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Arizona

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OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
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W. R. Mateer Agt
Moqui's Pueblo Agcy, Ariz.
Feby 24th 1878

Transmits report of first visit to the Moqui's villages.

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Moqui Pueblo Agency, Arizona.
Feb. 24th 1878.

Hon. E. A. Hayt, Commissioner of Indian Affairs,
Washington D.C.

Dear Sir:

I have the honor to report that I have just finished my first visit of the Moqui villages. As these villages have been frequently described and a number of photographic views taken of them by Prof. W. H. Jackson I will not enter into a minute description of them.

We spent two days in the first three, Tagua, Shechumavo and Wallapi, which are all situated on the same mesa and within a few hundred feet of each other. This mesa is at least a thousand feet above the plain which surrounds it and is approached only by a narrow pathway some portion of which was made by cutting steps in the rock. Their ponies are trained to ascend and descend quite rapidly although the [illegible] ride is not pleasant to contemplate, when by a misstep of the pony in several places would hurl

both pony and rider a distance, almost perpendicular, of five or six hundred feet. Their wood, water and provision have all to be taken up this path which is done chiefly by the women.

We had been invited to witness their great bean dance, which took place at this time, by the Chiefs when at Defiance. This dance takes place just when their bean plants begin to bloom. It is prepared to please the Great Spirit so that He will give them abundant crops the coming season. They spend several days in the preparation of their costumes for this occasion. They have eight different lodges or societies in the first three villages and their places of meeting and dancing are in cellars prepared especially for this purpose. These cellars are usually twenty by thirty feet and from ten to twelve feet deep, covered in the same manner as their dwellings and are entered from a small aperture in the center of the roof by means of a ladder. The dance commences about ten O'clock at night when all the women and children, from ten days old and upward, congregate in these cellars to witness it. The only light they have is from a fire in the center which is kept in a blaze by constantly feeding it with wild sage or grease brush prepared for the occasion

The dance of one society lasts about half an hour when it moves out and another takes its place. This rotation is kept up until daylight when the feast begins, which consists either of mutton, rabbit or dog, or perhaps a piece of sack, with corn, dried pumpkin and whatever else they may have on hand to add. This stew which has been cooking all night long is now kept dished out in a large bowl and placed in the center of the floor for the dancers and guests as they proceed from house to house each one helping himself by dipping his hand into the bowl. This is kept up until about noon which closes the dance.

We had a Council of all the Chiefs, except the Oraibi village on the first mesa. They are all friendly towards the Government, expressed their willingness to carry out the wishes of the Government and seemed desirous of having their schools started. They guarantee to furnish from fifty to sixty pupils at the Agency buildings and want a school established in the second and fourth villages for the smaller children and a few larger ones who have to stay at home to take care of their houses while their parents are away planting and herding their flocks. The Government

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owns a room in the second village which can be made a comfortable school room with an expenditure of one hundred dollars. At present it is lighted by three panes of glass ten by twelve inches, two of them being in the front and one in the rear end of the room.

From the first mesa we proceeded over to the Oraibi or Smooth Rock a distance of fifteen miles to the West, taking with us two Chiefs Nag-he and Capt. Lorse. This village trades altogether with the Mormons and we soon found the difference in the Indians after getting amongst them. After explain the object of my visit to the Chief, Lo-lu-lu-la-my, the only reply he made was "That it was a lie and he didn't believe a word of it." I then explained to him that if it had not been for the Government the Navajos, Utes and Apaches would have taken all their sheep and ponies from them which set the old fellow to thinking and he said: "that if the Gov. wanted anything from him why did'nt the President come and see him himself" and then went on to tell how they had been abused during the Navajo war by the Americans and the Mexicans ~~that they took away their stock and also~~ their wives. which is all true. and then he went on

to tell what the Mormons had said that they must not have anything to do with the Government that they only want their names so that they can again carry off their wives and their stock. We finally talked the Chief into terms the first night but when his council got together the next morning they all appeared as taking the consent especially Koun-mu-sha who spends most of his time in the Mormon camp at Moen Kappi made some threats if we attempted it. This is the fifth time that they have prevented the taking of the census and I would recommend that it now be taken by force so as to avoid trouble in the future either with these Indians or the Mormons. There are now four Mormon camps within fifty miles of these villages. Twenty men will be a sufficient force to bring them to terms. In the fifth village, Shong a pavi, their Chief, She pe la had been dead two months and I appointed in compliance with their request She-cah pu-kee and Lu-mah-to-wah as their Chiefs. The fourth & fifth villages are on the same mesa and within a few hundred yards of each other.

I found on retaking the census of the six villages that there had been eighty two births and

only two deaths since the 1st of last July an increase of eighty on a population of one thousand and seventy nine in eight months.
These Indians are very much in need of clothing, the women are all barefooted and very few of them seem to have anything but a blanket to cover them, boys running around ten and twelve years old without a particle of clothing on them and girls eight and ten in the same condition. We saw several men out in the snow barefooted, ~~and with nothing except a blanket to cover them,~~ gathering brush for wood. Their houses are warm especially where they live in the basement which is their great protection.

Very respectfully,
Wm R. Maleer,
U S Indian Agent

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