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THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL CHANGE ON THE LAND USE PATTERNS OF THE HOPI INDIANS

by

ELLIOT GREGOR McINTIRE

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Chapter 7

RESETTLEMENT

Colonization

A rapidly growing Hopi population on a very limited area of cultivable land was viewed as a serious problem in the early 1940's. Large, unused areas of potentially cultivable land were available near Parker, Arizona, on the Colorado River Indian Reservation, and it was felt by Bureau of Indian Affairs officials that colonization was a partial solution to the Hopi's problems. During the late 1940's, this was attempted, but met with only limited success. To understand why it was not as successful as had been hoped requires an examination of several aspects of the situation.

The Colorado River Indian Reservation (Figure 42) was established in 1865 "for the Indians of said river and its tributaries" (Young 1961, p. 198). In effect, it became a reservation for Mohave Indians, who had traditionally lived in the area along the river. By 1940, the Bureau of Indian Affairs was becoming increasingly concerned with the growing population pressures on other reservations, and began to explore the possibilities of opening up the Colorado River Indian Reservation to settlement by members of other tribes.[1]

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[1]Most of the information regarding the establishment of the resettlement scheme is summarized from Young 1961, pp. 198ff.

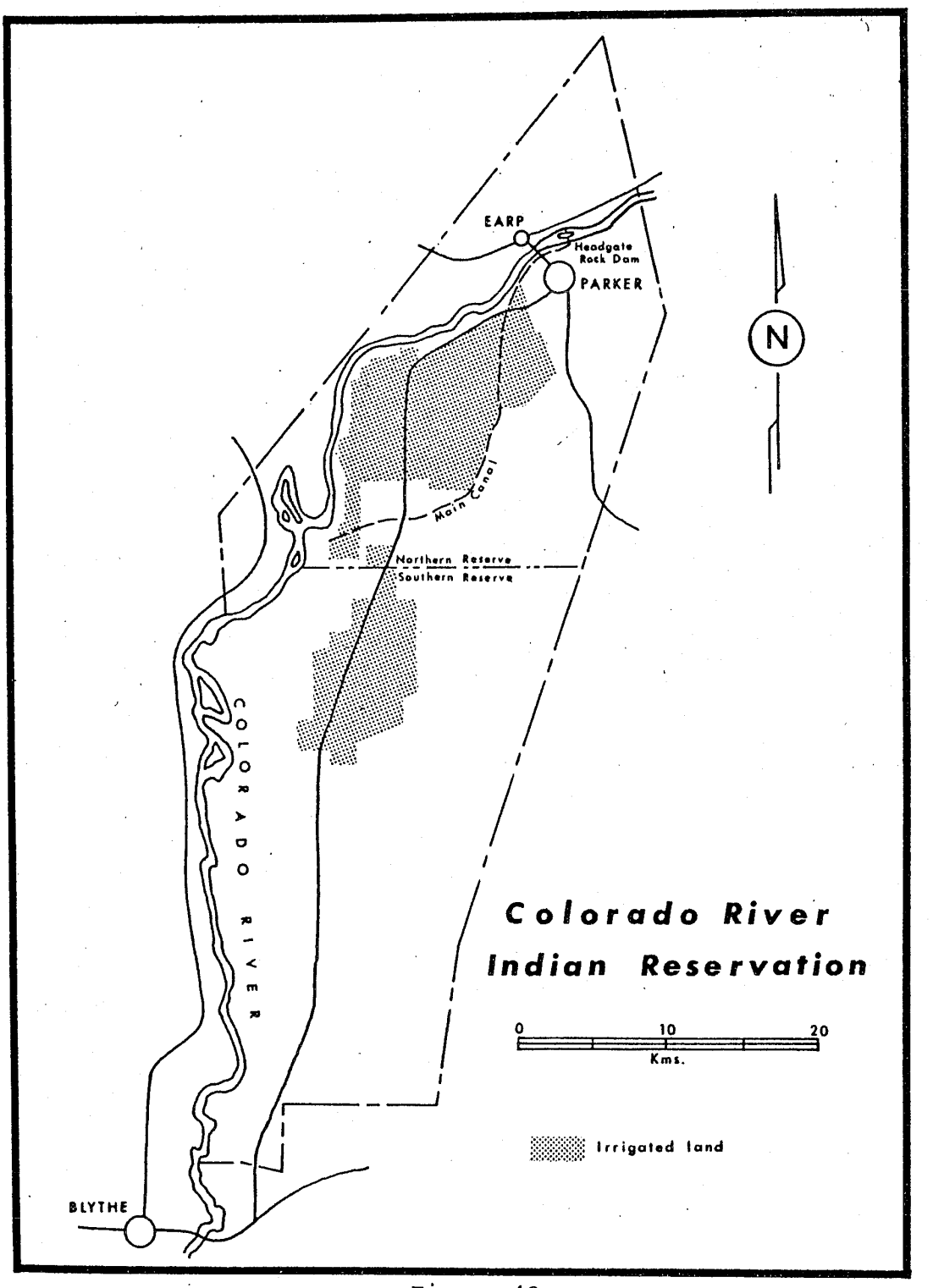
EARP
Headgate Rock Dam
PARKER
N
Main Canal
Northern Reserve
Southern Reserve
COLORADO RIVER
Colorado River
Indian Reservation
0
10
20
Kms.
Irrigated land
BLYTHE

Figure 42

In 1940, the population of the reservation was 1,187 (875 Mohaves and 312 closely related Chemehuevis). It was estimated that this population could be easily supported by 10,000 hectares of irrigated land, so plans were developed for the settlement of other tribes on the remainder of the land. The wording of the original legislation creating the reservation could be interpreted to include all Indians of the entire drainage area of the Colorado River, although it is doubtful that this was the intent of Congress in 1865.

Whatever the intent, plans were drawn for the settlement of groups from the Navajo, Hopi, Papago, and Yuma reservations, and certain other Pueblo groups. With the advent of World War II all such plans were suspended, and the unused southern portion of the reservation was turned over for use as a Japanese relocation camp.

At the end of the war the plans were revived, although many of the tribes previously listed were excluded. In 1945, the Colorado River Tribal Council and the Bureau of Indian Affairs entered into an agreement (known as Ordinance No. 5 on the reservation) which provided for the division of the reservation into two parts: the Northern Reserve, containing about 10,000 hectares of irrigable land for the use of the Mohave and Chemehuevi residents of the reservation, and the Southern Reserve, containing about 30,000 hectares of irrigable land, which would be opened for colonization. The Bureau agreed to subjugate some 6,073 hectares (15,000 acres) in each reserve. The new land, together with some 4,000 hectares already irrigated was thought to be sufficient to adequately support the resident population.

In order to provide a legal basis for the land holdings of the colonists (in the form of perpetual assignments, with title remaining with the tribe) it was agreed that the colonists would be required to become members of the Colorado River Indian Tribes (the legal tribal entity on the reservation).

This provision discouraged many potential colonists, since to do so they would have to give up all the rights and privileges as members of their original tribe. Few were willing to do so, particularly after the Indian Claims Commission Act of 1946 raised the possibility of large payments to tribal members for lands seized by the government in the past.

In spite of these difficulties, the first colonists arrived in June of 1945, and by the end of the year, sixteen Hopi families and one Navajo family were living on the Southern Reserve, housed initially in the buildings left from the internment camp. During the next few years more colonists arrived, although the total was far below that which had been expected. By the end of the program, 116 Navajo families, thirty-two[2] Hopi families, and three Supai families had moved onto the Southern Reserve. Some of the reasons for the relative ineffectiveness of the program are tied to a series of disagreements between the Colorado River Indian Tribal Council and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, outlined below.

By 1949, the Tribal Council, made up of Mohaves and Chemehuevis, had decided that Ordinance No. 5 had been a mistake on their part, and in 1951

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[2]Table 19, taken from Young (1961, p. 205) lists the total number of Hopi families as twenty-nine. The above figure is taken from data provided by the personnel of the Colorado River Indian Reservation Agency at Parker, Arizona. The reason for the discrepancy is unknown.

Table 19

Number of Family Groups Involved in Colonization on the Colorado River Indian Reservation (adapted from Young 1961, p. 205).

Year	Arrivals**		Withdrawals**	
	Navajo	Hopi	Navajo	Hopi
1945	1	16	-	-
1946	-	2	-	-
1947	6	3	-	-
1948	2	2	-	3
1949	15	1	-	-
1950	60	3	-	2
1951	32	2	7	1
1952	-	-	8	-
1953	-	-	20	1
1954	-	-	5	2
1955	-	-	16	1
1956	-	-	6	-
1957	-	-	5	1
1958	-	-	1	-
1959	-	-	2	-
1960	-	-	1	-
Totals	116	29*	72	11*
Number remaining:	44	18		
Per cent remaining:	37.9	62.1		

*Figures exclude one Hopi colonist for whom neither arrival nor departure dates are available, and one Hopi colonist who died at Colorado River is omitted from the column headed "withdrawals."

**Does not include three Supai families who arrived in 1951. Two of the Supai families withdrew in 1955.

acted to rescind the ordinance. This was contested by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the courts ultimately held that the reservation was for all tribes of the Colorado River and its tributaries, and the referendum was therefore invalid. In the confusion over the status of the colonists, the program came to an end in 1951.

Not all of those who came stayed. Table 19 shows the number of families arriving in each year during the program, and also the number of families who left, between 1945, at the start of the program, and 1960, by which time the colonist population had stabilized.

In 1964, Congressional action changed the status of the reservation, in order to avoid some of the problems of definition which had plagued the colonization effort. The phrase pertaining to the tribes of the entire Colorado drainage was eliminated, and the new legislation required that all residents of the reservation be enrolled on the tribal rolls of the Colorado River Indian Tribe, thus renouncing any other tribal affiliation. Most of the Hopi colonists had already been adopted into the tribe, so only a few individuals were affected by the new law (see Table 20). All of the Hopi who were there decided to remain, although two or three Navajo colonists returned to the Navajo Reservation at that time. At present no distinction is made on the agency records of any past tribal affiliations; all are members of the Colorado River Indian Tribe. The distinction between the Northern and Southern Reserves was also abolished, although in fact the northern portion of the reservation is still Mohave and Chemehuevi while the southern portion is Hopi and Navajo.

Out of a total Hopi population of around 4,000, only about 115 persons elected to make the move to the Colorado River, about three per cent of

Table 20

Number of Hopi Adopted into the Colorado River Indian Tribe

1947	21
1948	27
1949	18
1950	4
1956	1
1965	5
Total	76

Data provided by the staff of the Colorado River Indian Reservation Agency, Parker, Arizona.

the population. Of these, about forty eventually returned to the Hopi Reservation. In light of the rapid growth of the Hopi population, this scheme was of almost no importance in solving the problems faced by the Hopi.

But the program can be looked at in another way. What kind of Hopi were involved in the colonization, and what effect did their leaving have on the population which remained behind? Most Hopi in the late 1940's were not prepared to make the kind of change in their way of life required by the move to the Colorado River. Aside from the prospect of renouncing their membership in the Hopi tribe, the move meant that the colonists were effectively cut off from the remainder of their extended families, and the entire complex of social and religious activities which are of such great importance to the Hopi. Therefore, only those Hopi who were already at least partially divorced from these activities would be likely candidates for colonization. There are no figures available on the origins of the colonists or on their religious affiliations, but there can be no doubt that a majority of the colonists were Christian, and there is evidence that a large proportion of them came from First Mesa. Many of the names found on the Colorado River Indian Reservation are those of families at First Mesa.[3]

If these assumptions are correct, it means that a large proportion of the colonists came from the part of the reservation which had been most exposed to Western culture, and because of the presence of the Tewa popu-

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[3]In 1950 nineteen of the approximately eighty-eight Hopi colonists on the Colorado River were Tewa from First Mesa (Dozier 1954, p. 288).

lation, had been most receptive to this influence. Those who were Christian would have suffered the least from the move, for they could continue to follow their religion anywhere, whereas the traditional Hopi religion depends to a very great extent on its followers' physical presence on the mesas, and their participation in the many ceremonials.

Even though the number of colonists was relatively small, the program probably removed many possible sources of dissension from the reservation, for the people most likely to be at odds with the traditional leaders were also the most likely to become colonists. Cox (1967, p. 153) cites one case in which a family was forced to leave Polacca because a member had sold clan land, which could not be done within the traditional system. This family became colonists on the Colorado River, and is now well-established there. It seems probable that a major side effect of the colonization scheme was to lessen tensions between factions on the Hopi Reservation far out of proportion to the numbers of people involved.

This colonization plan must be considered as a failure, in terms of providing a remedy for the problem of increasing Hopi population with a limited area to exploit. It was conceived as a farming colony, and since the Hopi have traditionally been farmers, it was felt that this would be a relatively easy change to make. But the farming practiced on the Colorado River Indian Reservation is a completely different type of agriculture from the traditional type practiced by the Hopi. Therefore the move required a great change not only in location, but also in the type of activity engaged in, and the whole cycle of yearly tasks.

In addition, most of the Hopi who felt strongly about continuing to farm preferred to remain within the traditional system, on the reservation.

Those who, for whatever reason, were inclined to move off the reservation were usually interested in non-agricultural employment. Many had worked at the Navajo Ordnance Depot west of Flagstaff during World War II, and the prospect of wage labor seemed more attractive to many than farming, particularly in the unfamiliar environment of the Colorado River Valley.

The experience gained through the colonization program has been applied to later programs of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and others working with economic development on Indian reservations. As a result of observing the problems experienced by the Navajo colonists, the Navajo Tribal Council established the Navajo Farm Training Enterprise near Shiprock in 1957, to prepare the settlers chosen for the Navajo Irrigation Project on the San Juan River (Young 1961, p. 208).

More recent development projects aimed at assisting the Hopi have centered around training them for jobs in secondary or tertiary industries, usually off the reservation, or the development of industrial employment on or near the reservation.

Non-Agricultural Resettlement

Since the efforts at colonization of farming areas by Hopi proved to be of very limited utility in resolving the difficulties created by increasing expectations on the part of the Hopi, the increase in the total population, and the very limited possibilities for agricultural expansion on the reservation, it was obvious to all concerned that other solutions were necessary. In recent years, this has usually taken the form of resettlement of either individuals or nuclear families in off-reservation locations.

Two distinct aspects of this resettlement can be noted: first, the move by individuals and families into nearby towns such as Flagstaff or Winslow made on an individual basis, with no particular training or assistance from outside agencies; second is the move, often to much more distant locations, connected with specific training programs which often include assistance in the location of housing and/or employment.

For the sake of clarity, the term "individual resettlement" will be used to refer to moves to off-reservation locations as the result of individual initiative, while "assisted relocation" will refer to such moves as are connected with the efforts of various training programs or government agencies.

Individual resettlement has been occurring in small numbers for many years. Off-reservation schooling gave many young Hopi an increased familiarity with various parts of the Southwest, and sometimes led to full-time employment after their schooling was completed. Far more important has been the resettlement of nuclear families in towns relatively close to the reservation, such as Flagstaff or Winslow, to secure employment with the Atcheson, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad. The Hopi gained a reputaion during the steam era of railroading of being skilled mechanics and machinists (Kelly and Cramer 1966, p. 33). The switch to diesel has eliminated many of these jobs, but the pattern of off-reservation employment was already well-established.

During World War II many Hopi were employed at the Navajo Ordnance Depot just west of Flagstaff. Many returned to the reservation following the end of the war and the consequent reduction of employment at the depot,

but the experience pre-disposed many of these individuals to look for other jobs off the reservation.

Flagstaff and Winslow offer several advantages for the Hopi seeking employment. Their nearby location makes possible frequent visits to the reservation, and the maintenance of social and religious obligations within Hopi society. Locations at greater distance usually prevent any active participation in reservation affairs. Historically, many Hopi families moved out of the village into summer homes during part of the agricultural cycle, returning to the village for ceremonials and other functions. Hopi residents of Flagstaff and Winslow were able to adapt this pattern to the changing conditions of the modern economy, but continuous residence off the reservation seems to have resulted in a weakening of ties to traditional activities, in spite of frequent contact between these families and their relatives on the reservation.

A rather detailed picture of the Hopi communities of Flagstaff and Winslow is available, as a result of a recent survey of Indian families in these towns (Kelly and Cramer 1966). Flagstaff has an Indian population of approximately 700 (1965), of which about thirty per cent are Hopi. That is, the Hopi population of Flagstaff is approximately 200. The balance is primarily Navajo, with a few members of other tribes also represented. The Indian population of Winslow is somewhat larger, about 850 (1965), with a similar tribal division, except that Winslow has a colony of Laguna Indians from New Mexico, which totals approximately 100. The Hopi population of Winslow,then, is probably about 225.