

September 10, 1918

Subject:
Navajo encroachments
on Hopi lands.

5-1143

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

SUPERVISING ENGINEER
ALBUQUERQUE, N. M.

September 10, 1918.

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs,
WASHINGTON.

(Through the Chief Engineer).

Sir:

The encroachments of the Navajo Indians on the lands occupied by the Hopi Indians on the Moqui Reservation in Arizona is becoming more acute and will soon reach a point where the most energetic and drastic methods will be required to avoid actual deprivations on a large scale by the Navajo against the Hopis.

The situation is brought to my attention from time to time in connection with the development of water for these Indians within the boundaries of the Moqui Reservation.

The reservation was formed by executive order dated December 16, 1882 and was "set apart for the use and occupancy of the Moqui and such other Indians as the Secretary of the Interior may see fit to settle thereon". This reservation has an area of 2,473,320 acres or 3,364 square miles.

The Hopi Indians occupy nine towns a little south of the central part of this tract. They have no agricultural lands strictly speaking, as this area is very arid. They have a few insignificant spots where they are able to irrigate a few small garden tracts with the overflow from springs, a few fields where the area is wet once or twice in a season by the flood waters from the hills, and they do some dry farming, raising

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a little corn and a few beans in the sand beds which hold the moisture a little longer than do the other soils. They have some stock, mostly sheep and goats and a few hundred head of cattle. Formerly these ranged out a few miles from the villages and were driven in at night. Since we have been putting down wells and improving the springs they have moved away from the mesas and their stock has improved very much, both in quality and increase in numbers from the greater quantity of feed and the better quality of the water they receive.

Now that they are beginning to get away from the mesas they are running against the Navajos and trouble has ensued. Nothing of great moment as yet, but constant friction which in time (and a short time is predicted), if nothing is done by the Office, will mean a final clash that will take drastic action to settle.

Of the total area of this reservation, the Hopis are now restricted to perhaps 15% of the total area. The annexed map shows the maximum area that is occupied by the Hopis, and all along the red line and inside of it is the neutral or debatable ground where the trouble is occurring. The only possible place for the Hopi Indians to expand a little is toward the south where there is so little water and the grazing is so poor that the Navajos have not yet taken possession.

For years it has been the hope of the Office to have the Hopi Indians come down from the mesa tops and spread out, forgetting their clannish nature and forsake the ways of their fathers in part. Just now we are getting this accomplished

in a small way, and getting many families to move out where they can care for their flocks and stock, all by the increase in the water supply in the places where there is some feed, and now they are running up against the wall of the Navajos.

They find that the thrifty, pushing and combative Navajos have preempted the grazing land and water, for while the entire reservation is desert land, the best of it lies in the vicinity of the mesas occupied by the Hopis, so the Navajos are crowding in. There are 2260 Hopis occupying about 15% of the reservation or less of the total area of the reservation, and that about 2000 Navajos who have the balance of the reservation as well as the rights to some 13 million acres of their own reservation are crowding them back and preventing their spreading by taking forcible possession of the water which controls the grazing.

The characteristics of the two tribes are diametrically opposite. The Navajo, forceful and aggressive; the Hopi meek and quiet. The Hopi will suffer in silence, and he will accept punishment and oppression and make no move even in self-defence. His name indicates his character. "Hopi" in their own language denotes "peaceful", while the other name by which they are known, Moqui or Moki is from a Navajo word meaning "a dead one" and indicates the contemptuous esteem he is held in by the Navajo.

The hurtful acts of the Navajos are not only in crowding in and taking possession of water and grazing areas, although they are doing this, even forcing the Hopis away from

areas where they have been in undisputed possession for years, but in other ways.

A Navajo will send word to a Hopi cattle owner that his stock has damaged a corn patch of the Navajos, and the poor Hopi is ordered to round up his cattle and drive them over for the inspection of the Navajo that he may pick out one or more to pay for the damage -- and the peaceful Hopi does as he is ordered and looses a good steer or cow to liquidate a small damage, maybe one that is entirely imaginary or may have been done by the Navajo cattle. Such is the Navaj "Hun" method of aggression and passification.

Does the Hopi protest or go to the Superintendent? Not that I can hear of. He takes his punishment, looses his cattle and perhaps gives up a spring or well he has been using, takes any bitter medicine that may be handed him rather than fight.

There is always a last straw, and generally the worm if goaded enough will turn. Perhaps the Hopi will turn -- then the papers will be full of "Another Indian Uprising!"

I have just returned from an inspection trip to the Hopi country and found that a number of cases like this had happende recently.

Another example of the "strong arm" methods of the Navajos.

It is just a few weeks since a Navajo boy was accidentally shot with a 22 cal. rifle he had taken from a little Hopi herd boy. The Navajos immediately accused the Hopi

boy of the shooting, although it was clearly accidental, forcibly took him and held him, awaiting the death of the Navajo boy who lived several hours. They first stated that they would kill the boy -- "an eye for an eye"; a life for a life. They finally said they would not kill him, but would hold him for ransom - demanding ten head of cattle and other property. There was a considerable gathering of both Navajos and Hopis, probably more of the latter than the former, but they made no effort to get the boy from the Navajos and finally meekly paid the ransom. And the Superintendent? He was called, but being without backing, and the Navajos being so aggressive and the Hopis so meek --- what could he do, other than let the matter take its course?

I may not have all of the details right -- as I am not trying to report the case -- merely using it as an example of the aggressiveness that approaches the danger point of the Navajos.

This encroachment is no new matter. It has been reported to the Office many times. I submitted a report on the subject as far back as May 26th, 1914. Whether any action has been taken by the Office or not I am unable to say, but there have been no results apparent in the field.

I would suggest the Office corroborate the foregoing sketchy outline through Superintendent Leo Crane, and it is also suggested that some one be detailed to actually visit the reservation, not getting his information at the railroad 100 miles away, and by interviews not only with representatives of the government there, but the traders, the missionaries, and

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last but not least the Indians themselves. Then the Office will have sufficient first hand data upon which to work. I can assure you that unless some steps are taken speedily to relieve the situation that it will only be a short time before strong handed methods must be resorted to.

The Hopi will not fight, but he is a ward of the government, he has his rights, dating far prior to any rights the Navajo may have to any of the land surrounding his villages, and he must be protected. So far he has been self supporting, and has opposed the plans of the government for his improvement. Today, he has been educated to the point that he can see what has been done for him is good, and what is wanted of him by the Department is all for his own improvement. He is getting to a state of mind (very largely because of the benefits he has received from the increase in water supply and its attendant blessings), that he will do whatever the government may want of him. Now, therefore it is the time to keep the good work going on. Give him room to expand as he grows, and the only way to do this is to control the area he should occupy and keep all other Indians from encroaching thereon.

Very respectfully,



Supervising Engineer.

[Handwritten signature]
Respectfully forwarded to the Commissioner
of Indian Affairs, with the recommendation
that it be *[Handwritten signature]*

Chief Engineer.