

Mishongnovi Village meeting, 5-10-1951. In a Kiva. Fifteen members from Mishongnovi and two members from Sipaulovi present. John S. Boyden Collection, MS# 823, Box 41, folder 3. J. Willard Marriott Library Manuscripts Division. University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

MISHONGNOVI VILLAGE MEETING

May 10, 1951.

Meeting was held with Mishongnovi Village in a Kiva, May 10, 1951, to discuss proposed contract with Mr. John S. Boyden of Salt Lake City, Utah. Fifteen members from Mishongnovi and two members of the Sipaulavi Village, Mr. Boyden, Mr. Carnal and Mrs. Whipple were present. Neither Starlie nor the Chief were present.

Mr. Carnal: Since the time is getting short, we might start with our meeting. Since the contract has been explained at two different meetings, it will not be necessary for us to go into detail in explaining it but we might start by taking up any questions the group might want Mr. Boyden to answer or clarify.

Sam Shing: (speaks in Hopi and then interprets his own words) I was telling them the way I had interpreted the contract. Thomas had come over here and he interpreted it an entirely different way, yet Starlie and his brother say that he was reading from the contract, but it doesn't jibe at all.

He put so much responsibility on us as far as the compensation was concerned. When I came back here Friday night I talked with these fellows. I said it the way I understood it. I don't think an educated man would have any trouble understanding the contract. I studied the contract over one night. I referred to the dictionary on a few of the big words and then I understood it alright. I don't think Thomas should have had any trouble understanding it because he is an educated man.

Mr. Boyden: I have brought a message to you people to warn you that if you want to protect your rights you must file your claim by this coming August. I have prepared a contract in accordance with the kind of contract that other Indian tribes used. I think this contract is better for you than the contract that the Utes had, which has proved great satisfaction to them.

Now, we try to explain these things, but there is another one who comes around and tells you things that are not here. And, of course, if you choose to believe him, then there is no use in talking to you. I know that you are not going to take any action because things have changed since Sam was here the other night, but I want to read some things from the contract and then I will go.

First: I want to read from paragraph 6, "It is agreed that the compensation of the attorney for the services rendered and to be rendered under the terms of this contract shall be wholly contingent upon a recovery for the Hopi Tribe."

That simply means that if I don't recover anything for you, you don't pay me a cent. Now, the contract also provides that the actual costs of printing briefs and so forth should be paid out of tribal funds, not by any one of you but out of tribal funds. Then I want to read the last part of the contract. This is to come to a meeting where the Superintendent is, where there is someone who will write the contract. "Provided further neither the Tribe nor the United States Government shall be liable for any expense except to the extent that tribal funds are available therefor".

That simply means that if the Tribe does not have the money, nobody has to pay. It will have to come out of my own pocket, even for the expenses.

I also want to read from paragraph 10 of the contract which says: "In the event no recovery is had upon said claims the liability of the Hopi Tribes to reimburse said sums for costs and expenses shall cease with the termination of this contract and all extensions and renewals thereof, otherwise all unpaid costs and expenses shall be paid from the proceeds of the recovery upon such claims."

That simply means that, if during the time this contract runs along, the Hopi Tribe does not have money in the U.S. Treasury, then I never get paid and your responsibility ceases.

If anybody tells you the contract means something different than that, they are not telling you the truth, and they are not really your friend. I have told you now that I would like to help you. I think that I have been a friend and interested in the Hopi people a long time before there was an Indian Claims Commission. Hale Secakuku has a picture in his house just like I have in mine, that was taken of my wife and his wife and our babies. These babies are now 13 years old. That was long before the Claims Commission Act was passed. I want to be your friend, I want to help. If you want me to help you, that's fine. If you don't want me to help, I am still your friend.

Wesley Poneoma: One question I want to ask on behalf of my people. What happens to the Hopi if we don't file claim on this chance?

Mr. Boyden: The Indian Claims Commission Act says that if any Indian tribes in the United States has a claim against the government, any claim that they want in equity and good conscience, they shall file that claim before next August. If they do not file before that time, they shall forever be barred.

That means that if you do not file any claim the Government will say the Hopis are pleased with what they have and from now on they can't file any claim. There is only one thing that could save you and that is Congress might give us another chance, but I am afraid that won't happen because there are several bills in Congress now and they don't seem to be getting anywhere.

Now, what I tell you has been written down in a book for your protection. The Federal regulations provide that it must be taken down and if I am not telling you the truth, I will get into trouble. So, if someone tells you something different, you tell him to come to a meeting where the Superintendent is, where there is someone who will write it down and let him get into trouble.

I am sorry that the Chief's spokesman is not here because he has heard the other side. I do want to thank all of you for listening and I wish you the best of luck, and hope that I will see you all again some time.

Mr. Carnal: We appreciate very much you people coming out to listen to Mr. Boyden explain the terms of the contract to you. It shows that you are interested in your problems and are trying to do something about them. I feel that it is my duty, as your superintendent, to warn you that the time is getting short. It will take weeks and weeks of work to get this claim ready to meet the deadline. You have to have facts before the court will act on it. That is why I say the time is getting short. So it is up to you people. If you want to file a claim there is still time but, as I say, I want to warn you that the time is just about gone.

Jacob: (Interpreted by Sam) I was just wondering if we couldn't determine something tonight. I want to ask the people if they want to take any action right now. I want to get your opinions. Should we take an action right now? In my opinion, I want to say, that we should have an attorney because I feel that I would not have the ability to do the work myself so we should have some one to work for us.

Andy: (Interpreted by Sam) It has been our opinion always that when anybody comes here to speak to us, that his words are true. But many times when someone comes to interest the Hopi, to help them, it doesn't figure out that way. You older people have been constantly making those statements. We know that it was your knowledge that there would be someone that would come to the aid of our people, but still it also has been known to you that we would never at any time be obligated to pay out anything, so, therefore, that is our greatest fear - the compensation expense has to be paid out. That is the feeling the most of you fellows have been expressing this time and again.

Now, I should think that we should make an effort to fulfill the prophesy that you have by submitting our claim to the Claims Commission. Now, what is your opinion? Should we file a claim with this attorney or should we file a claim on our own accord. I wish one of you would express your opinions and show what your thoughts are.

Delbert Quavama: (Interpreted by Sam) I doubt if anyone here will be able to say anything concerning the question we have because it is up to Starlie and the Chief. They have the authority and they have the responsibility, so by not being here it determines that it is their desire not to be here and I don't think that anyone of us are capable to do what they did at the meeting held for Sipaulavi. At that time I said I would not vote because of the fact that I feel that I am obligated to this village and to those that are in lead because I am affiliated to them in the way of ceremonies. Of course, some of you may think otherwise of me, but I felt that by doing so that I am fulfilling the obligation that I have.

Seyestewa: (Interpreted by Sam) When I listened to the explanation and the talk Mr. Boyden gave us I feel that he is telling the truth and the right. Maybe we should have asked him what his religious denomination is. By that we may be able to know what he is and we may be able to determine his character.

You are telling us the truth, you are telling us that the time is short. The prophesies of long ago tells us these very things. And it also tells us that when the time becomes short and when these things will come to be fulfilled there will be many coming to us saying that they will help us and the people will be warned. We know that it will be a white man who will come. But that white man will never have been baptized in any religion. When that time comes there will be one, two or maybe three who will be very helpful. Now there is quite a few of us who still don't understand English and it has also been said that until the time that the non-English speaking Hopis would have been gone and then it is time for these things to come. Now, this is the truth and is not a false statement.

Andy: One more thing I want to ask you. I would like to know what you are - what religious belief you belong to.

Mr. Boyden: I do have a religion. I belong to the Church that is known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. You perhaps know them as Mormon. I believe that every Mormon has a responsibility to the Indian people, that these people will one day come into their own if they are faithful people. In the early days a Mormon, Jacob Hamblin, came to the Hopi people and told you the things that I am telling you now. That is the church to which I belong.

Andy: This will conclude the meeting.