds who moved to Zuni, stopping at Klagetoh, Wide Ruins, ~~Tsannats III and Whoyodzi~~ on the way, one of the latter two places being in the Manuelito area (Interview No. 31, 1972, p. 1). *Ahoyodtsi - Jacob's Well*

Thus there are traditional data linking the descendants of the Wide Reeds occupants with both Zuni and Hopi.

The next event which involves the site took place long after abandonment. The Hano Clans, in their immigration to Hopi shortly after the destruction of Awatobi, are said to have stopped there. (Fewkes, 1901, p. 614). This would have been in the very early 18th century.

The ruins are next associated with certain events in Navajo traditional history for which more complete, if sometimes contradictory, data exists. There was a man named Jihaal, ("Sound of a Rattle") who settled at or near the ruins. (Interview No. 44, 1972, p. 1; Interview No. 4, 1971, pp. 11-14, 20-22; Interview No. 45, 1972, p. 2; Interview No. 24, 1972, pp. 1-2; Interview No. 16, 1972, p. 8; Navajo Land Claim Interview No. 289, 1959; Navajo Land Claim Interview No. 460, 1960; Navajo Land Claim Interview No. 527, 1960). Knowledge of the man and his life is quite spotty and it is only by comparing the various accounts that enough can be learned to allow any reconstruction. Most sources identify him as Navajo, although a few are uncertain, suggesting even that he might have been Hopi. Two accounts identify him as a member of the Taachii'nii Clan, which if correct may be especially significant. The Tachi'nii originated from survivors of the destruction of Awatobi who settled at Tachii, a spring near the eastern edge of Black Mesa almost due west of Chinle. That a descendant of these

people now quite Navajo-ized, should return to a site occupied by remote ancestors might be conceivable. There is far more to the story than just that, however.

Jihaal is consistently associated by the Navajos with such sites as Kinaazini between Wide Ruins and Klagetoh, Talahodijool on the east side of Ganado Mesa and the Nazlini pueblo. These are all sites that were built in the 1760s by emigrants from the Dinetah. (Brugge, 1972, pp. 9-11). These were people of mixed Apachean-Puebloan descent themselves. Thus Jihaal, who apparently was an adult during the third quarter of the 18th century, may have had both consanguineal and affinal connections with Navajos who numbered among their ancestors Pueblo refugees from diverse towns.

also associated with (L.C.)

There has come to light no indication of Navajo occupation of Wide Reeds Ruin itself, however. Just west of the ruin across a small wash is a sandy knoll where occupational debris extends from Anasazi times to Navajo. Recorded as Site 4 or NA10546, the site has produced Navajo sherds of what I have called Dinetah Utility, Transitional Variety, a variety that is generally transitional in character between the Dinetah Utility of the early 18th century and Navajo Utility which dates from about the beginning of the 19th century to the present. If Jihaal and his followers lived at Lok'aa Ntiel, Site 4 was probably their home rather than the old ruin itself. Indeed, one Navajo of the Ganado area, who has refused to be interviewed, is reported to have located Jihaal's hogan on this small rise and to have said that the remains of the hogan itself have been eroded away by the Pueblo Colorado Wash which is currently undercutting still further at this site.

Descriptions of Jihaal are unanimous in depicting a very tall man with big feet who used bow and arrows of larger than normal dimensions. He was a great runner and is said to have used a race course near Nazlini for training. His skill at running and with a bow made him also a leading hunter and warrior. He is remembered as the leader in the construction of an antelope corral just south of Jeddito Mesa. He is said to have taken part both in offensive actions, in particular against the Western Apaches, and the Zunis and the Hopis, and defensive battles at Kinaazini and probably Talahodijool. Other defensive sites associated with him are the Nazlini Pueblito and possibly defensive

works said formerly to have been located on Round Top, a crag-like formation near Ganado, but whether these ever suffered attack is not known.

The greatest degree of uncertainty regarding him is whether or not he was a singer. Some sources state that he not only knew a number of ceremonies, including Blessing-way, but that he was one of those who introduced certain new ceremonies to the tribe. Others deny that he had any ceremonial knowledge beyond perhaps some private prayers.

He is said to have had a number of wives and at least one son. The name was passed on in forms such as Jihaal Bighe' ("Jihaal's son") and Jihaal Binali ("Jihaal's Paternal Grandson") through at least two generations and very probably more to Navajos of the present century living south and west of the Hopi villages. The name has been Anglicized to "Gee Hull" in more recent sources. It is not unlikely that repetition of the name in succeeding generations has led to some fusing of data regarding more than one individual with the stories pertaining to the best known figure in the group.

At the other end of the tradition there seems to be some confusion of Jihaal's story with the more tenuous tradition of Masido and Beibashdeali, two alleged Anasazi occupants of Wide Reeds itself, the latter said to have been a man with 12 wives. (Interview No. 21, 1972, pp. 28, 32). This last story lacks any real details. The names do not appear to be of Navajo origin and the source of the tale, very dim tradition at best, is not known, but it may go back to Puebloan origins.

After the death of Jihaal, according to one story killed by enemies on the rim of Canyon de Chelly, Wide Reeds again lapses as a place of significance for about a century. There is no certain mention of it in either Spanish, Mexican or Anglo-American military accounts. The place called Cumaa by Escalante in 1775 and 1776 was obviously nearby but whether his "watering place" was the spring at Wide Reeds or another is quite uncertain. Escalante probably obtained the name Cumaa from his Zuni guides. (Adams, 1963, pp. 120-122; Bolton, 1950, pp. 237-238.) If Jihaal did not still roam the Pueblo Colorado Valley, he had not been gone long.

In 1839, Colonel Mariano Chavez camped in the valley during a campaign against the Navajos. His primary refer-

cf. Washburn & White  
cf. Biggs & Dill

cf. Washburn & White  
cf. Biggs & Dill

cf. Goma's people  
acc'd to Yessie Zinkeddy  
(K & F 1994) -  
from Ganado area

ence point was the Pueblo Colorado or Kinichii, a ruin a few miles up the valley from Wide Reeds, but he did spend some time at a place he called Carricito, "Little Reed", which might conceivably be Wide Reeds itself. If so, the use of the diminutive suffix might be indicative of environmental change. ("Detailed Diary Formulated by Citizen Mariano Chavez, Colonel of Rural Militia and Commander in Chief of Operations against Navajo", ms translation by Mrs. Lloyd House in NPS files, p. 2).

Most references to the area mention only the name Pueblo Colorado and by the time of the Carson Campaign in 1863 it is apparent that it had come to have a general application to the entire valley. (Carson to AAG, July 29, 1863, NA, FWD, Record Group 98, DNM, LS, Old Book 124 bound as 76, pp. 5-6.) That the valley was a center of Navajo settlement where there were hogans and cornfields and a place where dances were held is evident from numerous reports of the military, but the ruin escaped notice, or at least comment, until well after the Navajos returned from the exile at Fort Sumner.

In the summer of 1881 Captain John G. Bourke traveled through the valley on his way to the Hopi Snake Dance, spending the night at Barney Williams "trading ranch", probably near the site of the present J.L. Hubbel Trading Post. He called the wash the Pueblo Colorado and visited a ruin nearby. He identified the ruin as that from which the stream took its name. His description, however, better fits Wide Reeds than Kinichii:

The tracings of the inner and outer walls are perfectly distinct, and the material of construction blocks of friable sandstone of all shapes and sizes, from six to ten inches long, three to six wide, and one to four thick.

The stones were upcut or unpecked, and placed in position just as they were taken from the adjacent mesa. The mud or clay which had once held them together was now washed away, and the walls reduced to piles of rock, but the general plan of the Pueblo could still be made out. It had evidently been shaped like a hollow square, the "placeta" (sic) in the centre reserved for move-

ments of religion, festivity, or public business. Two circular depressions marked the sites of Estufas, both within the square. (Bourke, 1884, p. 68.)

Bourke's description is sufficiently brief that his failure to mention some features of the site and his error in describing the pueblo as square could be merely the result of a very cursory examination, although he may well have visited an entirely different ruin. None other that matches his text quite so well as Wide Reeds is known in the vicinity, however.

A number of informants mention the ruin as having been in better condition in the recent past, both from the point of view of having lost little to erosion by the wash and of having walls more clearly visible on the surface. It is said that during the period that C.N. Cotton was at Ganado, 1884 to sometime in the 1890s, some construction was done at Hubbell Trading Post with rock taken from the ruin. (Interview No. 21, 1972, pp. 28-29). Even following this there were walls still partially standing above the rubble. (Interview No. 47, 1969, p. 10; Interview No. 16, 1972, p. 8). One reason for this may have been that as Navajos replaced Spanish-American masons in the area they refused to haul rock from the ruin (Interview No. 18, 1972, p. 2) and J.L. Hubbell came in time to value the remains and to try to preserve them. (Interview No. 47, 1967, p. 74). By the mid-1920s, however, there was little visible but a mound with some walls exposed along the more eroded sides. The rate of cutting by the Pueblo Colorado Wash is said to have varied, with the major losses to side-ward erosion of the wash having taken place in the 1890s and the losses between about 1925 and 1970 amounting to only ten to fifteen feet. (Interview No. 63, 1972.)

At least one older witness remembers seeing plentiful carrizo reed still growing in the valley (Interview No. 27, p. 8). By the mid-1920s little if any of this reed remained. At a subsequent date cattails from Missouri were inadvertently introduced by a mission employee who disposed of dried spikes and was surprised to find that these soon sprouted and spread along the wash (Interview No. 63, 1972).

#### A NOTE ON INTERVIEWS

Interviews cited by number only were conducted by Mr. Brugge and Roberta L. Tso in 1969-1973. Informants include seven Navajos and two Anglo-Americans. All but one of the Navajo interviews were conducted in Navajo. Eight of these interviews were done as part of an ethnohistory project supported by Southwest Parks and Monuments Association. Transcripts of the interviews are in the files of Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site. The Navajo Land Claims data were supplied by J. Lee Correll of the Navajo Tribal Research Section, where files are maintained of the data. Thanks are hereby extended to both Southwest Parks and Monuments Association and the Navajo Tribe for their assistance.